



Leeds Safeguarding  
Children Partnership



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WEST YORKSHIRE  
POLICE

## Leeds Joint Agency Protocol for Domestic Violence and Abuse: School and Further Education Notifications

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JFDI	Level 2 for CSWS, Police and Education staff Level 1 for other agencies



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## Introduction

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This protocol sets out a joint-agency approach to provide, by early intervention, appropriate support for children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse in their household. It draws on the principles of Operation Encompass which is established in a number of areas nationally.

The Protocol (here in referred to as the DVA Notification Process) is a result of a key recommendation in the Leeds Domestic Violence and Abuse Scrutiny Report 2012. In addition there are clear links with the extension of the Families First Programme with domestic violence as criteria for identification, the Family Valued programme and the workforce development progress made in clusters with the domestic violence quality mark.

This Protocol is aimed at staff within the Police, Childrens Social Work Services (Front Door Safeguarding Hub) and Educational Settings including schools and Higher Education (reference throughout document will refer to educational settings)

### *Definition of domestic abuse*

The Government defines domestic violence and abuse as “Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional
- Controlling behaviour: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour
- Coercive behaviour: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.”

This definition, which is not a legal definition, includes so-called `honour` based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

Domestic abuse is a safeguarding children issue; statistics show that in 90% of cases children are present in a household during a domestic abuse incident. Often the following day children are ill-prepared to deal with the school day.

As indicated recommendation 23 of the Leeds Domestic Violence and Abuse Scrutiny Report 2012 states that “the Chair of the Leeds Domestic Violence Strategy Group works closely with the Director of Children’s Services and the Leeds Divisional Commander to

ensure that there continues to be commitment from all key partners towards the development of a School Notification process within Leeds”.

The DVA Notification Process relates to all incidents of domestic violence and abuse whereby there is a child of statutory education age (4-17years) who is witness to, or present at, an incident of domestic violence or abuse. Educational Settings which have pupils who are post 18 years should also be mindful of the effects of witnessing or being present during incidents of domestic violence and abuse, and provide support and appropriate accommodations to their learning.

## **Aims**

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The domestic violence and abuse notification protocol is the implementation of key partnership working between West Yorkshire Police, The Front Door Safeguarding Hub, Council Contact Centre Staff, designated school and Higher Education staff (Safeguarding Leads), Targeted Services and Education and Early Years Safeguarding Team.

The aim of the protocol is to ensure that educational settings are made aware in a timely manner of incidents of domestic violence and abuse at which a child on role was present, in order that the setting can take appropriate steps to support that pupil during what could be an emotionally difficult day, ensuring access to responsive emotional health and wellbeing support after a domestic abuse incident. This could include practical and / or emotional support or as a minimum ensuring that those staff who should be made aware are. In its simplest form, they are given some leeway, comfort and support. This can make a huge difference to children and allows them to have a safe space.

Educational settings will receive information when:

- Police have been called out to a domestic violence incident
- The child is present in the household at the time of the incident and
- The child is of statutory education age (4-17 years)

This knowledge, given to educational settings through the notification process, allows the provision of immediate early intervention through silent or overt support dependent upon the needs and wishes of the child (see Appendix 4).

In the first instance disclosures will be made in respect of all children aged between 4-18 years.

## **Notification Process (see Appendix 1)**

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West Yorkshire Police will share details of all domestic violence and abuse (DVA) incidents (standard, medium and high as informed by the DASH assessment) in Leeds, in the last 24 hours, where a child is present. This information will be shared with a safeguarding lead in the educational setting by means of a telephone call.

West Yorkshire Police will provide a daily download of all DVA incidents from the last 24 hours to Leeds Council Contact Centre Staff prior to 8am. These staff will then interrogate Synergy (computer system) to establish the educational setting for the child and make the telephone call to the Safeguarding Lead prior to 9am.

Safeguarding Leads within the educational setting should consider any appropriate accommodations within the education day to lessen the impact and to support the child if they need it.

The information shared will be only that which is required to safeguard children including:

- date and time of incident
- brief circumstances
- police action if appropriate

A database of all Safeguarding Leads is reviewed regularly.

*What will be disclosed?*

Details collated with respect to the child or young person will include their name, age, date of birth, home address and educational setting attended. The educational setting will be told the time / date / location of the incident, the parties involved in the incident (including their relationship to the child), and the child's involvement in the incident.

*How will it be disclosed and when?*

This information will be disseminated from the Council to a named Safeguarding Lead within the educational centre via telephone conversation prior to 9am. Where the Safeguarding Lead is not available a message will be left with the educational setting that there is a notification. A log will be kept by the Front Door Safeguarding Hub on an excel spreadsheet detailing log number / educational setting / Safeguarding Lead / date of notification.

Incidents occurring on Friday, Saturday or Sunday will be reported to the educational setting on Monday morning. The aim of the notification process is to provide support in the period immediately following the incident. However, consideration will be given on a case by case basis with regards to reporting incidents occurring during the holiday periods when a child returns to the educational setting.

This process does not replace or supersede existing protocols, or singularly address child welfare. The Process should always be followed in conjunction with the current safeguarding procedures and practitioners guidelines and is designed to reinforce safeguarding and ensure children's well-being is of paramount importance.

#### **4. Legal Requirements**

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Section 11(2) of the Children Act, 2004 requires Local Authorities and the Police to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children. This enactment provides conditions under schedule 2 (5b) and schedule 3 (7(1) (b) of the Data Protection Act 1998 by which personal and sensitive personal data may be lawfully shared.

Personal data shared must be proportionate, necessary but not excessive, and must be balanced with the consideration of privacy rights under the Human Rights Act. It must take into account any duty of confidentiality owed. A public interest in disclosure must outweigh an individual's right to privacy.

It is recognised that the handling of such confidential, sensitive and often raw information needs to be dealt with in a way that is proportionate and appropriate to the needs of the

child or young person. To address this, "Safeguarding Leads" will be identified in each educational setting (a person with Child Protection training, usually the Designated Child Protection Officer (DCPO) / Head Teacher). The notification logs will then be stored within the child protection files.

The Safeguarding Lead will be the person available each day to receive the details of the incident and assess the type of support needed for the child. The Front Door Safeguarding Hub will hold a database of all the Safeguarding Leads in the Leeds area.

## **5. Roles and Responsibilities**

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### **West Yorkshire Police**

West Yorkshire Police will provide a daily download of all DVA incidents from the last 24 hours to Leeds Council Contact Centre Staff prior to 8am.

### **Front Door Safeguarding Hub**

Front Door Safeguarding Hub staff will collate all of the information in relation to the DVA incident in order to make the notification.

Front Door Safeguarding Hub staff will use internal computer systems to establish the educational setting the child(ren) attend and provide them with the notification prior to 9.00am.

Front Door Safeguarding Hub staff to maintain a record of all notifications detailing incident number, educational setting, safeguarding lead to whom disseminated and date.

Front Door Safeguarding Hub staff will be available for designated officers to contact in order to respond to notifications or messages left in relation to a notification on a daily basis.

### **Educational Settings**

Leeds Joint Agency Protocol for Domestic Violence and Abuse: School and Higher Education Notifications requires an up to date database of trained Safeguarding Leads. This list will be maintained by Education and Early Years Safeguarding Team and the Front Door Safeguarding Hub. Each educational setting will need to ensure that there is a sufficiently trained deputy to receive the information in their absence (see Appendix 2). Where no Safeguarding Lead is available a message will be left with the educational setting that there is a notification. An email address is essential and any changes to the Safeguarding Leads database must be forwarded to the Front Door Safeguarding Hub as soon as practicable.

Educational settings must also make certain that there is an open phone line or appropriate mobile number as a contact for the Front Door Safeguarding Hub staff to utilise.

Educational settings must record the information that they receive from the Front Door Safeguarding Hub on an incident form, which must be retained and stored utilising the current process used to store child protection paperwork within the educational settings. Educational settings need to be aware that in the event of any Domestic Homicide Reviews, Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews or Safeguarding Adult Reviews the documents may be required for disclosure purposes.

It is anticipated that all state and independent schools, academies and alternative education providers (AEP) will participate in the notification process.

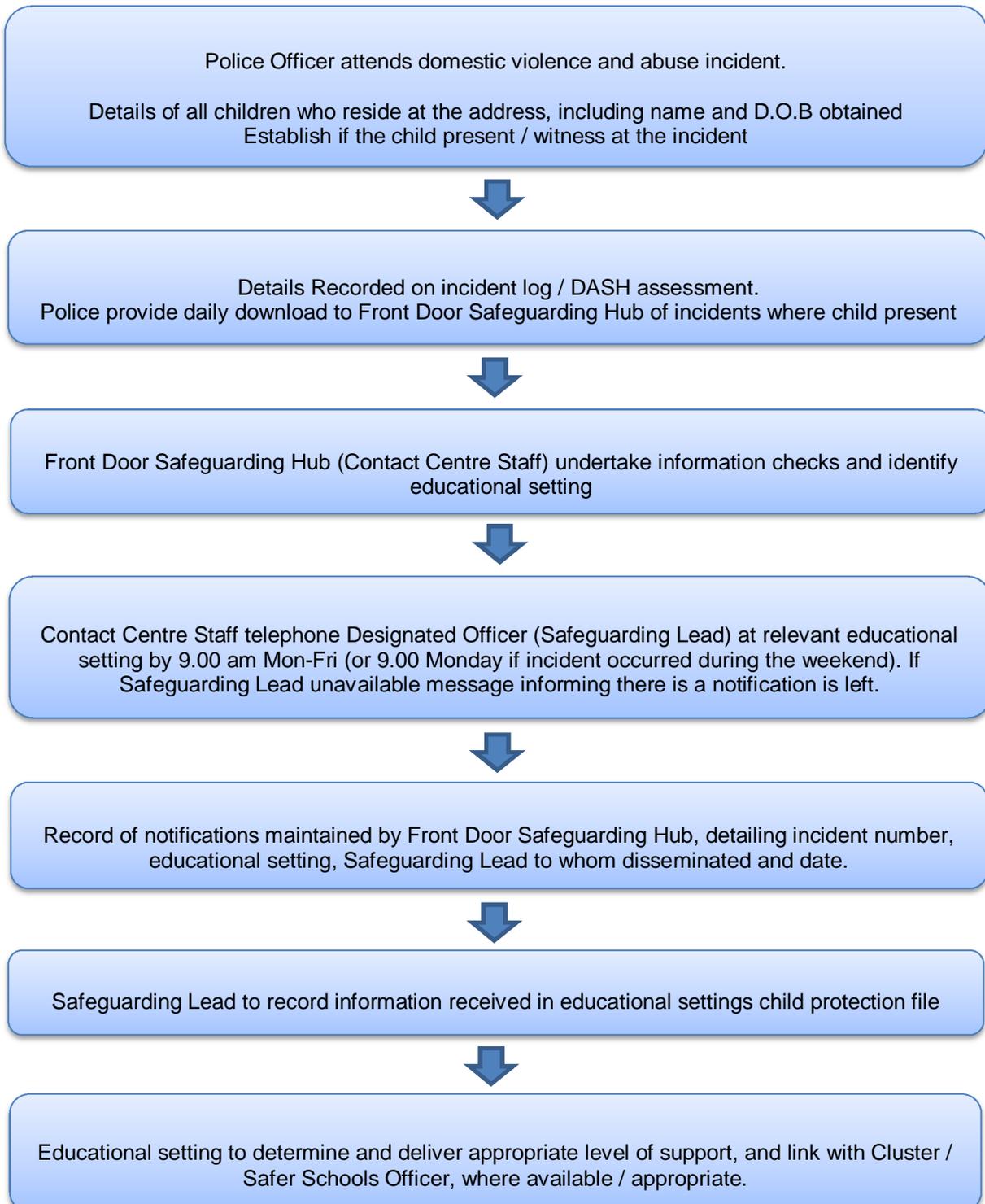
## **6. Cross Border Considerations**

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Where a child or young person is educated in a neighbouring borough, which is part of the Leeds Police area, information will be shared across geographical boundaries. Incidents occurring in other force areas or children accommodated in educational settings outside the Leeds area are not covered by this protocol. Where safeguarding concerns are identified for children this will need to be managed within existing protocols.

### **Notification Process for Schools and Higher Education Establishments for DVA Incidents**

This process intends to provide early information to schools and higher education establishments (educational statements) where their pupils have been present / witnessed an incident of domestic violence and abuse, where police attended. It does not replace existing child protection / safeguarding arrangements. Educational settings will still receive safeguarding notifications through existing routes and arrangements



### Officer Training: Preparing for DVA Notification Checklist

**The DVA Notification Process aims to give your educational setting a call before 09:00hrs on the first morning after police have attended a domestic violence incident where children are present.**

The checklist and prompts allow the Safeguarding Lead in each educational setting to prepare for a DVA Notification.

1. Information from FDSH phone call and educational setting intelligence

Check child protection records, check with class teacher for recent concerns.

Brief appropriate staff on notification call received and Safeguarding Leads decision about type of support to provide.

Initial Support ideas: breakfast, uniform, meet and greet, silent support, homework, scripts, quiet space, peer support, helping children talk, what to say if they disclose.

2. Consider referral to support services (or Social Care as ideas)

Who is the Officer that will receive the call?

If the Officer is not available before 09:00 who is the deputy?

What is the contact number? A mobile can be better because it shows a missed notification call.

If the main educational setting number is used, office staff should be briefed to understand the importance of a notification call.

How will you record the information? (Information sheet template provided) Where is it kept?

Does the Officer have access to Child Protection records?

Inform parents of educational settings participation in Notification process (see sample letter) "as part of the project, school will be notified by police if they attend..." "When this happens we will ..." "include the information in safeguarding policy, prospectus, and web site.

Staff training, role in signposting and parent self-referral.

Tell pupils of the educational settings involvement, website, newsletters etc.

3. How does this fit in with your educational settings safeguarding policy?

4. Plan for child and family support

Consider Early Help Assessment.

File completed information sheet in CP records.

Following initial support consider educational setting based pastoral support, signposting to other agencies.

5. Review impact of actions, continue or change?

Educational settings internal monitoring arrangements.

Check on child and update incident log.

Consultation with pupils and parent.

Be prepared to come across situations and contexts which you could not have planned for.

Appendix 3

**Domestic Violence and Abuse Safeguarding Lead Responsibilities**

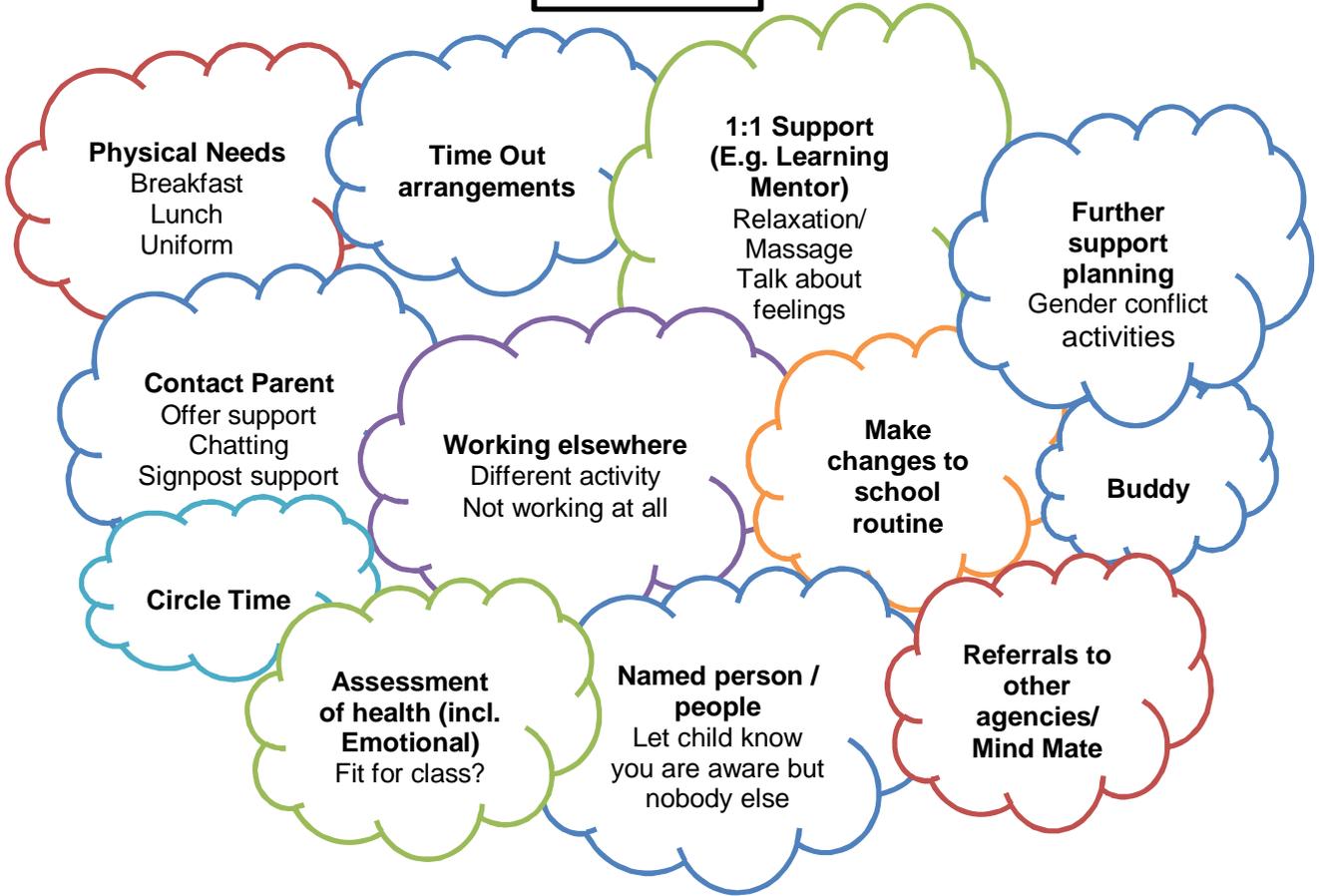
Name:

Educational Establishment:

Designation:

Responsibility	Achieved (date)
<p>The Safeguarding Lead must have attended the three day safeguarding training provided through the Education and Early Years Safeguarding Team</p> <p>Comment:</p>	
<p>The Safeguarding Lead must give up to date contact numbers to the FDSH / Education and Early Years Safeguarding Team.</p> <p>Comment:</p>	
<p>The DVA Notification File and record of calls must be kept in the same way as other Child Protection paperwork, in a secure and locked cabinet / drawer.</p> <p>Comment:</p>	
<p>The Safeguarding Lead must ensure that all teaching staff understands the confidential nature of any information passed to them and that this information must be treated in the same way as any other Child Protection information given by other partners such as Social Care.</p> <p>Comment:</p>	
<p>Office staff must be informed that when a DVA Notification call comes in then the Safeguarding Lead must be sought immediately.</p> <p>Comment:</p>	
<p>The educational setting must inform parents that the setting is part of the DVA Notification Process, using the basic template which can be amended to the settings individual requirements.</p> <p>Comment:</p>	
<p>The Safeguarding Lead must inform the Governing Body that the educational setting is part of the DVA Notification Process and the Governor with responsibility for Safeguarding should have a working knowledge of the project.</p> <p>Comment:</p>	
<p>The educational setting should consider including information about the DVA Notification Process in their prospectus, thus ensuring that all new parents are informed of involvement.</p> <p>Comment:</p>	
<p>The educational setting should consider whether the information about the DVA Notification process should form part of the settings website.</p> <p>Comment:</p>	

**Overt Support**



**Silent Support**



**Sample Parent Letter**

Dear Parent / Carer,

Leeds Joint Agency Protocol for Domestic Violence and Abuse: School and Higher Education Notifications (DVA Notifications Process) has been established to support children who are resident in households where there are incidents of domestic violence and abuse. We know that children can be significantly physically or emotionally hurt by being either present in the house or directly witnessing an incident of domestic violence.

The DVA Notification Process has been designed to provide confidential notification to schools and higher education establishments on any incidents of domestic violence and abuse which occur within a child's household that might have an impact on a child whilst they are in school / higher education.

The process will ensure that a member of staff is trained to allow them to use the information that has been shared, in confidence, and ensure that the school / higher education establishment is able to make provision for possible difficulties experienced by children, or their families, who have been involved in or witnessed a domestic violence or abuse incident.

We are keen to offer the best support possible to our pupils and we believe this is going to be extremely beneficial for all those involved.

If you would like further support or information about domestic violence and abuse please go to [www.leedsdomesticviolenceandabuse.co.uk](http://www.leedsdomesticviolenceandabuse.co.uk)

Signed

Head teacher

Appendix 6

**Sample Educational Establishment Recording Template**

Police Reference Number		Date	
Child's name and date of birth			
Date and time of incident			
Circumstances of incident			
Additional information including other Operation Encompass calls			
Actions taken and Impact/ child's voice			

**Signatories to the Leeds Joint Agency Protocol for Domestic Violence and Abuse: School and Higher Education Notifications**



Signed

**Name: Andrew Eastwood**

**Title: Head of Service Learning Improvement**

**Children's Services**



Signed

**Name: Samantha Millar**

**Title: Superintendent Safer Leeds**

Signed 

**Name: Lee Hemsworth**

**Title: Chief Officer Citizens and Communities**