Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust

Domestic Abuse Policy

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Our Christian Ethos and Values

All policies within the Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust (hereafter referred to as "the Trust"), whether relating to an individual academy or the whole Trust, will be written and implemented in line with our Christian ethos and values.

We have high ambition for all, and we truly value the wider educational experience.

We walk and talk our Christian values. We put people at the centre of the organisation and want to see them flourish and grow. Our schools are inclusive, welcoming those of all faiths and none.

Overall accountabilities and roles

The Trust has overall accountability for all its academies and staff. Through a Scheme of Delegation for each academy it sets out the responsibilities of the Trust, its Executive Officers, the Local Governing Body and the Principal / Headteacher. The Principal / Headteacher of each academy is responsible for the implementation of all policies of the Trust.

All employees of the Trust are subject to the Trust's policies.

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1. Policy Statement

1.1 The Trust recognises that some of our staff will be amongst those affected by domestic abuse either as: a survivor of domestic abuse, an individual who is currently living with domestic abuse, someone who has been impacted by a domestic abuse homicide or as an individual who perpetrates domestic abuse.

1.2 The Trust recognises that abuse is unacceptable and a breach of human rights since everyone has the right to live free from fear and abuse. The Trust is committed to developing a workplace culture which recognises domestic abuse.

1.3 The policy sets out the actions that will be taken in responding to staff who are experiencing domestic abuse and where there are concerns that any staff may be the perpetrator of domestic abuse.

1.4 1.5

1.7 For the purposes of the policy, this Trust recognises the Government's definition of domestic abuse: "Any incident of threatening behaviour, abuse or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality"

1.8 The Trust recognises that domestic abuse is rarely confined to a single incident and typically forms a pattern of coercive or controlling behaviour.

2. Scope of policy

2.1 This policy covers survivors of domestic abuse, current victims of domestic abuse, secondary victims of domestic abuse homicide and perpetrators of domestic abuse.

2.2 This policy covers all staff working at all levels and grades.

2.3 This policy does not form part of an employment contract and the Trust may update it at any time in consultation with Trade Unions.

2.5 The Trust also recognises that domestic abuse is experienced in same sex relationships, by men from women partners and by family members.

2.6 This policy is therefore applicable whatever the nature of the intimate relationship.

2.7 Under the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1992), this Trust recognises its legal responsibilities in promoting the welfare and safety of all our staff and non-school staff.

3. Confidentiality

3.1 Staff who disclose experiencing or perpetrating abuse can be assured that the information they provide is confidential and will not be shared with other staff and non-school staff without their permission.

3.2 There are, however, some circumstances in which confidentiality cannot be assured. These occur when there are concerns about children or vulnerable adults or where the employer needs to act to protect the safety of staff.

3.3 In circumstances where the Trust must breach confidentiality it will seek specialist advice before doing so. If it decides to proceed in breaching confidentiality after having taken advice, it will discuss with the staff why it is doing so, and it will seek the staff's agreement where possible.

3.4 As far as possible, information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.

3.5 Improper disclosure of information i.e. breaches of confidentiality by any staff will be taken seriously and may be subject to disciplinary action.

3.6 Staff experiencing domestic abuse may choose to be accompanied at meetings by a colleague, trade union representative or a friend.

4. Right to privacy

4.1 The Trust respects staff's right to privacy.

4.2 Whilst the Trust strongly encourages victims of domestic abuse to disclose domestic abuse for the safety of themselves and all those in the workplace, it does not force them to share this information with us if they do not want to.

4.3 The Trust does however require perpetrators of domestic abuse to declare any related prosecutions.

5. Anti-discrimination

5.1 The Trust will not discriminate against anyone who has been subjected to domestic abuse both in terms of current employment or future development.

5.2 If any staff member discloses domestic abuse during disciplinary procedures in relation to performance, absenteeism etc. this will be taken into account.

5.3 If it is felt that the issue can be resolved by addressing the support or safety needs of the staff the disciplinary process may be suspended.

6. Possible indicators of Domestic Abuse

6.1 The following indicators can be signs of possible domestic abuse, although it is important to note these can also be innocent in nature, or caused by other factors such as stress, physical illness, mental health problems or the effects of prescription drugs.

- Coming to work repeatedly with injuries;
- An unusual number of phone calls from home and strong reaction to the calls;
- Late for work and needing to leave early;
- Secretive about home life;
- Frequent absenteeism;
- Emotional reactions such as tearful, angry, depressed, nervous or confused;
- Partner exerts unusual amount of control over their life;
- Partner makes demands over their work schedule;
- May be extremely passive or aggressive;
- May seem chronically depressed or depressed in cycles;
- May isolate themselves at work.

6.2 These are just a few characteristics. People will react in different ways, so a more important sign is when an individual behaves in a way that is unusual for them.

7. Awareness raising and early intervention

7.1 This Trust will strive to create an environment which is alert to domestic abuse and in which staff feel supported to use confidential mechanisms to disclose experiencing abuse or perpetrating abuse.

7.2 All staff will be made aware of this policy through a range of methods including induction, training, appraisal, leaflets and posters.

8. Point of contact

8.1 The following have a critical role as members of staff able to offer appropriate responses to victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse:

- CEO/DCEO
- Central Senior Leadership Team
- Executive Headteacher/Headteacher/Principal
- Deputy Headteacher or another school based member of SLT
- Director of HR
- HR Officers
- Head of Safeguarding

8.2 The role of the individuals identified above is to:

- Be available and approachable;
- Listen, reassure and support;
- Respond in a sensitive and non-judgmental manner;
- Discuss how the Trust can best support the staff member;
- Ensure the staff member knows what options are available to them.

8.3 The Trust recognises that some staff may not wish to approach the Trust staff named above and may prefer to involve a third party such as a work colleague or trade union representative. They may also wish to approach members of the local Clergy, the police or LADO.

8.4 In such circumstances, the Trust will advise the staff of the difficulties which may arise if the manager is not aware of the relevant facts and circumstances (for instance if there is a potential health and safety issue or if other action is being taken on performance or absence monitoring).

8.5 The Trust recognises that developing a life free from abuse is a process not an event and this Trust will provide ongoing support for staff who disclose abuse.

8.6 The Trust will ensure that staff who are victims of domestic abuse are never disciplined because they refused or rejected support and assistance.

9. Training

9.1 The Trust is committed to training all line managers on the issue of domestic abuse.

9.2 In addition to specific training courses on the issue, it will be integrated into other relevant training courses e.g. performance management.

9.3 As a minimum, line managers will be trained to:

- Identify if any staff are experiencing difficulties because of domestic abuse;
- Provide initial support - be clear about available workplace support;
- Discuss how the Trust can contribute to safety planning;
- Signpost/offer referrals to other organisations;
- Understand that they are not counsellors.

10. Role of colleagues

10.1 The Trust encourages all staff to report if they suspect a colleague is experiencing or perpetrating abuse.

10.2 Staff should speak to their line manager about their concerns in confidence. In dealing with a disclosure from a colleague, employers should ensure that the person is made aware of this policy and that there is internal and external support available. The line manager should seek advice from the HR team where the partner of a member of staff is the alleged perpetrator.

10.3 Encourage them to talk to access internal and external support as detailed in section 11.

10.4 Support for survivors of domestic abuse, victims of domestic abuse, staff affected by domestic abuse homicide and staff who are concerned about their abusive behaviour working for the Trust do not have to keep their experience to themselves; there is always help and support available.

11. Internal and external support

11.1 Sources to help and support staff and managers can be found below:

- Requests for time off;

Use of Trust phones for staff in needs of using communication methods outside of the control of the alleged perpetrator;

- Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) which provides 24/7 confidential support, advice and guidance including financial advice and support from **Spectrum Life**
- Access to the HR Team (DoNESC);
- the Corporate Alliance against Domestic Abuse, a nationally recognised membership charity working with employers to lessen the impact of domestic abuse in the workplace;

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- The National Domestic Abuse Helpline, which provides advice for those experiencing domestic abuse;
- The Freephone 24 Hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline, run in partnership between Women's Aid and Refuge. Freephone: 0808 2000 247 www.nationaldomesticabusehelpline.org.uk
- ManKind: advice and support for men experiencing domestic abuse. Helpline (weekdays - 10am-4pm) 01823 334244 www.mankind.org.uk/help-for-victims
- Respect: provide a confidential helpline, email and webchat service for perpetrators of domestic abuse looking for help to stop. They help male and female perpetrators, in heterosexual or same-sex relationships. Partners or ex partners of perpetrators, as well as concerned friends and family members and Frontline Workers are also welcome to contact **Respect | Home**

12. Safety planning

12.1 The Trust will prioritise the safety of the staff member if they make it known that they are experiencing domestic abuse.

12.2 When a staff member discloses domestic abuse, the Trust will work with the staff member and a specialist agency (with the staff members consent) to identify what actions can be taken to increase their personal safety as well as address any risks there may be to colleagues.

12.3 A workplace risk assessment should be carried out by the nominated officer, in discussion with the staff and the People Team on the most how best to effectively support the individual.

13. Perpetrators of domestic abuse

13.1 Domestic abuse perpetrated by a staff member will not be condoned under any circumstances nor will it be treated as a purely private matter.

13.2 The Trust recognises that it has a role in encouraging and supporting staff to address violent and abusive behaviour of all kinds.

13.3 If a staff member approaches the Trust about their abusive behaviour, the trust will provide information about the services and support available to them.

13.4 The Trust will treat any allegation, disclosure or conviction of a domestic abuse related offence on a case-by-case basis with the aim of reducing risk and supporting change.

13.5 The Trust may view the use of abuse and abusive behaviour by a staff member, wherever this occurs, as a breach of the Code of Conduct for disciplinary purposes.

13.6 The Trusts Code of Conduct is intended to inform all staff and non-school staff, irrespective of grade, of the standards of conduct expected of them. It identifies a set of principles governing behaviour by which all staff are expected to abide. Staff are expected at all times to present high standards of personal integrity and conduct that will not reflect adversely on the Trust and its reputation.

13.7 The Trusts Code of Conduct may be applicable in cases where a staff member has/or is alleged to have:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed or threatened his/her/their partner or ex-partner;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against his/her/their partner;
- Had an allegation of domestic abuse made against him/her/them;
- Presented concerns about their behaviour within an intimate relationship.

13.8 The Trust is committed to ensuring that:

- Allegations will be dealt with fairly and in a way that provides support for the person who is the subject of the allegation or disclosure;
- All staff will receive guidance and support;
- Confidentiality will, wherever possible, be maintained and information restricted only to those who have a need-to-know;
- Investigations will be sufficiently independent ;
- All cases will be dealt with quickly avoiding unnecessary delays;
- All efforts will be made to resolve the matter as soon as possible (preferably within 4 – 6 weeks), although some cases will take longer because of their nature or complexity.

NOTE: This policy is intended to be safety focussed and supportive rather than punitive.

13.9 The accused staff member will be:

- Treated fairly and honestly;
- Helped to understand the concerns expressed and processes involved;
- Kept informed of the progress and outcome of any investigation and the implications for any disciplinary process;
- Advised to contact their union or professional organisations.
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13.10 There are several potential strands in the consideration of an allegation:

1. A police investigation of a possible criminal offence
2. Disciplinary action by the Trust (refer to point 5 below in relation to suspension from duty)
3. Providing specialist, safety-focused counselling
4. Identifying risk
5. The Trust will have a duty to determine whether there is transferable risk due to the allegations raised and undertake complete a suspension risk assessment in accordance with the Trust's disciplinary procedure, if there is deemed to be transferable risk to other employees or pupils. Advice will be sought from the HR Team and Head of Safeguarding. Any suspension would follow the process outlined in the Trust's Disciplinary Policy.
6. The Trust will determine whether a referral to LADO is required, LADO will make a decision as to whether they need to make a referral to Social Care.

13.11 Any staff who is responsible for giving advice or support to those experiencing domestic abuse needs to be particularly aware of the potential consequences if they are found to be perpetrators.

13.12 If a colleague is found to be assisting an abuser in perpetrating the abuse, for example, by giving them access to facilities such as telephones, e-mail or social media then they will be seen as having committed a disciplinary offence.

13.13 If it becomes evident that a staff member has made a malicious allegation that another staff member is perpetrating abuse then this will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence and action will be taken.

14. If the victim of the perpetrator works in the same school

14.1 In cases where both the victim and the perpetrator of domestic abuse work in the same school, the Trust will take appropriate action on a case-by-case basis.

14.2 Action may also need to be taken to minimise the potential for the perpetrator to use their position or work resources to find out details about the whereabouts of the victim.

14.3 This may include a change of duties for one or both staff members or withdrawing the perpetrators access to certain IT access.

14.4. The Trust will have a duty to determine whether due to the allegations raised undertake complete a suspension risk assessment in accordance with the Trust's disciplinary procedure, if there is deemed to be transferable risk to, the victim, other employees or pupils. Advice will be sought from the HR Team and Head of Safeguarding. Any suspension would follow the process outlined in the Trust's Disciplinary Policy.

15. Associated Policies

15.1 All of the Trust's People policies and procedures have been reviewed to ensure they complement and do not restrict the provisions outlined in this policy.

15.2 Where appropriate, the guidance which accompanies this policy will direct the person using the policy to other relevant policies and procedures for example:

- Grievance Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Code of Conduct