



Domestic Violence Policy

Academic Year 2018 – 20

" There is no acceptable form of violence in families. When it does occur children are always victims. Their lives are damaged by the experience of the violence in their family. Schools are uniquely placed to see some of the symptoms and effects of violence and to mobilise support for children. "

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is:

- To define Domestic Violence and how it affects young people
- To provide information of the signs to be aware of that might indicate domestic abuse in the home.
- To raise awareness and understanding of the needs of children living with or who have experienced domestic violence.
- To secure school attendance and achievement.
- To promote social inclusion and equal opportunities
- To develop a consistent approach and good practice at Bromley Pensnett Primary school with reference to our child protection policy.

This policy is intended to be a straightforward reference point and practical tool particularly for the designated teacher/person responsible for child protection, support staff, teachers and Special Education Needs Co-ordinator who come into contact with children and parents who might be affected by domestic abuse.

Definition of Domestic Violence

“Domestic violence/ abuse is the use, attempt, or threat of violence-whether physical, emotional, sexual, mental or economic, within an intimate or family relationship. Domestic violence/abuse forms a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour.”

Schools are in a privileged position to identify those who may be experiencing domestic violence/abuse, both at home and within their own relationships. They are key to raising the issue of domestic abuse in a safe and structured environment.

Bromley Pensnett Primay Primary school will:

- Be aware of the possible signs that may help to identify the signs of abuse
- Support children at our school to seek help and safety
- Model and promote healthy, non-violent relationships through our PSHE curriculum
- Safeguard children and young people from the harm caused by domestic violence/abuse
(Children’s Act, 2004)

The Impact of domestic violence on the child

- Children often see school as a safe retreat from problems at home or alternatively feel the need to not attend school through a perceived need for them to be at home to protect abused parents or siblings.
- Domestic violence can have a damaging effect on a child's health, educational attainment, emotional well-being and development. It is widely accepted that there are dramatic and serious effects of children witnessing domestic violence that often results in behavioural issues, absenteeism, ill health, bullying, anti-social behaviour, drug and alcohol misuse, self harm, eating disorders and psychosocial impacts.
- Children and young people may not only be affected by Domestic Violence between their parents, but as they begin to develop their own intimate relationships they may also perpetrate or become victims of Domestic Violence themselves.

Child Protection and Domestic Violence

The needs of the child can be overlooked in cases of Domestic Violence, as the primary target of the abuse is an adult. However, it is not uncommon for a perpetrator to mistreat the child as part of the abuse against the mother. There is increasing evidence to show that children living with Domestic Violence are at risk of physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Prolonged and regular exposure to Domestic Violence can have a serious impact on a child's development and emotional well being, despite the best efforts of the victim-parent to protect the child.

Children Witnessing Domestic Violence

Witnessing violence may have a detrimental impact on the child concerned. Children are not merely passive bystanders to Domestic Violence but will act and make choices in order to cope with and improve their situation. A child may be drawn into colluding with both of the adults in order to keep the violence secret as far as possible, thereby serving to deny the harm that is being done and the fear the child is experiencing as well as protecting the violent partner and isolating and confusing the child. The experience of domestic violence can have long lasting effects on self esteem, ability to form satisfying relationships and general mental health.

Signs to look out for in children between the ages of 5-16

School aged children (5-16) may:

- Be engaging in risk-taking behaviours
- Be withdrawn
- Have increased impulsive & aggressive behaviours
- Be exhausted and having sleep difficulties
- Be experiencing sadness, depression and mood swings
- Have a decline in school performance
- Have high non-attendance
- Not be doing their homework
- Have problems with concentration & attention
- Be anxious to leave parent at home
- Be being bullied or bullying
- Have low self esteem & therefore risk associated with this (self harm, substance misuse etc)
- Have no hopes or ambitions
- Be isolated; not many friends
- Be throwing themselves into school work as an escape from home life
- Not be allowed to attend clubs or local groups
- Be unable to have school friends visit them at home
- Have limited money for food/schools items.

What Bromley Pensnett Primary school will do:

In a whole school approach we will:

- Reflect on the Christian ethos and values of the school
- Review relevant Child protection and safeguarding policies and practise
- Provide whole school training on child protection
- Support and train key staff e.g. designated child protection lead
- Ensure that child protection procedures are followed.
- Provide information and advice for parents.
- Record domestic violence incidents.
- Make the most of curriculum opportunities with a focus on emotional literacy, developing and maintaining positive relationships, managing conflict, bullying as these will all contribute to work on domestic violence.

(The National Curriculum PSHE framework provides an overall guide and the SEAL materials from the Primary Strategy are a rich resource for work on feelings, relationships, getting on and falling out

and acceptable/unacceptable behaviours. Opportunities for the development of these themes can be across the curriculum e.g. English, Drama, Circle Time, RE, Art, ICT, PSHE and Citizenship.)

Procedure

In all cases where domestic abuse in the home is suspected, teachers and other members of staff should report the information to the DSL.

The Role of the DSL

After a member of staff reports a case of suspected domestic violence in the home the DSL will decide on the appropriate action to be taken. Reference will always be made to the school's child protection policy regarding emergency or non emergency situations, record keeping, and distribution of information to the relevant agency (First Point)

Governors

Governors will not be told specific details about cases but regular liaison will take place between the Head and Child Protection Governor and about issues arising. The Head will provide child protection statistics once a year to the FGB, in the annual safeguarding report.

We have carefully considered during the writing of this policy the potential impact of equality opportunities.

To be read in conjunction with the following document:

Child Protection Policy

For use – 18-20