

Personal Safety & Support



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Version	Date	Detail	Author
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1. Foreword

This policy has been developed following consultation with recognised trade unions and professional associations and reflects good employment practice within maintained schools and traded services. It has been informed by national guidance and by best practice within the education sector. I am pleased to confirm that it was agreed by the Schools' Joint Consultative Committee at its meeting in June 2026.

The policy is recommended for adoption by the Governing Boards of maintained schools where the Local Authority is the employer, and by those Academies, Aided and Foundation Schools which purchase the Schools' HR Advisory Service.

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that staff experiencing personal safety concerns are supported appropriately, sensitively and consistently at work.

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2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out how the school will support employees who are experiencing domestic abuse, stalking, harassment or other serious personal safety concerns that may affect their wellbeing, safety or ability to attend or perform at work.

This policy is intended to operate **alongside**, and not replace, existing employment policies including management of sickness absence, flexible working arrangements, etc. (see section 16). It provides a framework for identifying support, applying flexibility and ensuring appropriate responses where personal safety issues intersect with the workplace.

3. Context

The school recognises its duty of care to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of employees as part of the employment relationship. Personal safety concerns, including domestic abuse, may impact on an individual's physical safety, mental health, attendance, or performance at work.

Legal and statutory

Domestic abuse is recognised in law as a serious crime and a workplace issue. For the purposes of this policy, domestic abuse is understood to mean:

“Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (including psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional abuse) between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.”

The school has duties under health and safety, equality and safeguarding legislation to take reasonable steps to protect employees from harm and to provide a safe working environment. This policy supports those duties by setting out a framework for support, risk management and appropriate response where personal safety concerns intersect with the workplace.

This policy also complements statutory safeguarding guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), recognising that personal safety concerns affecting staff may, in some circumstances, have implications for safeguarding responsibilities.

The workplace can be a place of safety, stability and support for employees experiencing difficult personal circumstances. This policy reflects the school’s commitment to providing a supportive, inclusive and non-judgemental working environment, while balancing operational needs and statutory responsibilities.

4. Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- provide a clear and supportive framework for responding to personal safety concerns affecting staff
- promote early, appropriate and compassionate support
- reduce stigma and encourage employees to seek help where needed
- support managers in responding consistently and appropriately
- ensure links to existing policies are clear and understood
- maintain confidentiality while managing risk effectively

5. Principles

Supportive approach: Employees will be treated with empathy, dignity and respect.

Safety first: The safety and wellbeing of staff and others will be a key consideration in decision-making.

Confidentiality: Information will be handled sensitively and shared only on a need-to-know basis.

Choice and control: Employees are not required to disclose personal circumstances and will be supported to make informed choices about what support they access.

Consistency and fairness: Managers will apply this policy in line with other employment policies and seek advice where needed.

Fair and informed decision-making: Managers will be mindful of the potential for bias and will take reasonable steps to ensure that decisions are objective, consistent and based on the information available.

6. Recognising Concerns and Early Support

Personal safety concerns may affect employees in different ways, and individuals may not choose to disclose personal circumstances directly. Changes in attendance, behaviour, wellbeing or performance may sometimes indicate that an employee is experiencing difficulties outside work.

Managers should respond with sensitivity and care where they notice such changes, offering a supportive opportunity for discussion rather than making assumptions. Any conversations should remain voluntary, non-judgemental and focused on identifying appropriate workplace support.

7. Domestic Abuse and Violence

Domestic abuse can take many forms and may include physical, emotional, psychological, financial or controlling behaviour by a partner, ex-partner or family member. It can affect employees of any gender and background.

Domestic abuse is recognised as a serious personal safety and wellbeing issue. Employees are not required to disclose abuse in order to access support; however, where a disclosure is made, it will be taken seriously and responded to sensitively.

The school will not tolerate abuse or violence and recognises that domestic abuse is a criminal matter. This policy focuses on support and safety, not investigation.

8. Stalking, Harassment and Coercive Control

Stalking, harassment and coercive control may occur inside or outside the workplace and may involve current or former partners or other individuals.

Where such behaviour affects an employee's safety at work, the school will take reasonable steps to assess risk and provide appropriate support. This may include workplace safety planning, adjustments to duties or working arrangements, or liaison with relevant professionals where appropriate.

9. Threats, Intimidation or Violence

In some circumstances, employees may experience threats, intimidation or violence from individuals unconnected to their role but whose behaviour creates personal safety concerns that extend into the workplace. This may include threats from former partners, family members, or members of the public connected to personal circumstances. Such experiences may also be connected to an employee's role i.e. from a parent or a student.

Where such concerns affect an employee's sense of safety at work, the school will take reasonable steps to provide support and consider appropriate measures to reduce risk. This may include adjustments to working arrangements, workplace risk assessment, agreed communication arrangements or liaison with relevant professionals where appropriate.

Employees are encouraged, but not required, to share concerns where they feel this may help the school to provide appropriate support. Responses will focus on safety and wellbeing rather than investigation.

10. Substance Use

Some employees may experience difficulties related to alcohol, prescription medication or other substances, which may affect their wellbeing, personal safety or ability to attend or perform at work. In some cases, substance use may be linked to experiences of trauma, domestic abuse or other personal safety concerns.

Where substance use is having an impact on an employee's wellbeing or safety, the school will seek to respond in a supportive and non-judgemental manner, focusing on early support and signposting rather than blame. Employees are encouraged, but not required, to discuss concerns with their manager, HR or trade union representative in order to explore appropriate support or workplace adjustments.

This policy does not replace existing policies relating to health and safety, conduct or capability. Where substance use creates immediate safety concerns, or where expected standards of conduct are affected, relevant employment policies may need to be considered alongside this supportive framework.

11. Other Serious Personal Safety Concerns

This policy may also apply to other serious personal safety concerns which significantly impact an employee's wellbeing or safety, including situations where risks arise outside the workplace but affect an employee at work. This may include, for example:

- threats or intimidation linked to relationship breakdown or personal circumstances
- honour-based abuse or forced marriage risk
- safeguarding-related personal risk
- online or digital harassment, including unwanted contact or misuse of personal information

Each situation will be considered individually, with a focus on support, safety and appropriate risk management. Advice will be sought as appropriate to ensure a proportionate and sensitive response.

Employees are encouraged, but not required, to raise concerns where they feel this may help the school to identify appropriate support.

12. Employees Whose Behaviour May Cause Harm

This section applies where an employee's conduct gives rise to workplace safeguarding, safety or potential criminal concerns.

Disclosures made in good faith under this policy about personal experiences of abuse or personal safety concerns will not, in itself, result in disciplinary action.

The school does not condone any form of abuse, violence or threatening behaviour. Where concerns arise that an employee's behaviour may pose a risk to others, these will be addressed under the appropriate employment, safeguarding or disciplinary procedures.

Where necessary, advice will be sought from HR to ensure that concerns are managed proportionately, safely and in line with statutory duties. This policy does not replace existing procedures for managing conduct, safeguarding or criminal matters.

13. Support at Work – Reasonable Adjustments

Support will normally be provided through flexibility and discretion within existing policies, including:

- management of sickness absence
- management of stress and wellbeing support
- authorised leave of absence
- flexible working arrangements

Reasonable adjustments may be considered where personal safety concerns are having an impact on an employee's wellbeing or ability to work. This may include, for example, the following types of support. These examples are illustrative and not exhaustive; any adjustments will depend on the individual circumstances and what is reasonable and practicable in each case.

Working arrangements and duties

- temporary or permanent changes to working hours, patterns (including later start and earlier finish), or location
- adjustments to duties to reduce risk or avoid contact with individuals of concern
- temporary adjustment of workload or performance expectations

Workplace safety and security

- a safe workplace within the school environment
- workplace risk assessments or safety planning
- agreed communication arrangements
- arrangements to manage or respond to unwanted contact in the workplace
- ensuring appropriate security measures, such as secure entry arrangements
- alerting relevant staff on a need-to-know basis to support safety arrangements
- reviewing how personal information is held and shared to reduce risk

Practical support and flexibility

- authorised time off for appointments, including medical, legal, housing or support services
- additional paid or unpaid leave, where appropriate, to support personal safety and wellbeing
- support with travel arrangements to and from work where there are safety concerns
- temporary changes to pay arrangements or access to financial support mechanisms in exceptional circumstances

Support and signposting

- access to a trusted contact or point of support within the workplace
- signposting or referral to external specialist support services

Any adjustments will be discussed with the employee, taking into account their individual circumstances, and will be reviewed as appropriate. Employees are not required to disclose detailed personal circumstances in order for support or adjustments to be considered.

Where personal safety concerns have a substantial or ongoing impact, consideration will be given to whether reasonable adjustments are appropriate in line with relevant employment and equality legislation, including the Equality Act 2010 where applicable.

Where there is concern about serious, escalating or ongoing risk to an employee's safety, the school may seek advice from the HR Advisory Service and relevant health and safety professionals, including Occupational Health. Appropriate steps may include workplace risk assessment, safety planning or liaison with external agencies, while remaining focused on support rather than investigation.

Where personal safety concerns are impacting attendance, conduct or performance, the school will normally take reasonable steps to explore supportive measures and adjustments before any consideration of formal absence management, capability or disciplinary procedures, unless there are immediate and serious safety concerns or other overriding factors.

14. Roles and Responsibilities

Employees:

Employees are encouraged, but not required, to speak to their line manager, Headteacher, HR or trade union representative if personal safety concerns are affecting their work. Employees may choose to be supported by a trade union representative at any stage, particularly where issues begin to affect attendance, conduct or employment status.

Managers and Headteachers:

Managers will be expected to respond sensitively, focus on support and safety, and seek advice where necessary. They are not expected to investigate or to provide specialist support.

HR Advisory Service:

The HR Advisory Service can provide advice and guidance on the application of this policy, including appropriate responses to disclosures, the use of reasonable adjustments, links to other support mechanisms, and situations where personal safety concerns may impact attendance, conduct or performance.

Health, Safety & Wellbeing / Occupational Health Service:

Health, Safety & Wellbeing and Occupational Health services can provide specialist advice on workplace risk assessment, health and safety considerations, and appropriate adjustments or support.

15. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Any disclosure under this policy will be handled in accordance with data protection requirements. Information will be shared only where necessary, for example:

- to manage serious risk
- to meet safeguarding or legal obligations
- with the employee's consent

Information will be handled in line with data protection principles, including lawfulness, necessity and data minimisation. Only relevant information will be recorded and retained, and access will be restricted to those who need it in order to provide appropriate support or manage risk.

Employees will not be required to disclose personal information beyond what they are comfortable sharing, except where legal or safeguarding duties apply. The purpose of any information shared will be explained clearly, and, wherever possible, discussion will take place with the employee before information is shared. Records relating to personal safety concerns will be kept confidential and in accordance with the school's data retention arrangements.

Safeguarding considerations

Where personal safety concerns give rise to safeguarding issues relating to children or vulnerable adults, the school's safeguarding procedures will apply. In such circumstances, information may need to be shared without consent in order to protect individuals from harm. Any such decisions will be handled sensitively and in line with statutory guidance.

The limits of confidentiality will be explained sensitively where they apply.

16. Links to Other Policies & Procedures

Whilst not exhaustive, this policy should be read alongside (where applicable):

- Management of sickness absence
 - Management of stress and wellbeing support
 - Disciplinary
 - Performance capability
 - Authorised leave of absence
 - Flexible working arrangements
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17. External Support and Signposting

Employees may wish to access specialist external support tailored to their individual circumstances, including confidential helplines, local authority services or support available through recognised trade unions. Information on appropriate national and local organisations can be obtained from HR or trade union representatives.

Managers can assist employees by signposting sensitively and without requiring disclosure or evidence in order to offer workplace support.
