



Rowan Education
Domestic Abuse Policy

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1. Policy Statement

Rowan Education Independent School (also referred to as 'the School' and meaning the proprietor/s and owners in their capacity as such and as employers) condemns domestic violence and recognises it is both a crime and unacceptable. We are committed to the welfare of our employees and seek to support and assist any employee who is experiencing problems related to domestic violence and abuse. We also seek to raise awareness of domestic violence and develop a workplace environment in which domestic violence is recognised as unacceptable and in which staff feel safe to disclose any concerns they have.

This Policy is also a point of reference for all employees who are involved in reports of domestic abuse in a work capacity. Employees can refer to this Policy for guidance purposes.

2. Introduction

This policy is to support Rowan Education in working towards a safer community. Schools and educational settings have a responsibility to respond to the safety and welfare of pupils and children they are working with and a duty to recognise that their employees may also be affected by domestic abuse.

3. Aims of the policy are:

- a. To demonstrate Rowan Education's commitment to, and support for, employees experiencing domestic violence, and send out a consistently strong message that domestic abuse will not be tolerated.
- b. To develop an effective and supportive response for all those affected by domestic abuse.
- c. To optimise the opportunity for disclosure of domestic abuse in a safe environment.
- d. To offer practical suggestions and signposting of further support available.
- e. To provide the Head with guidance on how to support employees affected by domestic abuse.

4. Who does this policy apply to?

This policy covers all school employees.

5. Definition of domestic abuse

The Home Office definition, in their [Statutory Guidance of July 2022](#), say the following:

- (1) This section defines “domestic abuse” for the purposes of this Act.
- (2) Behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is “domestic abuse” if—
 - (a) A and B are each aged 16 or over and are “personally connected” to each other, and
 - (b) the behaviour is abusive.
- (3) Behaviour is “abusive” if it consists of any of the following—
 - (a) physical or sexual abuse;
 - (b) violent or threatening behaviour;
 - (c) controlling or coercive behaviour;
 - (d) economic abuse (see subsection (4));
 - (e) psychological, emotional or other abuse;

and it does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

- (4) “Economic abuse” means any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on B’s ability to —
 - (a) acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or
 - (b) obtain goods or services.
- (5) For the purposes of this Act, A’s behaviour may be behaviour “towards” B despite the fact that it consists of conduct directed at another person (for example, B’s child).

N.B. Controlling behaviour is: 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 is: 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.”

6. The impact of domestic abuse in the workplace

It should be noted that there may be incidents which occur in the workplace or specifically affect the work of an employee.

Possible signs of domestic abuse include:

- Changes in behaviour, including uncharacteristic depression, anxiety, distraction or problems with concentration;
- Changes in the quality of work for no apparent reason;
- Arriving late or leaving early;
- Poor attendance or high presenteeism without an explanation;
- Needing regular time off for appointments;
- Inappropriate or excessive clothing.

7. The impact of domestic abuse on the employer

Some effects may include:

- Negative impact on productivity, performance and morale;
- Employee turnover, as employees may have to leave work or move away to escape abuse.

The School expects all employees to report their concerns if they suspect a colleague is experiencing or perpetrating abuse, and strive to create an environment in which such disclosures are fully facilitated. In the first instance, they should speak to the Head about their concerns in confidence. Alternatively they can ring the local Police on 101.

8. Confidentiality and the right to privacy

Employees who disclose that they are a victim of domestic abuse can be assured that the information they provide is confidential and will not be shared with other colleagues without their permission.

There are, however, some circumstances in which the employer's duty of care is the overriding factor, and confidentiality cannot be assured. This may occur when there are concerns regarding children, vulnerable adults or where the organisation is required to protect the safety of their employees. In these circumstances, the employee will be informed as to the reasons why confidentiality cannot be maintained. As far as possible, information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.

9. Reports or suspicions of domestic abuse

Any disclosures of domestic abuse can be made directly to the Head, and will be treated with confidentiality, unless in the Head's opinion to do so might put the employee's or any other individual's safety at risk. Such disclosures may be made to a colleague, but the recipient of such disclosure must make it clear that it will be conveyed to the Head. Suspicions of colleagues in the absence of specific disclosure should be addressed to the Head (or the Deputy in the Head's absence).

10. Support for employees

There are a number of ways in which employees experiencing domestic abuse can be supported by the school:

- Through offering practical support as indicated below;
- Raising awareness of the general issues;
- Signposting to an appropriate counselling support;
- Taking a clear anti-abuse stance against perpetrators.

It is essential that an environment is created and maintained such that employees feel able to disclose such personal information, and they are encouraged to discuss this and raise any concerns with the Head. However, if they feel unable to raise this with the Head, they may disclose to a colleague (on the understanding that this will then be disclosed to the Head) or via self-referral to specialist local support services (see Contacts, below).

11. Support for the Head

10.1 Victims

Identifying domestic abuse

Domestic abuse may not be disclosed easily or freely either by victims or (even less likely) perpetrators. There are a number of steps that can be taken to address suspicions of domestic abuse, including how to recognise the problem, respond, provide support, refer to the appropriate help and record the contact. This is referred to as the 'Four R's':

- **Recognise** that abuse is or may be occurring;
- **Respond** appropriately;
- **Refer** on to appropriate help;
- **Record** the details.

It is acknowledged that this is a difficult area to discuss and further guidance is available to support the Head from various resources and professionals.

Detailed records should be kept of all discussions and actions agreed. All records should be treated 'strictly confidential'.

10.1.2 Support available

The Head's role is not to deal with the abuse itself, but to make it clear that employees will be supported and outline what help is available. The Head may consider offering a broad range of practical support to an employee experiencing domestic abuse including:

- Time off for relevant appointments, for example with support agencies, solicitors, to rearrange housing or childcare, and for court appointments;
- Special leave provisions (e.g. compassionate leave or unpaid leave);
- Temporary or permanent changes to working times and patterns using existing procedures, i.e. flexible working;
- Measures to ensure a safe working environment, for example blocking emails/screening telephone calls; alerting reception if the perpetrator is known to come to the workplace; and checking arrangements are in place for safely travelling to and from work;
- Advising colleagues on a need-to-know basis and agreeing a response if the perpetrator contacts the workplace;
- Obtaining a photograph of the perpetrator and making staff aware;
- Reviewing the security of personal information held, such as temporary or new address and bank details.

The right of employees to make their own decisions regarding the course of action at every stage will be respected.

12. Recording of information

Information recorded relating to the above on any individual either attending or working at the school will be stored in a safe and secure manner.

13. Training

All employees are advised to complete domestic abuse awareness training at some level. Training is available on Educare (additional to Safeguarding Training) and employees are encouraged to access this and update themselves at least every three years.

14. Perpetrators who are also employees

Domestic abuse found to have been perpetrated by employees will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Employees should be aware that domestic

abuse is a serious matter, with profound consequences for all, that can also lead to criminal convictions. Furthermore, such conduct outside of work may lead to disciplinary action being taken against an employee, up to and including dismissal, depending on the circumstances in line with the school's Staff Code of Conduct. However, we also recognise that we have a role in encouraging and supporting perpetrators to address violent and abusive behaviour of all kinds, and we will provide such support as and when is necessary and practicable, notwithstanding the above comments.

15. Key Contacts and resources

Service	Contact details
<u>The Blue Door, Scunthorpe and North Lincolnshire</u> - Domestic and Sexual Abuse Support	Laneham St, Scunthorpe DN15 6PB. Tel: 01724 841 947 or email: info@thebluedoor.org Freephone 0800 197 47 87
North Lincs Women's Refuge (no website)	01724 289299
UK Refuge – National Domestic Abuse Helpline (24 hr)	0808 2000 247
Childline	0800 11 11
Citizens Advice	01724 870941
North Lincolnshire Council Housing Advice Team	01724 297777
Humberside Police (Non Emergency)	101
NHS Direct	111
Samaritans	01724 860000
We Are With You (Substance Misuse 24 Hour Helpline)	0808 143 0640
Humberside Victim Support	0800 368 7586, or 08 08 16 89 111 (24 hrs)