



Derby and Derbyshire Education Providers Domestic Abuse Notifications - Stopping Domestic Abuse Together (SDAT) Guidance

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To be read in conjunction with the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Procedures				
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Derby and Derbyshire Education Providers Domestic Abuse Notifications - Stopping Domestic Abuse Together (SDAT) Guidance

1. Introduction

Domestic Abuse notifications to schools, also known as Stopping Domestic Abuse Together (SDAT), is the local Derby and Derbyshire version of a national initiative called [Operation Encompass](#). It follows the same principles as Operation Encompass; however, it is implemented differently.

Derbyshire Constabulary lead on Domestic Abuse Notifications/Stopping Domestic Abuse Together (SDAT) which was rolled out to all schools in Derby and Derbyshire in 2018.

This guidance must be read in conjunction with the [Derby and Derbyshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Children](#) procedures.

2. What are Domestic Abuse Notifications (SDAT)?

Domestic abuse notifications are sent from Derbyshire constabulary to schools in Derby and Derbyshire. They are an early notification system to schools to quickly notify them of any incidents of domestic abuse where the Police have attended a household where statutory school aged children live.

The notifications are designed to:

- Provide a link between a statutory school aged child or young person's lived home experience and their experience in school when domestic abuse is a current issue
- Help ensure that schools can effectively support and respond to children and young people's needs in the education setting
- Promote effective communications between Police, Children's Services and Schools where there has been a domestic abuse incident

3. Role of the Police

When the police are called out to a domestic abuse incident or are informed of an incident at a later date, the Police Officer will complete a Public Protection Notice (PPN) or a Domestic Abuse, Stalking, Harassment and Honour based violence risk identification checklist (DASH) gathering information about the incident and its seriousness. They will also check if there are children living in or associated with the household and if they are statutory school age, which setting they attend. If a child or young person is present within the household, the Police Officer will briefly assess the impact on the child/young person at the time of the incident; this will be included in any information passed onto Children's Services.

If immediate safeguarding concerns are identified by the police, then action will be taken to protect the child/young person. Children's Services will be informed as a matter of urgency to work together jointly to decide what action is needed.

If there is any difficulty identifying the school or the parent/carers refuse to confirm the school, this will be alerted to the Police Safeguarding Co-ordination Hub (SCH) who will check with Children's Services.

Completion of the PPN/DASH will automatically trigger a domestic abuse notification to the child's school where details have successfully been obtained. If siblings attend different schools, each school will receive the notification.

Children's Services and Health may also receive information from the police based on the completed PPN/DASH.

4. Police notifications to schools

All education providers (including maintained schools, academies, independent schools and colleges) will receive domestic abuse notifications via their designated secure safeguarding email address.

Notifications are on statutory school aged children only, therefore early years settings and maintained nurseries aren't eligible to receive them.

The school will be told that a domestic abuse incident has occurred – no detail will be provided about the risk level of the incident. The information will include:

- The date and time of the incident
- The location of the incident
- The child's name and date of birth
- The alleged perpetrator of the incident
- The alleged victim of the incident
- If a welfare check on the child was made; this means that the child was seen by the police. If a welfare check was not made this means the child wasn't seen by the police.

The risk level of the incident isn't shared as this is sensitive information which relates to the adults (including 16 and 17 year olds) who were involved. Abuse towards parents/carers by young people under the age of 16 are not notified to schools using the domestic abuse notification system. They are referred directly to Children's Services, who will then liaise with the young person's school as appropriate.

5. Police notifications to Children's Services

The police triage all domestic abuse incidents and where there is a concern about a child/young person, the PPN/DASH Risk Identification Checklist form is sent to Children's Services.

If there are concerns about a risk of serious harm Children's Services will co-ordinate a strategy meeting involving all relevant agencies, including schools, to discuss next steps. See [Child Protection Section 47 Enquiries](#) procedure for information on strategy discussions and meetings.

All cases that are open to localities are notified of the incident as soon as they are received and passed to the principal allocated worker.

Unknown and closed cases are screened by Senior Practitioner/Social Worker led processes using the [DDSCP Threshold document](#), to agree to thresholds, co-ordinate interventions and information sharing.

6. The role of the school

The school should ensure they have a designated secure safeguarding email address to receive domestic abuse notifications. This email address should only be accessible by staff who have responsibilities for safeguarding such as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), deputy DSL and other specific safeguarding staff. The inbox should be regularly monitored by staff responsible for safeguarding; this should be done by more than one individual. The school safeguarding email address must also be encrypted using transport layer security (TLS); you can find out more about TLS on the Government Digital Service, [Transport Layer Security \(TLS\) Guidance](#) webpage.

Notifications will continue to be sent to schools throughout school holidays and at weekends, so that school staff can be made aware of any incidents and have that in mind when they support the child or young person on their return to school. Some schools may be able to respond and provide support out of school hours and during school holidays.

When a notification is received, the DSL should initially respond as they do in any situation where concerns are raised about a child or young person. They should consider:

- What is already known about the child/young person and their family?
- What is known about the child/young person when they arrived (or not) at school today?
- Who in the school needs to be informed? Only those staff who have a specific need to know about the incident will need to be told i.e., class/form teacher and relevant support staff.

Steps should be taken to observe the child/young person's well-being and how they are today. This should be done by the most appropriate member of staff who knows the child/young person, for example the class/form teacher, learning mentor, teaching assistant or the DSL/deputy DSL. In all cases the child/young person (and their parent/carer) should not be directly approached and asked about the incident, instead general observation, and enquiries about how they are should be made.

Discretion and sensitivity should be used at all times when you become aware that an incident has occurred. School staff should be mindful that it is likely that children/young people may have seen or heard the abusive episode, be used, or even involved in the abuse. Other children/young people may not be aware that the incident has taken place; particularly those who weren't in the household at the time the incident took place. It is probable that most children/young people, whether they were in the household at the time of the incident or not, will have sensed the tension in the build-up to the abuse and experienced the aftermath in some form. Even when the parents believe the children/young people were unaware of what was happening children/young people can often give detailed accounts of the events.

In all cases the school is expected to assess the presentation of the child/young person and what is known about their family and home life. Things to consider:

- How are they presenting physically and emotionally?
- Are there any changes in their behaviour?

- What is the possible impact on siblings/other children?

There may be times when the child or young person may initiate a conversation, this should be encouraged, and the child supported to share their experiences which can inform school and partner agencies decision making.

If the child/young person is not in school on the day of the notification, the DSL, and anyone else responsible for receiving the notification, should assess what they know about the child/young person at school and the explanation for why the child/young person is not in on that day. Schools should follow their attendance policies to agree any school-based actions and decide whether the absence raises concern that should be discussed with Children's Services. The [DDSCP Threshold document](#) can help all schools make a judgement about the child's level of needs, risks and the help required.

The [DVRIM](#) (Domestic Violence Risk Identification Matrix)¹ can help schools reflect on what they know and what they do not know and make a judgement about risk to the child or young person.

In all cases the school should consider what support they could offer the child or young person according to their individual needs. This could include ensuring their basic needs have been met (are they tired or hungry?) and considering if they are able to engage in learning or if they would benefit from positive play, nurture, or time out of the classroom.

Some children and young people may benefit from an early help assessment to address any emerging needs and co-ordinate support from a range of early help services. This will make sure that an in-depth understanding of the child and their family's needs and strengths are understood at the earliest opportunity. It also increases the likelihood that the most effective decisions are made to improve the situation for the child and their family. See [Providing Early Help](#) procedure.

If a school becomes concerned about what the child tells them and/or have any concerns that emerge from their assessment of a child or young person, they should use the DDSCP [Threshold Document](#) to support their decision making about the child's level of needs, risks and the help required and if felt necessary make a referral to Children's Services. See [Making a Referral to Social Care](#) procedure and [Domestic Abuse](#) procedure.

Where a school is unclear about the action they should take and wish to speak to a Social Worker they should contact:

- In Derbyshire - Starting Point Consultation and Advice Service for Professionals 01629 535353. The service operates Monday to Friday from 10am to 4pm
- In Derby City - Children's Services Professional Consultation Line 07812 300329. The service operates Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm

When a child or young person is already open to Children's Services and a domestic abuse notification has been received by the school, the school and the Early Help Worker or Social Worker need to make contact as soon as possible. Both should keep in regular contact.

¹ Please note this tool is currently under review for update by partner agencies.

7. Recording

The DSL or their deputy will need to record that the notification has been received in the child/young person's individual child protection / safeguarding file and chronology. Records should also include:

- Details of how the concern was followed up and resolved; and
- A note of any actions taken, decisions reached and the outcome, as well as a review of any progress made.

8. Developing a whole school approach to domestic abuse notifications

Schools are encouraged to communicate their commitment to domestic abuse notifications/ "Stopping domestic abuse together" on their website and through their usual communications to parents and carers. They should explain that if they receive a notification, they will routinely monitor the child's welfare and engage with partner agencies where required. This forms part of the school commitment to safeguarding all children and young people.

The school information sharing and privacy notice should incorporate domestic abuse notifications/ SDAT.

Schools should also consider how they will ensure that learners in their setting are aware of domestic abuse notifications to schools. Young people told the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership that:

- Most hadn't heard about domestic abuse notifications (SDAT)
- When they had, they thought it only addressed serious cases and some thought all teachers were told and this would be very embarrassing
- They wanted more information about SDAT especially that:
 - Notifications were on all incidents of domestic abuse, and they didn't include details of incidents, just that something had happened
 - Only safeguarding school staff received notifications
 - Children wouldn't automatically be taken away from their family
 - The aim was to support and help children
 - Children weren't to blame

It is also vital that all school staff should have an awareness of domestic abuse, it's impact on children and young people and school domestic abuse notifications/SDAT.

9. Further Information and Resources

Up to date information about the range of local domestic abuse services available is located on:

- Safer Derbyshire [domestic abuse](#) webpage, there is also a [Derbyshire Domestic Abuse Service Directory](#)
- Derby [city life links](#) – please note the Derby city council will be launching dedicated domestic abuse and the support services webpages during 2022. Please see www.derby.gov.uk

- Derbyshire constabulary - information and advice about domestic abuse [webpages](#)
- [Safer Derby City](#) - for information, advice and support for young people and parents who live, visit or go to school in Derby City

Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership ([DDSCP](#))

Key DDSCP supports to be aware of:

- Policy, procedures and guidance - [Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Procedures](#) to be used by all agencies whenever there are concerns about a child. Relevant procedures relating to domestic abuse are:
 - [Providing Early Help](#)
 - [Making a Referral to Social Care](#)
 - [Domestic Abuse](#)
- The procedures contain a [document library](#) with key protocols, guidance, assessment tools and briefing notes including:
 - Derby City and Derbyshire [Threshold](#) Document
 - Multi Agency [Dispute Resolution and Escalation](#) Policy and [template](#)
 - [Information Sharing Guidance for Practitioners](#)
 - [Assessment tools](#) – early help, DASH risk identification checklist, Domestic Violence Risk Identification Matrix (DVRIM), Graded Care Profile for neglect
 - DDSCP Briefing Note: [Updates to Domestic Abuse \(SDAT\) Notifications to Schools](#)
- Learning and Development – the DDSCP offers a range of multi-agency safeguarding training opportunities which includes Safeguarding Children and Domestic Abuse (level 3) multi-agency training. There is also a domestic abuse – and introduction (level 1) e-learning course. See DDSCP [training](#) page.

National

- [Women's Aid](#) – also has [The Hideout](#) a space for children and young people to help them understand domestic abuse, and how to take positive action if it's happening to you.
- [Refuge](#) – including the **national free 24 hour domestic abuse helpline: 0808 2000 247** or visit www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk (access live chat Mon-Fri 3-10pm). A BSL interpreter service is available Monday to Friday, 10am to 6pm. Refuge also facilitate a bespoke website about '[tech safety](#)', this is when someone uses technology to harm or control someone.
- [Men's Advice Line](#) - confidential help and support for men experiencing domestic violence from a partner, ex-partner or from other family members. Freephone 0808 801 0327
- [Safe Lives](#) - UK wide charity dedicated to ending domestic abuse

- Domestic Abuse Act: [Factsheet](#)
- NSPCC – [protecting children from domestic abuse](#)
- [Galop](#) – LGBT+ anti-violence charity. Includes **National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans+ Domestic Abuse Helpline 0800 999 5428**. Provides emotional and practical support for LGBT+ people experiencing domestic abuse.
- [Gov.uk](#) – how to get help for domestic abuse
- [Operation Encompass](#) – resources for schools which includes free advice from an Education Psychologist about how best to support children, call the OE Teachers' National Helpline on 0204 513 9990. Monday to Friday, 8am-1pm

Appendices A. Common Domestic Abuse Notification Issues and Questions

- **The school has received a notification, however the child is not known to the school**
The notification will include details/a link about how to report that the notification has been received in error. It is important that schools act quickly to report the error to ensure that the child/young person's school can be informed. Once this has been reported the information must be deleted.
- **The school safeguarding email address has changed**
The school should inform:
 - In Derby, the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership via ddscp@derby.gov.uk.
 - In Derbyshire, the school should inform the Child Protection Manager for Schools via CS.CPMSchools@derbyshire.gov.uk.
- **The school domestic abuse notification appears to have been delayed and was received by the school sometime after the incident itself**
Delays in notification can be caused by the initial notification going to another school. It is important that when a school receives a notification in error, they quickly address this. Another reason for an apparent delay is when a victim reports a domestic abuse incident to the police after it has taken place. This could be days, weeks, months or rarely years after the initial incident. On other occasions it may be unclear which school the child attends as the parents/carers have not provided the information.
- **When the school receives a domestic abuse notification, is it safe for the child or young person to go home?**
This is a multi-agency decision and is managed by the police and children's services who will liaise with the school as needed. If a child is at risk action will be taken by the police and children's services, however if the school has additional information in relation to the child's immediate safety they should liaise with children's services as a matter of urgency.
- **The school has been contacted by Children's Services and asked to progress an early help assessment. What information and support will the school receive to help them take the assessment forward? What happens if the family refuse an early help assessment?**
In Derbyshire, Starting Point would initially speak to the parents/carers to advise that the school had been asked to progress an early help assessment. Schools can request support from the [Transition Team](#).

In Derby, whilst completing an Early Help Assessment (EHA) schools can ask for support from an [Early Help Advisor](#). Social Care will provide the school with enough information about the domestic abuse incident and other relevant issues, to assist them in completing an EHA. On some occasions Social Care will also speak with the parent/s to gain consent for the completion of an EHA. If the family refuse an early help assessment, the school can notify Children's Services via the [online portal](#) or via Education Welfare. Schools can also seek the support of an [Early Help Advisor](#).

- **What happens if a child is educated at home or not on a school roll?**

The Police Officer will ensure that their Safeguarding Co-ordination Hub are alerted, they will then check with Children's Social Care.

Appendices B. Domestic Abuse Notifications Flowchart

