

When a **Child** discloses Domestic Violence



don't...

PANIC

Ignore what the child says

Offer total confidentiality, which you can't deliver because of child protection issues

Give confidential information to the abusing parent, especially home contact details

do...

Listen to what they have to say and take them seriously

Express that everybody deserves to feel safe, nobody deserves to be abused and that domestic violence is wrong and against the law

Tell them they are not alone, that many women and children experience domestic violence

Make it clear that the school is there to support them and their parent to be safe

Explain that there is support out there, and that you can give their parent this information
Bear in mind that some parents may not be entitled to benefits or legal aid, for example if they are asylum seekers and some parents may need specialist agencies offering translators – Women's Aid can refer you to appropriate services in the borough

Tell them they have a right to support for themselves. Explain that they can see a school counsellor if you have one or be referred to another agency that can help them, explain what help is available and ask them what help they would like. Explain exactly what will happen in the referral procedures

Explain that you understand that living with domestic violence can have lots of negative effects, including on their school life and work, stress that the school is aware of this and wants to help them manage their stressful situation, not blame or draw attention to them.
For example – they may not be able to get to school on time if they have fled violence to new accommodation further away, they may be absent to attend appointments, they may have difficulty concentrating if they are worrying about their abused parent

Explain that because domestic violence puts children at risk you have to tell the designated child protection manager in your school about their situation, stress that only certain teachers will know about it and that other teachers generally will not be told, other pupils will not know about it

Report the disclosure to the designated child protection manager in your school who will report to Social Services

Work with the parent, designated member of staff, Social Services, and other agencies as appropriate who are working with the family to make sure the child's progress and welfare is monitored

Trust that the designated child protection manager and Social Services will make the right decisions and follow up your concerns. Remember that you can offer support to the abused parent - and this is the best form of child protection

Give contact details for :

ChildLine - 0800 1111 (entirely confidential, which most other agencies cannot be, this is important to children)
Domestic Violence 24hr free helpline - 0808 2000 247
Islington Women's Aid - 020 8269 2121

Cards are available with these numbers on for distribution and display, contact Finn Mackay for details

Ring Finn Mackay CEA@Islington Home Safe Project Officer for Schools for advice and information on how you can work with and support parents and children living with domestic violence. Also for details of what support is there for teachers when dealing with this often stressful and emotional issue