

## **Operation Encompass and Covid-19**

**Operation Encompass** is a national police-led initiative to notify schools, prior to the start of the next school day, when a child or young person has experienced, any domestic abuse. The initiative was launched in Lincolnshire schools in January 2020 and all schools are signed up to fully participate.

During these unprecedented times, the safeguarding of children who have been victims of domestic remains a high priority and therefore the notification process remains in place.

### **What does this mean in practice with the current arrangements?**

- Operation Encompass will continue to send a notification to the main school that the child attends. The emails are sent to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Deputy Safeguarding Lead. In order to receive the notification, the DSL and Deputy DSL of the main school must be able to access their emails prior to the start of the next school day, even if they are closed. In normal circumstances there would be no expectation for schools to check for notifications in the school holidays, however under the current arrangements, this is an expectation that DSL's and Deputy DSL's check daily including through the Easter break.
- If either the Deputy DSL or Deputy DSL knows that they will be unable to act on the notification due to self-isolating or illness, then they must set up for the emails to be automatically forwarded to a member of staff who is temporarily responsible for receiving the notification.
- If a school receives a notification and the child is present at their main school, the original guidance on appropriate school actions should be followed.

- If the child is now attending another school, the main school must safely forward the notification to the new school who will then take appropriate action.
- If the child is not attending a school as they fall into any of the government identified groups, the school will need to review the risk assessment completed that resulted in the decision that the child could remain at home. In partnership with the child's social work or EHCP case worker, the school will decide if that child would be better placed in school.
- If the child is not attending a school and does not fall into any of the government identified groups, the school will carry out a risk assessment to consider whether they should offer a school place to the child.
- As per guidance, if the school feels that on receipt of the notification, the risk of significant harm has increased, the school should follow their normal safeguarding procedures and contact the Customer Service Centre.
- Remember that in addition to notifying the school, the police who attend the incident will have dealt with the emergency needs of the family and will have notified social care.
- As part of the school's support for parents during these unsettling times, they should inform parents through their website, of services, charities that can help them, including support for domestic abuse. The website for Domestic Abuse support is EDAN Lincs Domestic Abuse Service <https://edanlincs.org.uk/>
- **The school should not phone the parents to discuss the incident as this may increase the risk to the child. However, it is expected that the school contact a family to discuss any absences and to review the education at home due to Covid19.**

#### **DfE advice 31 March 2020**

*'If a school is concerned about a child's vulnerability even though they are not formally under a social worker or a child in need, consideration can be given to offering them a place'*