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Domestic Abuse, Honour Based Abuse and Forced Marriage Policy

This policy should be read alongside our safeguarding policies:

- Safeguarding children and child protection policy
- Data protection and confidentiality policy
- GDPR privacy notice.

The Wales Safeguarding Procedures ‘Safeguarding children affected by domestic abuse practice guide’ provides additional information about safeguarding responses where a child is affected by domestic abuse. It should be used in conjunction with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures.

The Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 sets out that “abuse” means physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial abuse.

“Domestic abuse” means abuse where the victim of it is or has been associated with the abuser.

“Gender-based violence” means:

- Violence, threats of violence or harassment arising directly or indirectly from values, beliefs or customs relating to gender or sexual orientation
- Female genital mutilation
- Forcing a person (whether by physical force or coercion by threats or other psychological means) to enter into a religious or civil ceremony of marriage (whether or not legally binding).

“Violence against women” should be read as also including male victims of gender-based violence (GBV) unless the context suggests otherwise.

Domestic abuse may also include a range of behaviours that, when viewed as isolated incidents, do not seem much. If they involve a pattern of behaviour that result in you feeling fear, alarm or distress, it is abuse.

There is well established evidence that exposure to domestic abuse can and does cause significant harm to children. The Adoption and Children Act 2002 extended the definition of significant harm to include “impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.” This recognises the fact that witnessing domestic violence can have a serious impact on children’s emotional well-being and development.

Where domestic abuse is taking place in a child’s home the child is at risk of harm, whether they witness the violence or not. This may take the form of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse or neglect. At Fun Foundations Day Nursery we ensure that if there are any signs or symptoms that domestic abuse may be occurring we act without haste and follow our main child protection policy.

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Domestic abuse can happen to anyone regardless of gender, age, social background, religion, sexuality or ethnicity and domestic abuse can happen at any stage in a relationship.

We aim to develop staff knowledge of recognising the signs and symptoms of domestic abuse. These signs may include:

- Changes in behaviour, for example, becoming very quiet, anxious, frightened, tearful, aggressive, distracted, depressed etc
- Visible signs of injury or repeated injury with unlikely explanations.
- Change in the manner of dress: for example, clothes that do not suit the climate which may be used to hide injuries
- Changes in behaviour of the adult(s) and child – e.g. the abused adult may become withdrawn and/or quiet, show low levels of self-esteem, show signs of being anxious, fearful, tearful, aggressive, distracted, depressed etc
- One adult being visibly worried about what their partner may say in a certain situation (e.g. if the child has become dirty or injured at nursery)
- One adult becoming scared of their partner
- Adults becoming isolated from their friends or family
- Signs of abuse in the child (as per the main safeguarding policy).
- Partner or ex-partner stalking employee/parent in or around the workplace, this may be excessive calls or messages
- Partner or ex-partner exerting unusual amount of control or demands over work schedule
- Frequent lateness or absence from work.

Signs that children may have witnessed domestic abuse include:

- Anxiety
- Regressive behaviours
- Constant or regular sickness, such as colds or headaches
- Difficulties with concentration
- Emotional and behavioural difficulties
- Withdrawal
- Low self-esteem.

We will raise awareness of domestic abuse within our setting by:

- Ensuring all staff can identify the signs and symptoms of domestic abuse and know how to report concerns
- Share information to external organisations that can offer support with incidents of domestic violence. The information will be displayed in visible spaces within the setting
- Staff will let parents know about the support available, including the Live Fear Free service. Live Fear Free Helpline: 0808 8010 800. Text service: 078600 77333 Email: info@livefearfreehelpline.wales.
- Provide all staff with the telephone number for the free 24 hour National Domestic Violence Helpline (0808 2000 247)

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- Consideration will also be given to whether a parent should be considered as an adult at risk. There is a Duty to Report Adults at Risk (Section 128) to relevant partners under Part 7 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act.
- Staff are aware and able to share information about the organisations that are available to help children, such as Meic and Childline
- Share our Domestic abuse policy and Safeguarding children and child protection policy with all stakeholders.

If we are concerned that domestic violence is happening within a home and a child is at risk we will follow our safeguarding policies reporting procedures (see Safeguarding Children / Child Protection policy).

Speaking to parents about preventative family support services and violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV) services is important and, with the consent of that parent, a referral should be made to local services. Early intervention and prevention can potentially have a significant impact on reducing the long-term negative consequences of domestic abuse on children.

Where incidents of domestic abuse are shared by an employee or parent/carer we will respect confidentiality at all times and not share information without their permission. However, we will share this information without permission in cases of child protection or where we believe there is an immediate risk of serious harm to the person involved.

Honour based abuse

‘Honour’ crime involves abuse and/or violence, including murder, committed by people who want to defend the reputation of their family or community. It can also take the forms of intimidation, coercive control or blackmail. Honour killing is the murder of a person accused of bringing shame upon their family. Actions taken by a family which may be believed by them to restore honour can include:

- Abduction or kidnapping
- Imprisonment or isolation
- Acid attacks
- Beatings and domestic servitude
- Forced marriage
- Female genital mutilation
- Mutilation or disfigurement
- Murder
- Controlling or coercive behaviour.

Where the person who is subject to or at risk of honour based abuse (HBA) is a child (under 18 years of age) they must be considered as a Child at Risk under the Social Service and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

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In cases of HBA concerning a child under the age of 18, consideration will be given as to whether it is safe to speak to the child's parents. Involving the family or community may increase the risk of significant harm to the child. The family may deny the allegations and in some cases may also attempt to take the child out of the country.

We will raise awareness of HBA within our setting by:

- Sharing information with external organisations that can offer support with incidents of HBA. The information will be displayed in visible spaces within the setting
- Sharing our HBA, child protection and safeguarding children policies with all stakeholders.

Where incidents of HBA are shared by an employee or parent/carer, we will respect confidentiality at all times and not share information without their permission. However, we will share this information without permission in cases of child protection, or where we believe there is an immediate risk of serious harm to the person involved.

Forced marriage

A forced marriage is defined as 'a marriage in which one or both spouses do not consent to the marriage but are coerced into it. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. In the cases of some vulnerable adults who lack the capacity to consent, coercion is not required for a marriage to be forced'.

Where the person who is subject to or at risk of forced marriage is a child (under 18 years of age) they must be considered as a Child at Risk under the Social Service and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

If we suspect or receive information about a forced marriage being planned then we will follow our safeguarding reporting procedures. If the person concerned is under the age of 18 years then we will report the incident to the children's social care team.

The Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022, raises the minimum age of marriage to 18 in England and Wales. It means that 16 and 17 year olds will no longer be allowed to marry or enter a civil partnership, even if they have parental consent. It is now illegal and a criminal offence to exploit vulnerable children by arranging for them to marry, under any circumstances whether or not force is used.

If we believe a person is in imminent danger of being forced into a marriage we may contact the Police and the Governments Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) on 020 7008 0151.



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Signed	Date for review
A. Ferguson.	June 2026

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