SENsational Tutors

Domestic Abuse Policy

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SENsational Tutors

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1. Policy Statement

SENsational Tutors is committed to creating a safe, supportive and respectful environment for all children, young people, families, tutors, and staff.

We recognise that domestic abuse can affect anyone, regardless of age, gender, background, disability, sexuality, culture or circumstances. We also recognise that domestic abuse can have a significant and lasting impact on children and young people.

We operate a **zero-tolerance approach to domestic abuse** and will take concerns seriously, respond sensitively and act appropriately to safeguard those at risk.

2. What is Domestic Abuse?

Domestic abuse is not limited to physical violence. Under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, it can include:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Violent or threatening behaviour
- Controlling or coercive behaviour
- Economic or financial abuse
- Psychological or emotional abuse

Domestic abuse may involve a single incident or an ongoing pattern of behaviour.

Examples may include:

- Threatening or intimidating behaviour
- Preventing someone from seeing family or friends
- Monitoring phones, emails or social media
- Controlling access to money
- Preventing someone from working or studying
- Humiliating, degrading or constantly criticising someone
- Threatening to harm children or pets
- Physical violence or sexual abuse
- Using a child's additional needs or disability to control a partner or family member

3. Children and Young People

SENsational Tutors recognises that children and young people can be victims of domestic abuse in their own right.

A child may be affected by domestic abuse even if they are not directly physically harmed. Exposure to domestic abuse can affect a child's emotional wellbeing, behaviour, development, education and sense of safety. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 specifically recognises children who see, hear or experience the effects of domestic abuse as victims.

Where a tutor or member of staff becomes concerned that a child or young person may be experiencing or witnessing domestic abuse, this must be treated as a **safeguarding concern**. The concern should be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in accordance with SENsational Tutors' Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

4. Recognising Possible Signs

There may be no obvious signs of domestic abuse. Staff should remain alert to changes in a child's or young person's presentation, including:

- Becoming unusually withdrawn, anxious or fearful
- Changes in behaviour or mood
- Difficulty concentrating
- Increased aggression or emotional distress
- Sleep difficulties
- Frequent unexplained absences
- A noticeable change in school or tutoring performance
- Appearing frightened of a particular adult
- Talking about arguments, violence or threats at home
- Becoming unusually protective of a parent or sibling
- Having an adult who appears excessively controlling towards them or their family

These signs do not necessarily mean domestic abuse is taking place, but they should be considered alongside other safeguarding information.

5. Responding to a Disclosure

If a child, young person, parent, tutor or member of staff discloses domestic abuse:

Tutors and staff should:

- Listen calmly and without judgement.
- Take the disclosure seriously.
- Reassure the person that they have done the right thing by speaking to someone.
- If the disclosure comes from or involves a child, explain that you cannot promise to keep information secret if someone is at risk of harm.
- Record what has been said as accurately as possible.
- If the disclosure comes from or involves a child, report the concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible.
- If the concern comes from an adult staff member or tutor and there are no children involved, the person should be encouraged to seek external support.

Tutors and staff should not:

- Investigate the allegation themselves
- Ask leading or unnecessary questions.
- Confront the alleged perpetrator.
- Promise confidentiality.
- Attempt to mediate between people involved in domestic abuse.
- Contact another family member about the concern without safeguarding advice.

6. Immediate Risk

Emergency Support

If someone is in **immediate danger**, call **999**.

If they are unable to speak on a mobile phone, they can call **999** and, when prompted, press **55** to be transferred to the police.

> **Important**
>
> If a child or young person discloses domestic abuse, this should also be dealt with through SENsational Tutors' **Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures** and reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider whether the concern needs to be referred to children's social care, adult safeguarding, the police or another appropriate agency.

7. Domestic Abuse and SENsational Tutors Staff

SENsational Tutors recognises that tutors and staff may themselves experience domestic abuse.

Employees and tutors who are experiencing domestic abuse will be treated with dignity, respect and without judgement.

Where appropriate, SENsational Tutors will consider reasonable support, which may include:

- A confidential conversation with an appropriate member of the team
- Adjustments to working arrangements where reasonably possible
- Flexibility around appointments or support services
- Consideration of workplace safety
- Signposting to specialist domestic abuse services
- Support with safeguarding concerns involving children

No employee or tutor should feel that they have to disclose personal circumstances unless they wish to do so, except where safeguarding responsibilities require information to be shared.

8. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Information relating to domestic abuse will be handled sensitively and shared only with those who need the information to safeguard a child, young person or adult.

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where information indicates that a child or vulnerable person may be at risk of significant harm.

All information will be handled in accordance with SENsational Tutors' safeguarding, confidentiality and data protection procedures.

9. Record Keeping

All safeguarding concerns relating to domestic abuse must be recorded accurately and objectively.

Records should include:

- Date and time of the concern/disclosure
- What was observed or disclosed
- The exact words used where possible
- Who was present
- Actions taken
- Who the concern was reported to
- Any referrals or advice received

Records should be stored securely and in accordance with SENsational Tutors' data protection procedures.

10. Training and Awareness

SENsational Tutors will ensure that staff and tutors understand:

- What domestic abuse is
- How domestic abuse can affect children and young people
- How to recognise potential signs
- How to respond to a disclosure
- How to report safeguarding concerns
- The importance of professional boundaries and confidentiality

Relevant staff will receive safeguarding training appropriate to their role.

11. Partnership Working

SENsational Tutors will work appropriately with relevant agencies when concerns arise, including children's social care, adult safeguarding, the police, education settings and specialist domestic abuse services.

Domestic abuse requires an appropriate multi-agency response, and the Home Office statutory guidance promotes coordinated working between organisations supporting victims and responding to domestic abuse.

12. Signposting to Support Agencies and Useful Contacts

SENsational Tutors will signpost individuals to appropriate specialist organisations where domestic abuse is disclosed or suspected. Tutors and staff should not attempt to provide specialist domestic abuse advice themselves.

- **National Domestic Abuse Helpline – Refuge**

  Free, confidential, 24-hour support for women experiencing domestic abuse, as well as family, friends and professionals concerned about someone.

  Call on: 0808 2000 247

  Live chat and further information are available through Refuge.

- **Women's Aid**

  Provides information, advice and access to local domestic abuse services through its directory.

- **Men's Advice Line**

  Confidential support and advice for men experiencing domestic abuse.

  Call on: 0808 801 0327

- **Galop**

  Support for LGBT+ people experiencing domestic abuse.

  Call on: 0800 999 5428

- **Respect Phoneline**

  Confidential advice for people concerned about their own abusive behaviour, and for those supporting them.

  Call on: 0808 802 4040

- **Victim Support**

  Provides free, confidential support to victims of crime, whether or not the incident has been reported to the police.

  24/7 Supportline: 0808 168 9111

- **Karma Nirvana**

  Specialist support for victims of honour-based abuse and forced marriage.

  Call on: 0800 5999 247

- **STREET – Safe Teenage Relationship Education and Empowerment Team**

  Provides support to young people aged **13–19** who have experienced domestic abuse or harmful behaviours within their own relationships.

  Call on: 01452 228 802

13. Appendices

Appendix 1

Related policies and documents

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Safer Recruitment
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults
- Code of Conduct
- Diversity, Equality and Inclusion
- Health and Safety
- Lone Working
- Whistleblowing
- Complaints
- Online safety and acceptable use of Technology
- Modern Slavery Statement
- Behaviour
- Attendance
- Domestic Abuse

Related Government Documents

- **Domestic Abuse Act 2021**