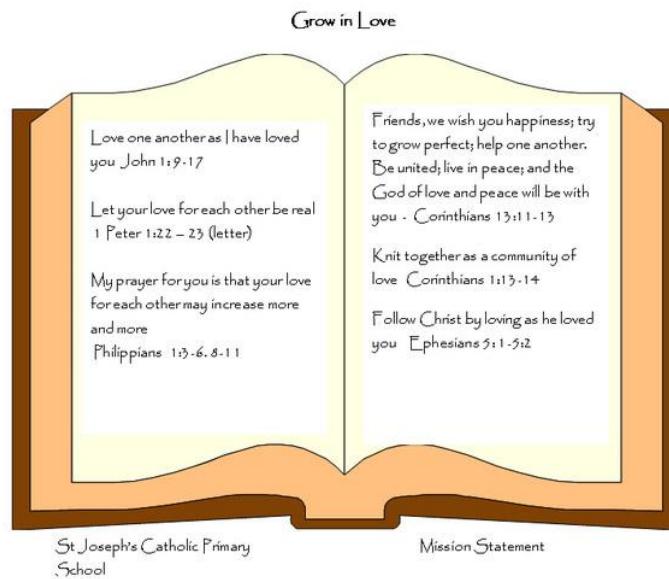


42. Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Policy

Policy Valid until Summer 2025
Policy owned by Head teacher



For and on behalf of the
Board of Governors

Headteacher

Date:

Policy status

Recommended and reviewed every 3 years

Consultation

This policy was established and reviewed by the all school staff in consultation with the Governing Body.

General

St Joseph's recognises that some employees will be amongst those affected by violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, either as a victim or a perpetrator.

We have a 'zero tolerance' position on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and are committed to ensuring that any employee who is the victim of such violence and abuse has the right to raise the issue with their employer in the knowledge that they will receive appropriate support and assistance.

This policy also covers the approach that will be taken where there are concerns that an employee may be the perpetrator of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

St Joseph's recognises that violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence is an equalities issue and undertakes to not discriminate against anyone who has been subjected to such violence and abuse both in terms of current employment or future development.

1. The Role of the Employer

1.1 The employer should be aware of the possibility of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence when implementing sickness absence policy and procedures. If the employer suspects such violence and abuse could be the root cause of absence the employer should try to create a supportive environment in which the employee is able to disclose the abuse if they wish to do so. The employer should not pressure the employee for information in this respect.

1.2 The employer should make freely available to employees information about sources of support and services for employees affected by violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. This information should be available to all employees and not only those who are office based. (For more information and resources see livefearfree.gov.wales)

1.3 Arrangements should be made to give employers discretionary powers to allow reasonable time off for any employee who is seeking help to escape violence and abuse e.g. to consult a solicitor or attend a housing appointment. This may be as additional authorised leave.

1.4 Where violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence impacts on the employee's child the employee may need to be granted additional leave.

1.5 Employees may wish to alter or reduce hours of working because of the effects of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and employers should consider such requests positively in order to support and accommodate the employee wherever possible.

1.6 Once an employer is made aware of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence the employer should discuss with the employee whether there is any risk to the employee while at work. If the employee believes this to be the case, the employer should carry out a risk assessment and take action to minimise risks in the workplace e.g. additional security measures at the entrance to the building, interception of telephone calls, transfer to another location, redeployment. Where incidents at work do occur these should be recorded and followed up under the Health and Safety Policy. Employees may need to seek legal advice in relation to taking out an injunction against the perpetrator in the vicinity of the workplace.

1.7 The employer has responsibility for ensuring that confidentiality is maintained at all times and that information about violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence is only shared with other parties where this is necessary and where the employee has given permission. Appropriate steps should be taken to ensure files containing information about those experiencing violence and abuse do not contain details of current addresses, particularly if the employee is living in a refuge. Addresses may need to be held separately to ensure the abuser has no way of accessing them.

1.8 The employer should be aware that there may be employees who are themselves perpetrators of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and that confidentiality is of paramount importance as both victim and perpetrator may be employees of the same organisation.

1.9 If the employee discloses such violence and abuse the employer should make information about sources of help available to the employee and should offer support.

1.10 Employees affected by violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence may be absent from work periodically. Again employers should be aware or may have reason to believe that this is the root cause and should support the employee to seek help and work towards resolving the issue. The employer should consider whether it is appropriate to issue sickness warnings where the known cause is such violence and abuse. Employers should focus on supporting rather than penalising employees affected.

2. Employees and Colleagues

2.1 If you are an employee affected by violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence you may wish to seek support and information from your line manager, personnel team, occupational health and/or trade union representative. There are a range of agencies and services that can help (livefearfree.gov.wales).

2.2 If a colleague is experiencing violence against women, domestic abuse and/or sexual violence it is important to be supportive and to ensure they have access to information about sources of help.

3. Harassment at Work

3.1 Harassment at work is unacceptable and often unlawful. Employers should ensure that employees know that jokes and comments that trivialise, condone or even encourage violence or abuse are totally unacceptable, and should deal effectively with any incidents brought to their attention.

4. Perpetrators of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence

4.1 Employees who perpetrate violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence should be aware that such behaviour goes against this policy. Some forms of violence and abuse are a crime.

4.2 Employees who perpetrate violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence may be disciplined.

4.3 Employees charged or convicted in court because of such violence and abuse should declare this formally to the employer. Where the employer believes the charges/conviction to have implications in terms of the employee's work role (e.g. where an employee works with children or vulnerable adults) an investigation should be undertaken to assess any risk and mitigating action taken accordingly e.g. redeployment, suspension from duties, moving work location or other appropriate action.

This policy is available on the school website, and in translation, on request.