

# Leeds Joint Agency Protocol for Domestic Violence and Abuse - School Notifications



Leeds  
Safeguarding  
Children Board



Working through the  
**Safer Leeds Partnership**

# Front Door Safeguarding Hub – Protocol for a Domestic Violence and abuse notification for schools.

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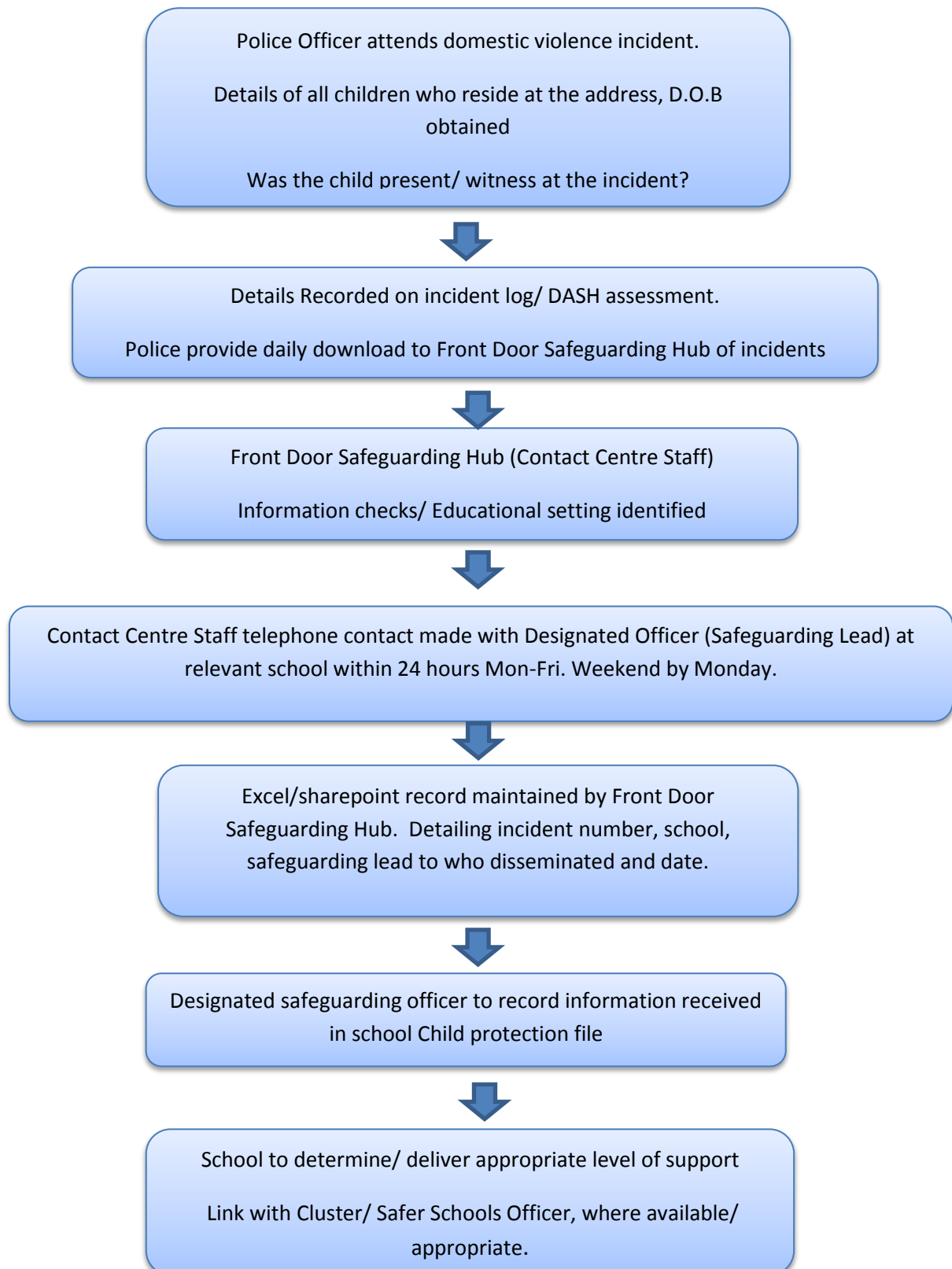
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## Appendix 1 - Early notification process for schools for DV incidents

This process intends to provide early information to schools where their pupils have been present/ witnessed an incident of Domestic violence, where police attended. It does not replace existing child protection/ safeguarding arrangements. Schools will still receive safeguarding notifications through existing routes and arrangements




## Appendix 2 – Officer Training: Preparing for Notification Checklist

The School Notification process aims to give your school a call before 09:00hrs on the first school morning after police have attended a domestic violence incident where children are present.


The checklist and prompts allow the Designated Officer in each school to prepare for a School Notification.

1. Information from FDSH phone call and school intelligence



Check child protection records, check with class teacher for recent concerns. Brief Class teacher on School notification call received and Designated Officers decision about type of support to provide.  
Initial Support ideas: breakfast, uniform, meet and greet, silent support, homework, scripts, quiet space, peer support, helping children talk, what to say if they disclose.

2. Consider referral to support services (or Social Care as ideas)



Who is the Officer that will receive the call?

If the Officer is not available before 09:00 who is the deputy?

What is the contact number? A mobile can be better because it shows a missed notification call.


How will you record the information? (Information sheet template provided) Where is it kept?

If the main school number is used, office staff should be briefed to understand the importance of a notification call.


Does the Officer have access to Child Protection records?

Inform parents of school's participation in School Notification process (letter provided) "as part of the project, school will be notified by police if they attend..." "When this happens we will ..." "include the information in safeguarding policy, prospectus, and school web site. Staff training, role in signposting and parent self-referral, Tell pupils of the school's involvement, website, newsletters etc.

3. How does this fit in with your school's safeguarding policy?




4. Plan for child and family support



Consider Early Help Assessment  
File completed information sheet in CP records  
Following initial support consider school based pastoral support, signposting to other agencies

5. Review impact of actions, continue or change?



School's Internal monitoring arrangements  
Check on child and update incident log  
Consultation with pupils and parent

Be prepared to come across situations and contexts which you could not have planned for.

### Appendix 3 - Domestic Violence and Designated Officer (Safeguarding lead) Responsibilities

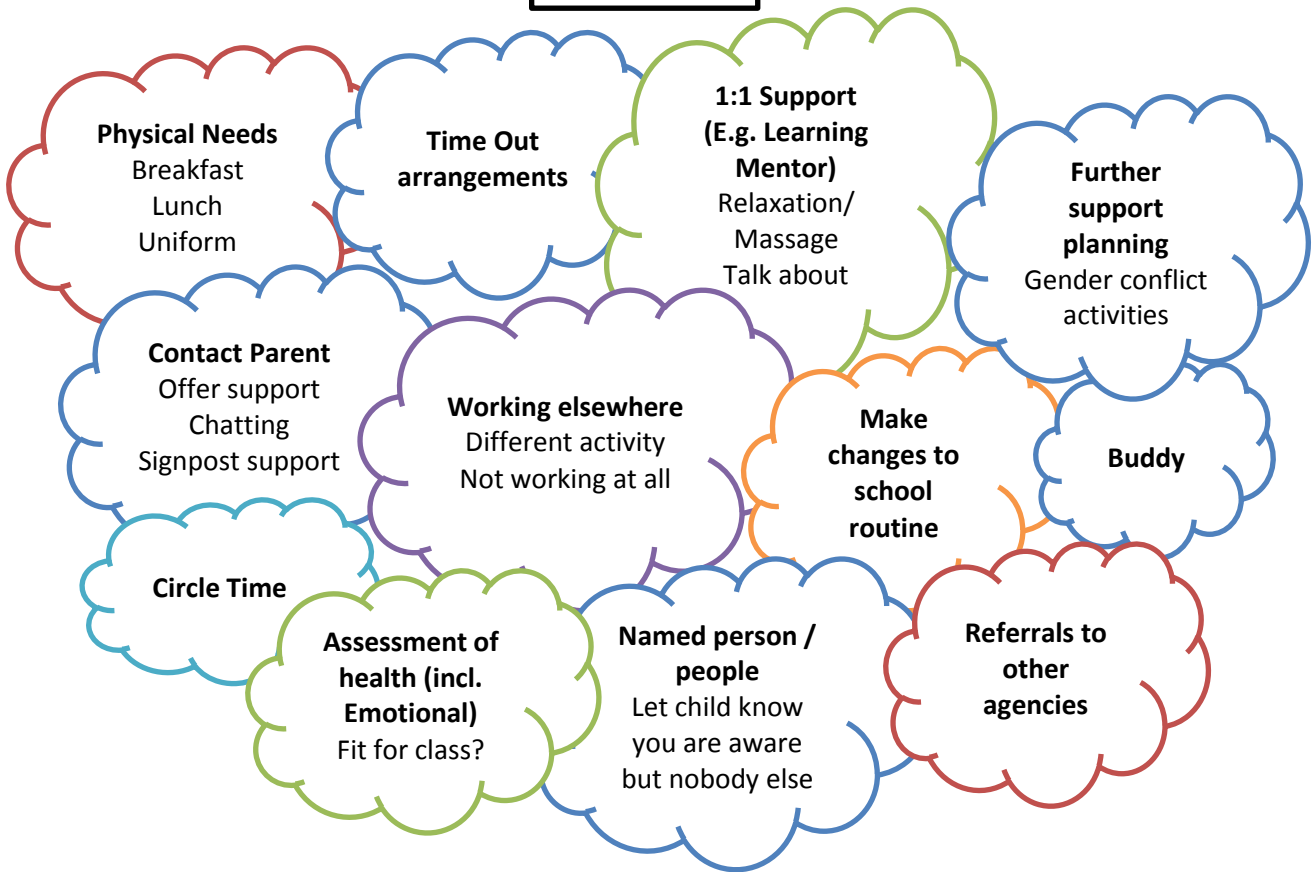
Name:

School:

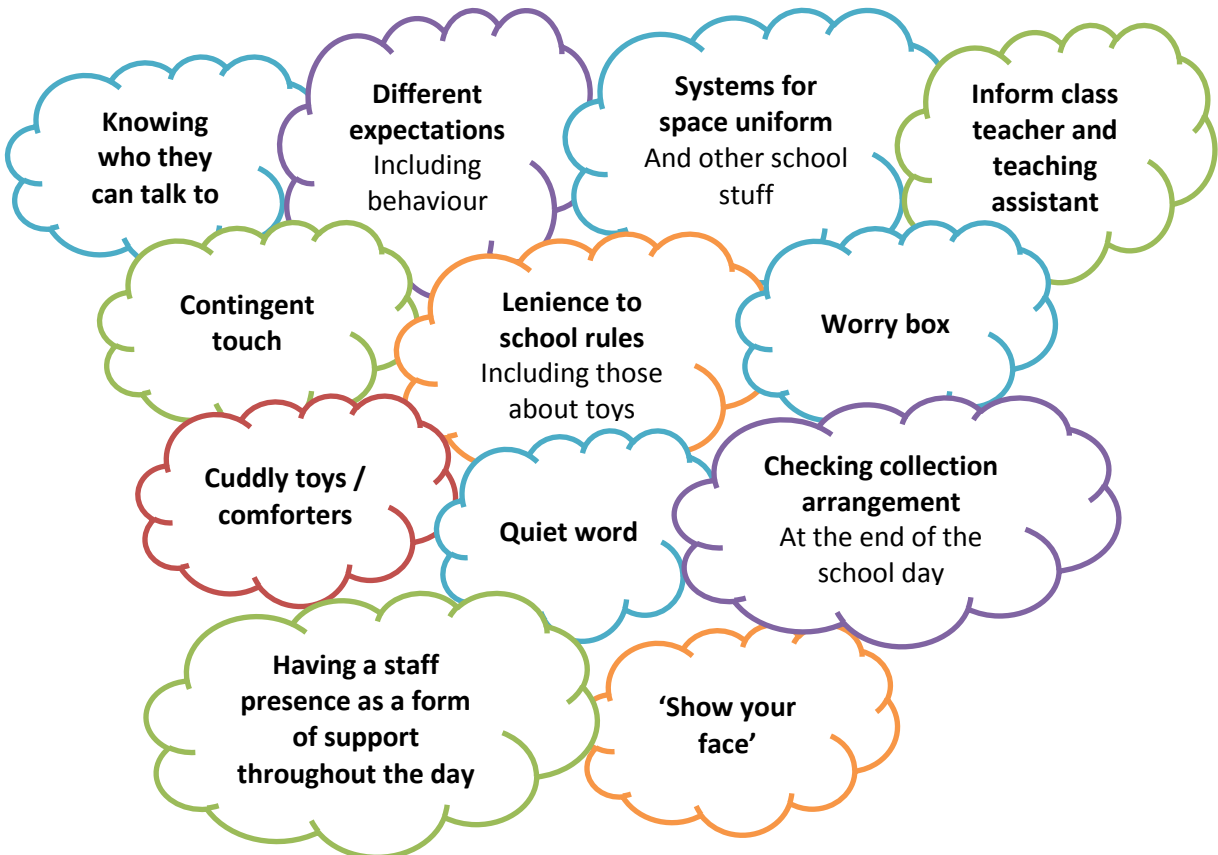
Designation:

Responsibility	Achieved
<p>The Designated Officer must have attended the three day Safeguarding training</p> <p>Comment:</p>	
<p>The Designated Officer must give up to date contact numbers to the FDSH/ Educational Safeguarding Team.</p> <p>Comment:</p>	
<p>The Operation School Notification file and record of calls must be kept in the same way as other Child Protection paperwork, in a secure and locked cabinet/drawer.</p> <p>Comment:</p>	
<p>The Designated Officer (Safeguarding Lead) must ensure that all teaching staff understands the confidential nature of any information passed to them and that this information must be treated in the same way as any other Child protection information given by other partners such as Social Care.</p> <p>Comment:</p>	
<p>Office staff must be informed that when a School Notification call comes in then the Designated Officer must be sought immediately.</p> <p>Comment:</p>	
<p>The School must inform parents that the school is part of the School Notification process, using the basic template given to each school which can be amended to the school's individual requirements.</p> <p>Comment:</p>	
<p>The Designated Officer (Safeguarding Lead) must inform the Governing Body that the school is part of the School Notification Process and the Governor with responsibility for Safeguarding should have a working knowledge of the project.</p> <p>Comment:</p>	
<p>The School should consider including information about the School Notification process in the school's prospectus, thus ensuring that all new parents are informed of involvement.</p>	
<p>The School should consider whether the information about the School Notification process should form part of the school website.</p>	

Overt



Silent



## **Appendix 5 - Parent Letter**

Dear Parent/Carer,

The school has been given the opportunity to take part in a new project that will run jointly between schools and West Yorkshire Police. The project has been established to support children who are resident in households where there are incidents of domestic violence and abuse. We know that children can be significantly physically or emotionally hurt by being either present in the house or directly witnessing an incident of domestic violence.

The Domestic violence and abuse school notification project has been designed to provide confidential notification to schools on any incidents of domestic violence and abuse which occur within a child's household that might have an impact on a child whilst they are in school.

The project will ensure that a member of the school staff is trained to allow them to use the information that has been shared, in confidence, and ensure that the school is able to make provision for possible difficulties experienced by children, or their families, who have been involved in or witnessed a domestic violence or abuse incident.

We are keen to offer the best support possible to our pupils and we believe this is going to be extremely beneficial for all those involved.

If you would like further support or information about domestic violence and abuse please go to [www.leedsdomesticviolenceandabuse.co.uk](http://www.leedsdomesticviolenceandabuse.co.uk)

Signed  
Head teacher

## Appendix 6 – School Template

Police Reference Number		Date	
Child's name and date of birth			
Date and time of incident			
Circumstances of incident			
Additional school information including other Operation Encompass calls			
Actions taken and Impact/ child's voice			



**Appendix 7 - Signatories to the Joint-Agency Domestic Violence School Notification**

Signed



**Name: Andrew Eastwood**

**Title: Head of Service Learning Improvement  
Children's Services**

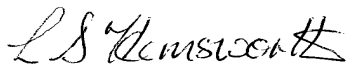
Signed



**Name: Samantha Millar**

**Title: Superintendent Safer Leeds**

Signed



**Name: Lee Hemsworth**

**Title: Chief Officer Citizens and Communities**

## 1. Introduction

This protocol sets out the potential for a joint-agency approach to provide, by early intervention, appropriate support for children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse in their household. It draws on the principles of Operation Encompass which is established in a number of areas nationally (Liverpool and Plymouth).

The scoping and potential implementation was a key recommendation in the Leeds Domestic Violence Scrutiny report. In addition there are clear links with the extension of the Families First Programme with domestic violence as criteria for identification, the Family Valued programme and the workforce development progress made in clusters with the domestic violence quality mark.

### *The Government: Definition of domestic abuse*

The definition of domestic violence and abuse; Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional
- Controlling behaviour: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour
- Coercive behaviour: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim

This definition, which is not a legal definition, includes so-called `honour` based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group

Domestic abuse is a safeguarding children issue; statistics show that in 90% of cases children are present in a household during a domestic abuse incident. Often the following day children are ill-prepared to deal with the school day.

As indicated recommendation 23 of the Leeds Tackling Domestic Violence and Abuse Scrutiny report states that the Chair of the Leeds Domestic Violence Strategy Group works closely with the Director of Children's Services and the Leeds Divisional Commander to ensure that there continues to be commitment from all key partners towards the development of a School Notification process within Leeds.

## 2. Aims and Proposal (See Appendix 1 for process)

The Domestic violence and abuse notification process is the implementation of key partnership working between West Yorkshire Police, The Front Door Safeguarding Hub, Council Contact Centre Staff, designated school staff (Safeguarding leads), Targeted Services and Educational safeguarding. The process starts with police sharing details of all Domestic Violence incidents (standard, medium

and high as informed by the DASH assessment) where a child is present in the last 24 hours. This information will be shared with a safeguarding lead in the school by means of a telephone call to allow that school to take appropriate steps to support their pupil during what could be an emotionally difficult day.

West Yorkshire Police will provide a daily download of all DV incidents from the last 24 hours to Leeds Council contact Centre Staff prior to 8am. These staff will then interrogate Synergy to establish the education setting for the child and make the telephone call to the designated officer (Safeguarding Lead) in the school prior to 9am.

Designated Officers (Safeguarding Leads) within the schools would then be able to accommodate the school day to lessen the impact and to support the child if they need it. In its simplest form, they are given some leeway, comfort and support. This can make a huge difference to children and allows them to have a safe space.

The information shared will be only that which is required to safeguard children including:

- date and time of incident
- brief circumstances
- police action if appropriate

A database of all designated officers (Safeguarding leads) has already been established within education safeguarding arrangements which includes contact numbers and is reviewed regularly.

This process does not replace or supersede existing protocols, or singularly address child welfare. The Process would always be followed in conjunction with the current safeguarding procedures and practitioners guidelines and is designed to reinforce safeguarding and ensure children's well-being is of paramount importance.

By sharing this information under the notification process it is hoped that children and young people who are experiencing domestic abuse will have access to responsive emotional health and wellbeing support after a domestic abuse incident. Schools will receive information when:

- Police have been called out to a domestic violence incident
- The child is present in the household at the time of the incident
- The child is of school age

This knowledge, given to schools through the notification process, allows the provision of immediate early intervention through silent or overt support dependent upon the needs and wishes of the child (see Appendix 4 - Silent/ Overt Support).

Incidents occurring on Friday, Saturday or Sunday will be reported to the school on Monday morning. The aim of the notification process is to provide support in the period immediately following the incident. However, consideration will be given to a provision to report incidents occurring during the school holiday periods when a child returns to school.

In the first instance disclosures will be made in respect of all children aged between 4-18 years. Consideration will need to be given to a potential further iteration of this approach with early year's settings following a period of review.

### **3. Legal Requirements**

Section 11(2) of the Children Act, 2004 requires Local Authorities and the Police to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children. This enactment provides conditions under schedule 2 (5b) and schedule 3 (7(1) (b) of the Data Protection Act 1998 by which personal and sensitive personal data may be lawfully shared.

Personal data shared must be proportionate, necessary but not excessive, and must be balanced with the consideration of privacy rights under the Human Rights Act. It must take into account any duty of confidentiality owed. A public interest in disclosure must outweigh an individual's right to privacy.

It is recognised that the handling of such confidential, sensitive and often raw information needs to be dealt with in a way that is proportionate and appropriate to the needs of the child or young person. To address this, "Safeguarding leads" will be identified in each school (a person with Child Protection training, usually the Designated Child Protection Officer (DCPO) /Head Teacher. The notification logs will then be stored within the child protection files.

The safeguarding lead will be the person available each day to receive the details of the incident and assess the type of support needed for the child. The Front Door Safeguarding Hub will hold a database of all the safeguarding leads in the Leeds area.

### **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

#### *What will be disclosed?*

Details collated with respect to the child or young person will include their name, age, date of birth, home address and school attended. The school will be told the time/ date/location of the incident, the parties involved in the incident (including their relationship to the child), and the child's involvement in the incident.

#### *How will it be disclosed and when?*

This information will be disseminated from the Front Door Safeguarding Hub to named designated officer (safeguarding lead) within the schools via telephone conversation prior to 9am. Where the designated officer is not available a message will be left with the school that there is a school notification. A log will be kept by the Front Door Safeguarding Hub on an excel spreadsheet detailing log number/school/ designated office (Safeguarding lead) /date of notification.

### **5. Schools' Responsibility**

The Domestic Violence and Abuse School Notification process requires an up to date database of trained designated officers (safeguarding leads). This list will be maintained by educational safeguarding and the Front Door Safeguarding hub. School will need to ensure that there is a sufficiently trained deputy to receive the information in their absence. Where no designated officer is available a message will be left with the school that there is a notification.

Council contact centre staff will be available for designated officers to contact in order to respond to this message on a daily basis. An email address is essential and any changes to the safeguarding leads database must be forwarded to the Front Door Safeguarding Hub as soon as practicable.

Schools must also make certain that there is an open phone line or appropriate mobile number as a contact for the Front Door Safeguarding Hub staff to utilise.

Schools must record the information that they receive from the Front Door Safeguarding Hub on an incident form, which must be retained and stored utilising the current process used to store child protection paperwork within the school. Schools need to be aware that in the event of any domestic homicide or serious case review the documents may be required for disclosure purposes.

It is anticipated that all state and independent schools, academies and alternative education providers (AEP) will participate in Notification process, however there may need to be an incremental approach to implementation.

## **6. Cross Border Considerations**

Where a child or young person is educated in a neighbouring borough, which is part of the Leeds Police area, information will be shared across geographical boundaries. Incidents occurring in other force areas or children accommodated in schools outside the Leeds area are not covered by this protocol.