

Implementing the Operation Encompass Child's Victim Support Code

A guide for schools

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The Child's Victim Support Code

This code sets out the key rights and minimum level of support that children experiencing domestic violence and abuse should expect from all professionals. Professionals includes, but is not limited to, police, health, education, local authorities, domestic violence and abuse support services and the judiciary.



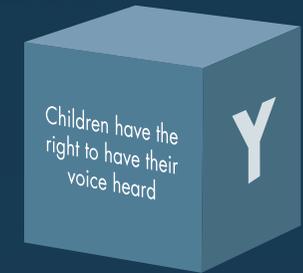
Children have the right to live without fear, abuse or trauma

Safeguarding policies and procedures in school reflect this right for all children and these are built into the culture and ethos of the school and understood by all members of the school staff. School teaches children that this is their right, and have clear methods by which children can identify a trusted member of staff with whom they can share any concerns. This links to Article 19 of UNCRC.



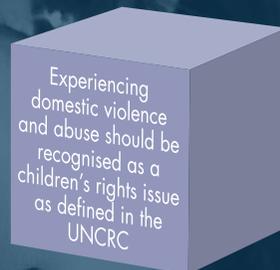
Children have the right to have their voice heard

Methods for consulting children are in place throughout the school (e.g. school council) and they know that they are regularly consulted about school issues. The school is explicit about listening to and valuing children's views and opinions rather than the school taking decisions that they think are best for children. The school recognises that if children see this in action on a daily basis about issues in school then they will feel that they can trust the school about listening to them about more serious and personal issues. Links to Article 12 of UNCRC.



Experiencing domestic violence and abuse should be recognised as a children's rights issue as defined in the UNCRC

School explicitly teaches the children about UNCRC and their rights within that convention. As part of the R(S)E/HE curriculum children are taught about domestic abuse, children are clearly and unambiguously taught that experiencing DVA violates their own rights.



Children have the right to support, dependent upon their needs and wishes

School staff are aware of how to support children on a day-to-day basis within school and also are aware of the range of provision for support within their local area and what may be available on a national basis. They encourage children to be able to consider what support they might find helpful and encourage other professionals such as support workers/social workers to listen to the wishes of the children and to appropriately take their views into account. School uses the Operation Encompass Continuum of Support and Operation Encompass School Guide to understand day-to-day support.



Children have the right to be dealt with by people, including police officers, who understand the impact DVA has upon children

The school understands that it is a child's right to be supported by people who understand the well-researched and serious impact that living in a home where there is DVA or where there is DVA in their own teenage relationships, can have upon the child's health, emotional wellbeing, behaviour, academic success, physical development, relationships and attachments.

Children have the right to be dealt with by people, including police officers, who understand the impact DVA has upon children



Children have the right to experience day to day understanding and support from all professionals including their school

School ensures that all staff within school; Leaders, teachers, TAs, support workers, office and lunchtime staff have an understanding of DVA, the impact on both the adult and child victims and how the school is supporting these victims as part of a whole school culture. The school uses the guides and the free National Online Operation Encompass training as a catalyst for discussion.

Children have the right to experience day to day understanding and support from all professionals including their school

It is a child's right for the police to share DVA information, in a timely fashion, with those who can best support them

The school is part of Operation Encompass and accesses the notifications from the police in a timely manner and ensures support is given to the child/ren. All school staff are aware of Operation Encompass, the work that it does and how this positively impacts their ability to safeguard the children in their care. School undertakes whole school safeguarding training to consider what their school responses are to children experiencing DVA.

It is a child's right for the police to share DVA information, in a timely fashion, with those who can best support them



Children have the right to be involved and consulted in the decision making process following DVA

School ensures that children know they can talk to school staff, a trusted adult, about what they are experiencing and the decisions that are being taken to support them. This also means that school staff ensure that social workers/support workers/police involve children in the decision-making process and listen to the child's voice. They exercise professional challenge to those who do not do this.

Children have the right to be involved and consulted in the decision making process following DVA



Operation Encompass has translated the Child's Victim Support Code into "child speak"

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Experiencing an Unhealthy or Unsafe Relationship? Your rights as a child or young person

If the police are called to your home because of a domestic incident, then the officers should talk to you and listen carefully to you and your experiences; they should explain to you any decisions that they are making and listen to what you want for yourself and your own safety.

You should not have to face this on your own and you have the right to be listened to, to have your voice heard and to be cared for... that is the responsibility of the adults in your life... because you matter.

Your teachers in school should show understanding and care for you; they have had training to help them to try to understand what it is like experiencing unhealthy or unsafe relationships and they should give you the support that you want and need, and work on your behalf to get you support by people/groups outside school if that is what you want and need.

Operation Encompass believes that you have the right to be happy, to live in a secure and caring environment and to live without harm and fear.

Operation Encompass understands that living in a home where there are unhealthy or unsafe relationships between the people who care for you, or being in an unhealthy or unsafe relationship yourself (domestic abuse) can be harmful to you. If this happens to you then you should be listened to, helped and supported by a trusted adult who cares and understands what you are experiencing.



Operation Encompass is a scheme that means that the police will share information with one trained person in your school or college if something has happened that is about unhealthy or unsafe relationships between the people who care for you or in your own relationship. The person in school who is responsible for keeping you safe will be told so that they can help you. www.operationencompass.org Your rights are written in the United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/

This poster can be displayed in school and also used as part of the DVA aspect of R(S)E/HE.

Children's Rights

There are a number of Articles in the UNCRC that apply to the Child's Victim Code but we must remember that the Articles are interdependent and of equal value.

However, Article 12 is a fundamental right:

Article 12 (respect for the views of the child)

Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This right applies at all times, for example during immigration proceedings, housing decisions or the child's day-to-day home life (UNICEF).

The work of Professor Laura Lundy, Queens University Belfast, is very helpful in the education and Children's Rights field, especially her work around Article 12.

"Conceptualising Article 12 as four separate yet interconnected concepts - space, voice, audience and influence - assists children to fully exercise their participation rights under its provisions. To ensure their right to space, children must be given the opportunity to express their views; to have a voice, children must be supported to express their views; to have an audience, the view of the child must be listened to; and to ensure that children have influence, their views must be acted upon (see figure)."



Living with domestic violence and abuse is a children's rights issue as enshrined in the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child and should be recognised by us all as such. The most relevant Articles to DVA are:

Article 2 (non-discrimination)

The Convention applies to every child without discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, sex, religion, language, abilities or any other status, whatever they think or say, whatever their family background.

Article 3 (best interests of the child)

The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.

Article 12 (respect for the views of the child)

Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This right applies at all times, for example during immigration proceedings, housing decisions or the child's day-to-day home life.

Article 15 (freedom of association)

Every child has the right to meet with other children and to join groups and organisations, as long as this does not stop other people from enjoying their rights.

Article 19 (protection from violence, abuse and neglect)

Governments must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.

Article 28 (right to education)

Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free and different forms of secondary education must be available to every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity and their rights. Wealthy countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

Article 31 (leisure, play and culture)

Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.

Article 39 (recovery from trauma and reintegration)

Children who have experienced neglect, abuse, exploitation, torture or who are victims of war must receive special support to help them recover their health, dignity, self-respect and social life.

Article 42 (knowledge of rights)

Governments must actively work to make sure children and adults know about the Convention.

Resources

There are also a number of CRC based videos created by Laura Lundy on YouTube.

The Children and Young Peoples Commissioner, Scotland has a website with the articles explained clearly for children/young people. Accessing this could be useful to support your implementation of the code. <https://cypcs.org.uk/rights/uncrc/>

The Operation Encompass website provides a wide range of guides to support work in schools around domestic abuse.

There is also free National Operation Encompass online training. The Helpline provides advice and guidance for educational professionals about Operation Encompass and can be accessed Mon to Fri 8am to 1pm : +44(0)204 513 9990.

*All **Operation Encompass resources** are free.*





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