

Operation Encompass:

Guidance for next steps following a notification

For Schools and Educational Settings
in Kent and Medway



**Kent
Police**



Kent Safeguarding Children
multi-agency partnership



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What is Operation Encompass?

Operation Encompass is an information sharing partnership which supports children/young people experiencing domestic abuse.

Police are legally obligated to share information with education providers about incidents of domestic abuse they attend where there are reasonable grounds to believe a child/young person aged 5–18 may be a victim of domestic abuse including exposure as a witness.

This ensures the child/young person receives timely support from trusted adults in their educational setting.



Step-by-Step Guidance for Responding to an Operation Encompass Notification

1. Prepare for receiving an Operation Encompass Notification

You should ensure all Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs), Deputy DSLs and relevant staff are aware of this guidance, and it is included in staff safeguarding induction training and updates.

Any new or changing DSLs/deputy DSLs should complete the 70 minutes Operation Encompass training which can be accessed here:

[Online National Key Adult Training : Operation Encompass](#)

This training is a requirement for receiving Operation Encompass Notifications.

You should know who will be receiving the notifications in your setting and who will do this if they are not available.

2. Review the Notification Immediately

Notifications from Kent Police are typically sent before the start of the school day via secure email or your school's agreed communication system. Only the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy DSL should access and process this information.

Log the notification according to your school's child protection policy and safeguarding recording procedures.

3. Share Appropriately & Safeguard

The DSLs can then share this information with relevant staff, and they jointly assess what type of support (silent or overt) needs to be offered to the child/young person involved.

When an Operation Encompass notification is sent to the school, a copy is sent to Integrated Social Care where the police assess that the threshold for statutory intervention is met.

If you have any additional information that you think would inform their risk assessment, then this should be shared. Schools should not assume there is no further risk if social care are not involved.

4. Offer Support

You should offer the child/young person involved support – this will look different depending on your school, the situation and the child/young person.

You might want to consider:

- letting the child/young person know that you are aware that it might have been a difficult night, that the police have told you that they went to their home to make sure everyone was safe, and that you are there if they want to talk
- asking if there is anything they would like you to know, or if there is something they need
- having a quiet check-in with a trusted adult (*pastoral lead, learning mentor, etc.*)
- providing access to a safe, quiet space
- adjust expectations for the day if needed (*e.g. reduce academic pressure*)
- referrals for additional support
- the involvement of external agencies such as making a referral to a local domestic abuse organisation for support

Allow them time and space to talk if they initiate, but do not force a disclosure.

5. Record Actions Taken

Record Operation Encompass contacts for each child/young person ensuring school's actions are linked with other Child Protection /Safeguarding information for the child/young person.

Note any observations, conversations, or support offered in line with your safeguarding and child protection recording policy. Ensure records are factual, dated, and objective. Include the voice of the child /young person wherever possible. All records should be securely stored and accessible only to the DSL team.

6. Follow-Up as Needed

Monitor the child/young person over the following days for any changes or further needs. Discuss with your DSL team if additional support is required. Engage with the child/young person's wider support network only where appropriate.



Preparing for an Operation Encompass Notification Checklist

Kent Police aim to contact you on the first school morning after the police have attended a domestic abuse incident where children are present. The checklist allows Key Adult(s) in each school to feel confident about their school's response.

1. Be Prepared

- Who has completed Operation Encompass Training?
- Have Kent Police got the most appropriate contact details?
- Is Operation Encompass included in your school's child protection Policy so governors, parents and pupils are aware?
- Is it included in your safeguarding training?

2. Review Immediately

- Who is the key adult who will receive the information?
- Is the key adult available to review the notifications before 10am?
- If the key adult is not available who is the deputy?
- Who will check the school child protection records?

3. Share & Safeguard

- Who needs to know when a notification is received? Consider other *DSLs*, *pastoral staff*, *class teacher*, *head teacher*.
- Check with class teacher for any recent concerns.
- How will you share the information?
- If you have pertinent safeguarding information, it should be shared.

4. Offer Support

- What types of support can you offer? Support can be silent or overt.
- Consider mentoring or someone to talk to, letting the child/young person know that you are aware, offering quiet time, reducing pressure, referrals for specialist support
- DSLs should remain professionally curious about the child's wider experiences

5. Record Actions

- Who will update records?
- Does the key adult have access to child protection records?
- How will you record the information and actions?
- Ensure the child's child protection/safeguarding records are updated

6. Review

- Who is responsible for ongoing support?
- Is there a review process?
- Has the support offered been helpful?
- Is there different support that you will offer if another notification comes in for this family?
- Consider whether new information meets the threshold for further safeguarding action?

Frequently Asked Questions

Practical Considerations

What should we do if we are not receiving notifications?

If you believe you are not receiving notifications but have completed the [Op Encompass](#) training please contact Kent Police at OP.Encompass.CRU@kent.police.uk

Which schools & colleges receive notifications?

All primary, secondary and colleges who have completed the [Op Encompass](#) training receive notifications.

What do I do if the child is no longer at our school?

If you receive a notification for a child/young person that is no longer attending your school, please notify Kent Police at OP.Encompass.CRU@kent.police.uk

What if my school is out of county, but the pupil is from Kent & Medway?

You will not be notified about a domestic abuse incident that Kent Police attends if your school is outside of Kent and Medway.

Who in the school is informed?

The Level 3 safeguarding trained Designated Safeguarding Leads and Deputy's must be the key adults for Operation Encompass.

All schools and education settings must provide Kent Police with a secure, generically named email address which can only be accessed by the trained key adults. To change the email address registered with Kent Police please email OP.Encompass.CRU@kent.police.uk

How will we receive the information?

You will receive an email from the attending or investigating officer. The subject line will contain the words "Domestic Abuse Notification".

Why am I receiving emails for multiple children?

If there are multiple children/young people affected in the same family unit, but who attend different schools, then a single notification will be sent to all schools involved.

If you are aware of other children in the same family unit, can I talk to their education provider about the notification?

Sharing information helps to build up a fuller picture and is therefore an intrinsic part of any practitioner's job when working with children/young people and families. Similarly, it is also important to share information with agencies that may be formulating a risk assessment about whether a particular individual poses a risk to children/young people.

Data protection legislation (the Data Protection Act 2018 (the DPA 2018) and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)) does not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of safeguarding children, when it is necessary, proportionate and justified to do so. For more guidance on information sharing, and the legal basis for safeguarding services please see [Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK](#)

For more guidance on information sharing, and the legal basis for safeguarding, schools should refer to the DfE's Information sharing: advice for practitioners and the statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children at [DfE non statutory information sharing advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and carers](#)

How will we know if the young person has witnessed an incident the night before?

Even if a child/young person has not been present during the incident, they experience the abuse within the home. Children/young people can experience an incident by hearing, seeing, or because of the emotional and physical impact on a parent. It's helpful to understand that domestic abuse is not a stand-alone incident but is a pattern of controlling behaviour that can be reinforced by an explosive incident of violence or abuse. Children at any age are affected by this.

There are on average 35 incidents of domestic abuse before a call is made to the police. This means that there may have been up to 34 incidents experienced by the child/young person before you receive the first Operation Encompass notification.

Do we contact the parents to advise that we as a school are aware of the domestic abuse?

Do not inform the parents. The police will inform the parent(s) that the school will be informed about the incident.

A parent may discuss it with the school; there may be ways that you can support the non-abusive parent to stay safer, this could be offering a space for them to call support services, reflecting on the behaviour that concerns you to them, being supportive and non-judgemental. Never pressure anyone to leave an abusive situation, this must be their choice and does increase their risk in the short term.

Do we need to complete our own safeguarding referral?

If you have any additional information or the information you receive increases your level of concern for this child/young person, or you believe you have additional safeguarding information to share, you should follow the Kent support level guidance - [Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership](#) or the [Medway Right Support at the Right Time \(threshold\) Guidance - Medway Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

Will the child/young person know that the school have been informed of an incident? Should we tell them?

The child/young person may not know that you are aware of the incident. You may choose to tell the child/young person that the police let you know about what happened, and that you are there if they want to talk about it. This can relieve the pressure a child/young person feels to keep adult's secrets.

You may feel it is not appropriate to inform the child/young person, preferring to offer a safe environment and the opportunity to talk if they wish to. The circumstances for each individual will be different.

Will the family know that school have been informed?

Yes, police have an obligation to inform parents when they share information with other professionals.

Will we know if a person has been arrested?

Do not assume that a person has been arrested. Depending on the circumstances or situation of that incident the police will make the decision about what action to take. This won't be included in the notification.

Will schools be told of the identity of the perpetrator?

No, they will only be told the name of the child/young person, their date of birth and the severity of the incident. The information is for the school to be able to ensure the child/young person is supported appropriately.

Where can I access training?

All Designated Safeguarding Leads should undertake Key Adult online training; police forces will not share information until the training has been completed.

The online Operation Encompass National Key Adult Training is available from the Operation Encompass website: [Online National Key Adult Training: Operation Encompass](#)

What is Operation Encompass Plus?

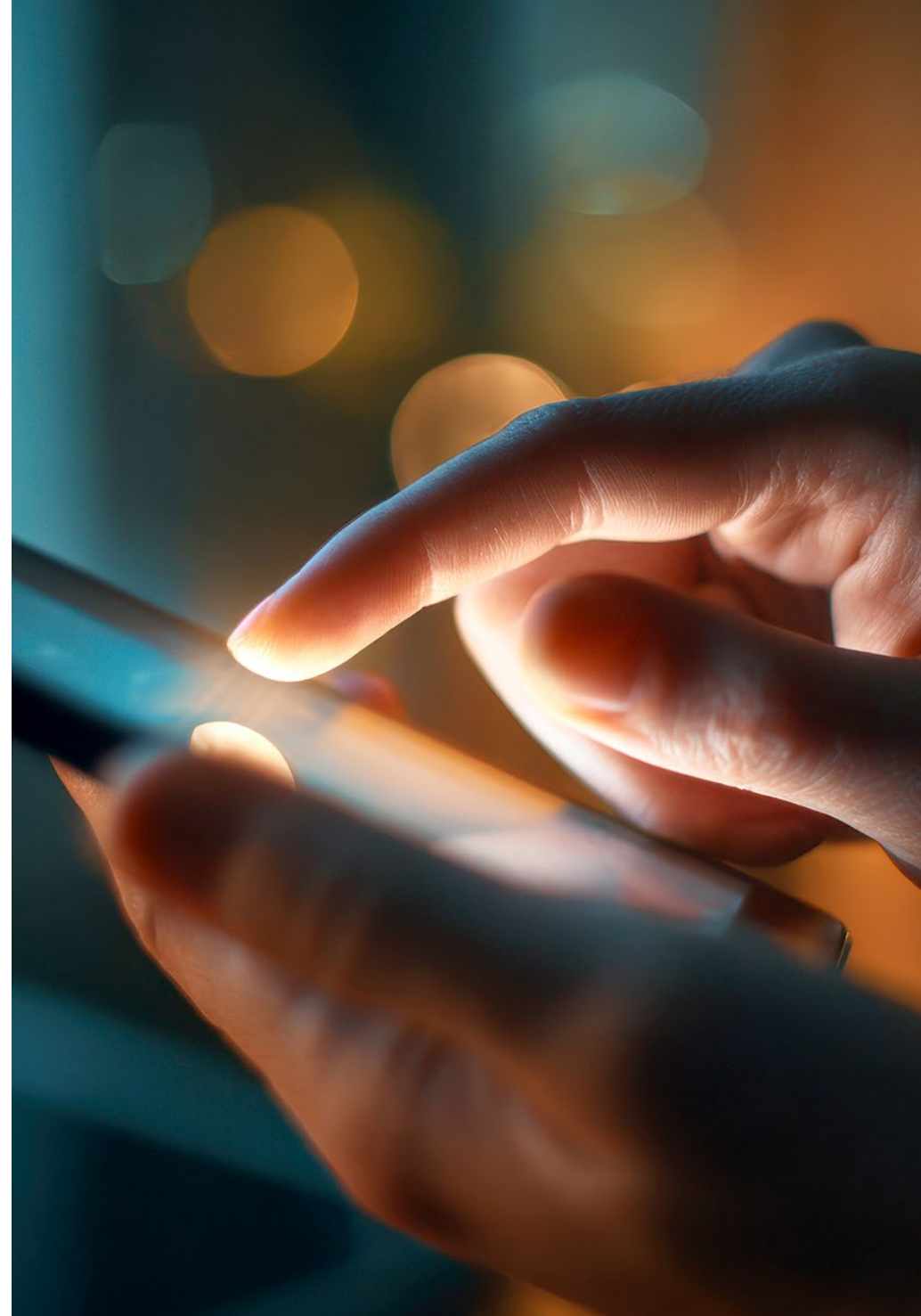
Operation Encompass Plus, whilst not yet in statute, is a requirement of Kent Police and allows information to be shared with schools for incidents that affect a child/young person outside of a domestic abuse incident.

This is when the attending officer thinks the school would benefit from knowing about any incident that has happened to a child/young person so that the school can deliver support to their pupil with a view to reducing the risks.

Can I call anyone for support?

The Teachers' Helpline provides advice and guidance for educational professionals about Operation Encompass. Access to Educational or Clinical Psychologists can enable staff in educational settings to discuss how best to support individual children who are experiencing domestic abuse, or to discuss whole school policies for supporting children/young people.

Call the Operation Encompass Teachers' Helpline: **0204 513 9990** (Charged at local rate) Monday to Friday 8am to 1pm.



Your Operation Encompass Response

How should we support a child affected by domestic abuse?

Operation Encompass does not expect school staff to be therapists or counsellors; we know that there are incredibly simple yet highly effective ways that schools can support children experiencing domestic abuse.

This does not necessarily involve removing a child from the classroom or engaging external counsellors or therapists, which a child may neither want, nor be ready for. Instead, it emphasises fostering a school culture and ethos where classrooms and professional relationships provide consistent support for children. The focus is on the actions that school staff can take on a daily basis to create such an environment.

What support is there if we are concerned about unhealthy relationships among children/young people?

You can find out more about support for children and domestic abuse here:

- [Children and young people - Kent & Medway Domestic Abuse Partnership](#)
and about the services available here:
- [Get support near you - Kent & Medway Domestic Abuse Partnership](#)
- [Kent support level guidance - Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership](#)
- [Medway Right Support at the Right Time \(threshold\) Guidance Medway Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)
- [Welcome to the Kent and Medway Safeguarding Children](#)

If you are concerned a child is in immediate danger, please dial 999 or report non-urgent crime to Kent Police at www.kent.police.uk/report

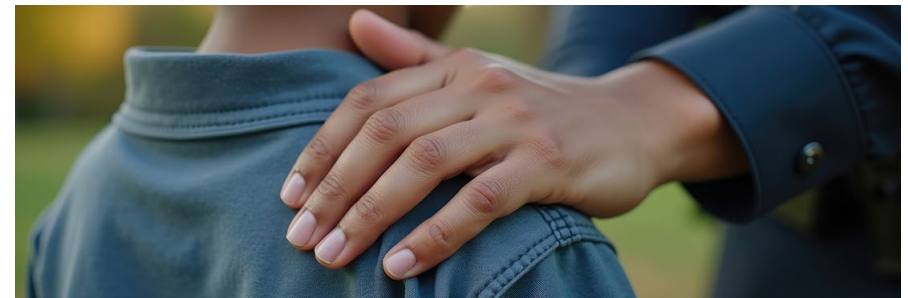
What Policies should include reference to Operation Encompass?

Information contained on this page should be referenced in your setting's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Policy and any related pastoral support policies or procedures.

What have other schools done to support children after an Op Encompass notification?

- 1) Operation Encompass notification to school, key adult greeted child as she arrived. A member of staff took her quietly to one side to a room and explained that they knew what had happened that previous night at home. They ensured that she was OK, that she had breakfast and then talked about how to support her particularly that day as she was due to sit a GCSE examination. They offered her a separate room and any other support they could. She took her examination and the school sent a supporting letter alongside her paper explaining what she had been through the night before. She passed her examination.
- 2) A 9-year-old boy walked into his classroom, his teacher quietly took him to one side, explained that he knew what had happened the night before at his home and gently asked if there was anything he or the school could do to help. The teacher describes that the 'tension visibly dissolved from his body' and he said to his teacher. "At last, there is someone that I can talk to about all of this."

- 3) The DSL approached a child after they had received contact from Operation Encompass. The child commented, 'How do you know?' The DSL responded by reassuring the child that all the adults who care, all those who work with them in school, care about them and want to make sure they are safe. They reassured the child that the school staff are there if the child needed them. The DSL recounts "it's a huge relief. There's this incredible sigh of relief from the child" and we can go on to support them
- 4) "What [the notification] allowed us to do... [He] went to see our therapeutic counsellor, opened up straight away because I think it was a relief now that people knew that was happening. He didn't need to tell anybody. He didn't need to sort of betray Mum's trust because people already knew he hadn't done it. Other people had already done it for him, and he was able to just completely open up... and we were able to not only support him with how he was feeling - his emotions and stuff - but we were able to put in a safety plan for him."



About Children and Domestic Abuse

How many children in my school are living with domestic abuse?

While no official source collects data on children affected by domestic abuse, research suggests as many as **one in five** children (20%) live in a home where there is a perpetrator of domestic abuse present (Radford, 2011). This equates to around six children in an average UK class size of 30 pupils.

Safe Lives data indicates that at least **one child in every primary school** classroom will have lived with domestic abuse since birth.

How does domestic abuse affect children?

Children experiencing domestic abuse are victims of domestic abuse in their own right. They are often living in a state of heightened anxiety and hyper vigilance. Their homes, rather than being a place of safety and security, are a place of stress, trauma and fear, leading to feelings of insecurity and danger.

78% of children living with domestic abuse are directly harmed by the perpetrator. *[Data about domestic abuse - SafeLives](#)

How can we ensure our school is a safe place for children experiencing domestic abuse?

You can embed a culture of support and respect through many of your school activities. For instance:

- The school's 'Behaviour' and 'Child Protection' policies are particularly important; they should reflect trauma informed and responsive practice, challenging a "what's wrong with you?" to "what's happened to you?"
- Teach pupils about respect, equality, and non-violent relationships through lessons that promote emotional intelligence and healthy communication skills as part of your [Relationships and Sex Education](#) (RSE) curriculum. Discuss the signs of abuse and encourage pupils to confide in trusted adults.
- Ensure that all staff, including non-teaching staff and governors, are educated about domestic abuse and its impact on adult and child victims.
- Demonstrate professional curiosity about the living experience of the children in your care and showing compassion in all interactions, this means that we can place a child's behaviour in a context.
- Ensuring that parents know that you have an understanding about domestic abuse and that you will support their child and the family non-judgementally.

Glossary with Definitions

Operation Encompass & Relevant Police Acronyms

ACE	Adverse Child Experience
AP	Adult Protection
AP	Alleged Perpetrator
AWARE Principles	A guide for things to look out for and be aware of to enhance our professional curiosity in identifying vulnerability. The AWARE principles support both Voice of the Child and Voice of the Vulnerable Adult: Appearance, Words, Activity, Relationships and Dynamics, Environment
BWV	Body Worn Video
CPAP	Child Protection and Adult Protection Team
CRU	Central Referral Unit
DA	Domestic Abuse
DASH	Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour Based Violence risk assessment
DSLs	Designated Safeguarding Leads
DVDS	Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme
DVPN	Domestic Violence Protection Notice

Educational Settings	Includes Schools and Colleges
EH	Early Help
EHE	Electively Home Educated
FDS	Front Door Service
ICPC	Initial Child Protection Conference
ICS	Integrated Children's Services
IDVA	Independent Domestic Violence Advisor
IP	Injured Party
LADO	Local Authority Designated Officer
LSP	Lead Safeguarding Partner
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangement
MARAC	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference
MASA	Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements
MASH	Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (Medway only)
NCI	Non-Crime Incident

Notification	Communication from Police alerting school to a domestic abuse incident that has occurred
OIC	Officer in Case
Perpetrator	Person alleged to be the suspect in the incident.
PR	Parental Responsibility
RCPC	Review Child Protection Conference
RDAIT	Rape and Domestic Abuse Investigation Team
Section 47	Refers to Section 47 of the Children's Act
SIO	Senior Investigating Officer
Strategy Discussion (Strat)	Multi-agency strategy discussion under Section 47 of the Children's Act
Voice of the Child (VotC)	This is the process of actively involving children in decisions that affect them by understanding their views, opinions and experiences through both verbal and non-verbal communication including their behaviour and environment. It goes beyond their feelings, experiences and needs which can all be expressed by their behaviour, actions and even silence.