

WHAT IS OPERATION ENCOMPASS?

Operation Encompass is a National Operation that directly connects the police with schools and early years settings to secure better outcomes for children who are subject or witness to police-attended incidents of domestic abuse. Provision of support within the school/early years environment means children are better safeguarded against the short-, medium- and long-term effects of domestic abuse.

Operation Encompass was initially set up as a charitable organisation in 2011. Since inception it has facilitated effective interventions to many thousands of children who've experienced domestic abuse.

Operation Encompass is a police and education early information sharing partnership enabling schools and early years settings to offer immediate support to children and young people experiencing domestic abuse. Information is shared by the police with the school/setting's trained Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) via Email on the morning of the next school day after officers have attended a domestic abuse incident, thus enabling appropriate support to be given, dependent upon the needs and wishes of the child.

The Email will only inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead that the Police have attended an incident and will request that the school is mindful of that in their care and responses to the child throughout the school day. The school will not be informed about the specific details of the incident. The only exception would be when Warwickshire County Council and Warwickshire police deem the incident to be a child protection matter that requires further investigation. Information would then be shared with the school as part of Warwickshire County Council's child protection checks and investigation, which is current practice and will not be changed by Operation Encompass.

Children experiencing domestic abuse are negatively impacted by this exposure. Domestic abuse has been identified as an Adverse Childhood Experience and can lead to emotional, physical and psychological harm. Operation Encompass aims to mitigate this harm by facilitating immediate support, making a child's day better and giving them a better tomorrow.

Operation Encompass believes that children are victims of domestic abuse in their own right and should be acknowledged as such.

What Operation Encompass does

Operation Encompass provides an efficient, confidential channel of communication between police forces and Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) within schools and early years settings. This enables the immediate and discrete recognition of the child's situation by the DSL, ensuring the provision of a secure, supportive and

emotionally connected environment by the school/setting so that the wider effects of abuse are ameliorated.

Encompass ensures that all incidents of domestic abuse are shared with schools and early years settings, not just those where an offence can be identified.

Warwickshire is working towards full implementation of Operation Encompass by September 2019

The principles of Operation Encompass are very simple and easy to adopt. Within every school a trained Key Adult is appointed – the Key Adult receives information about abusive incidents directly from the police. The Key Adult will be notified prior to the start of the next school day (or as early as feasibly possible) that the police have attended an incident of domestic abuse to which a child has been exposed. This timely knowledge enables a plan for appropriate support to be made for that child so that all interactions, from when the child first arrives at the school gates, are of a positive nature.

The Key Adult must be a trained Designated or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead and should attend a mandatory police and education led Operation Encompass briefing. They are then able to cascade this training to their school governors and all staff, creating an awareness throughout their school of Operation Encompass, how it mitigates the effects of domestic abuse, and its broader consequent benefits. They can also communicate the school's Operation Encompass participation to the broader school community and stakeholders, for example by placing information on the school's website, in its prospectus and by sending the joint police/school letter to parents. In order to ensure that information is received and acted upon as quickly as possible, all Email notifications will be sent to the Headteacher's Email account and to one other senior DSL's account.

Operation Encompass is an integral component in child safeguarding and protection policies and, as such, should also be cited in the school's safeguarding policy. Participation in Operation Encompass mandates a secure record-keeping trail, which may be electronic or paper based. Within Operation Encompass all records should be managed and stored with the same highest level of confidentiality and security as other safeguarding and child protection records and in full accordance with GDPR, i.e. they should be stored in the child's separate safeguarding file.

Operation Encompass - how the police participate

Operation Encompass provides a set of simple and effective procedures which together enable Warwickshire police to communicate efficiently and effectively with the schools attended by children who have been exposed to domestic abuse or other forms of adverse childhood experience. Early intervention and the provision of appropriate support in these events has a significant positive effect on affected

children. It helps minimise the long-term effects and promotes positive outcomes for the child, the wider family and the community at large. Operation Encompass provides a proven and easily understood framework in which these incidents can be consistently and appropriately addressed and recorded.

Within each police force individual responsibilities are clearly defined:

The Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner make the initial commitment to the Operation Encompass scheme, for which a member of the Senior Management Team takes on strategic responsibility.

An officer of appropriate responsibility is appointed as police lead to oversee implementation of Operation Encompass by the force, and to direct associated policies. This officer ensures effective delivery of Operation Encompass as directed by the Home Office and identifies the most effective method of communicating with schools ahead of the school day.

The force briefs every school's Designated Safeguarding Leads. Operation Encompass provides the appropriate teaching materials. These briefings ensure that the highly confidential information the police supply to the DSL is treated with appropriate care and sensitivity, in situations which are frequently rapidly evolving.

The force maintains up-to-date contact details for all DSLs trained in Operation Encompass procedures.

All frontline officers within the force are fully trained in Operation Encompass - its purpose, when to apply it and how to apply it correctly.

The force provides a letter template to schools, used to inform parents of the school's participation in the scheme.

The force records the number of children supported and shares this data with the Operation Encompass charity.

Operation Encompass is vital to ensuring the true partnership required to safeguard these children, ensuring that police and schools deliver the necessary support at the right time. This is in the hours immediately after exposure to the incident and that information must be available in schools at the right time in order to help children and young people overcome the traumatic events they have been exposed to.

If there is a true intention to help children exposed to domestic abuse then Operation Encompass is a proven approach to ensure the protection of our children.

DS 423 Rhys Bower
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Operation Encompass lead.