

Stichting Haagsche Schoolvereniging



Procedure for reporting indications of potential domestic violence and child abuse

1. Introduction.

The Stichting Haagsche Schoolvereniging (hereafter called HSV)

- is responsible for ensuring high quality education for the pupils of the schools and departments governed by the HSV. This responsibility also applies in the event of (suspected) domestic violence or child abuse;
- expects that, given this responsibility, the staff of the HSV in their contacts with the pupils, be alert to signals which may indicate domestic violence or child abuse and that the staff respond effectively to these signals;
- wants to incorporate the improvements contained in the national reporting procedure, published on 1 January 2019;
- on the basis of the above, needs to establish reporting procedure, so that the members of staff of the HSV know the steps that are expected of them in the event of suspected domestic violence or child abuse;
- outlined in this reporting procedure are how the members of staff are supported by the HSV;
- understands that the use or threat of by domestic violence or violence, at any location, by someone from the domestic environment; violence means: physical, sexual or psychological damage to the personal integrity of the victim, including

parental abuse and violence relating to honour. The domestic environment of the victim includes: (ex-)partners, direct family members, other family members and housemates;

- understands that child abuse can include: any physical, sexual or psychological form of threats or violent interaction imposed on a minor, either actively or passively, by the parents or others on whom the minor is dependent or to whom they are bound, and which includes behaviours likely to cause serious physical or psychological harm to the minor, including honour-related violence and female genital mutilation;
- staff and members of staff understand this reporting procedure: the professional staff working for the HSV and in this role offer the pupils of the HSV care, guidance, education or other means of support;
- pupils understand that through this procedure they can receive support from staff at the HSV.

Taking into account:

- General EU data protection regulation,
- the Law on Youth Care,
- the Law on Community Support,
- the Law on Primary Education,
- the Law on Reporting Regulations on Domestic Violence and Child Abuse.

The HSV has developed the following protocol on the Reporting of Domestic Violence and Child Abuse:

2. Plan of action in the event of suspected domestic violence and child abuse:

Step 1: assessing the signals.

Record the signals which may confirm the suspicion of domestic violence or child abuse. Also make a record of the contacts regarding such signals, as well as the steps and the decisions that are being taken. Describe the signals as factually as possible. If hypotheses and assumptions are documented, then this must be clearly stated. Make a follow-up note if the hypotheses or assumptions are confirmed or not at a later stage. If third party information

is recorded, then the source must also be reported. Diagnoses are only recorded if they have been stated by a qualified expert.

Beware: these steps are not applicable if there are signals that the domestic violence or child abuse is committed by a qualified teacher. In these cases other protocols are to be followed.

Step 2: Consultation with colleagues and, if necessary, the consultation of the Child Abuse and Reporting Agency (Veilig Thuis) or the school social worker.

Discuss the signals with the school or department experts (mentor, school leader, trusted person). Ask Veilig Thuis and/or the school social worker for advice.

Step 3: Discussion with the pupil (older than twelve years of age) or parent/carer (if it concerns a child under the age of twelve).

A good preparation is necessary in order to be able to discuss the signals. An expert colleague and/or a professional from the Veilig Thuis and/or the school social worker may be involved with the preparation and discussion.

The discussion:

1. Explain the reason for the discussion.
2. Describe the facts and observations which have been noted.
3. Ask the pupil for a reaction.
4. Only give an interpretation of the facts and observations after this reaction.

Reporting a case without having spoken to the pupil/parent/carer is only permitted when:

- the safety of the pupil or someone else is at stake:
- there are reasons to believe that if a discussion were to take place, this would result in the pupil breaking off contact, not wishing to talk any more, etc.

Step 4: Evaluate the nature and the seriousness of the domestic violence or child abuse.

Estimate the risks of domestic violence or child abuse, based on the signals, the advice which has been given and the discussion with the pupil. Also evaluate the nature and the seriousness. An external organisation (Veilig Thuis and/or the school social worker) may provide a risk assessment instrument to help evaluate the risks.

Assessment process:

1) assessing suspicion: steps 1 to 3 have been completed and;

a) no action is needed: record in the file and close the file

b) there is a strong suspicion of domestic violence and / or child abuse; the management is informed

2) safety: Is there an acute risk to the child's safety as the abuse is ongoing?

a) if not, determine whether help is needed (see step 5)

b) if so, make a report to Veilig Thuis (see step 5)

Step 5: Decision: organise help oneself or seek assistance.

If the school decides that, on basis of this assessment, it is possible to protect the child against (the risk of) domestic violence or child abuse, then the school will:

- organise help;
- monitor the effects of the help;
- report the case once more if there are signs that the domestic violence or the child abuse does not stop or starts again.

If the school concludes that it is not possible for the school to offer the child the necessary protection against domestic violence or child abuse, then the suspicion is reported to Veilig Thuis as mentioned in Step 1. In consultation with the Veilig Thuis it is decided what the school is able to do.

Discuss the report beforehand with the pupil (above 12 years old) or with the parent/carer:

- explain why the case is being reported;
- ask specifically for a reaction;
- discuss how you can meet any possible objections from the pupils or parent/carer;
- if this is not possible, then consider the need to protect the pupil, or the family member involved, against the violence or abuse;
- report the case if the protection of the pupil, or the family member involved, is the deciding factor.

Assessment process:

3) Are we able to offer or organize effective help and can the threat be averted?

a) No: report at Veilig Thuis

b) Yes: consultation with stakeholders about the assistance.

4) Do the people involved accept help and are they willing to actively engage themselves?

a) No: report to Veilig Thuis

b) Yes: initiate help and agree on the period within which the effect must be felt. Discuss concrete steps and document. Decide who has which role and who is the case manager.

5) Results achieved?

a) No: report to Veilig Thuis

b) Yes: Make agreements about monitoring the safety of those involved

3. Responsibilities of the HSV for the creation of conditions for a safe working and reporting climate.

In order to make it possible for the staff of the HSV to identify domestic violence and child abuse in a safe working environment and to take the necessary steps set out in the reporting procedure, the HSV must ensure that:

- all school departments and all parents/carers are informed of the aim and the contents of the reporting procedure;
- there is regular training and other forms of professional development, so that the staff may develop sufficient knowledge and skills concerning the noticing of domestic violence and child abuse and keep these up-to-date;
- there are designated experts within the HSV network who can assist the staff with the reporting and with taking the necessary steps;
- the reporting procedure must be incorporated with the general procedures within the HSV (discussions during staff meetings, report procedure must be openly available etc.);

- the efficiency of the reporting procedure will be evaluated regularly and, if necessary, actions will be taken to improve the working of the reporting procedure;
- staff are aware of the support offered by the HSV in the event of parents/carers questioning the manner in which they are implementing the reporting procedure.