

Reporting code for responding to signs of domestic violence and child abuse

The Executive Board of Saxion University of

Applied Sciences **Considering:**

- that the Executive Board is responsible for providing high-quality support to its students and that this responsibility is certainly also relevant in the case of support for those students who are or may be affected by domestic violence or child abuse;
- that, based on this responsibility, the professionals (see definition below) employed by Saxion are expected in all their dealings with students to be alert for signs that may indicate domestic violence or child abuse and to respond effectively to these signs;
- that the Executive Board aims to establish a Reporting Code so that professionals employed within Saxion know which steps they can take and what is expected of them if they observe signs of domestic violence and child abuse;
- that in this Reporting Code, the Executive Board will also set out how it will assist the professionals in carrying out these steps;
- that the Executive Board will appoint two persons within the institution as internal counsellors who have sufficient knowledge and experience to appraise the signs of domestic violence or child abuse, in order to support the professionals in taking the necessary steps;
- that domestic violence is defined as: threats of violence or actual violence at any location by someone from the person's household, in which violence is understood to include: the physical, sexual or psychological violation of the victim's personal integrity, including elder abuse and neglect and honour-based violence. The victim's household includes: partners and former partners, immediate and extended family members, informal carers and housemates;
- that child abuse is defined as: any interaction of a physical, psychological or sexual nature that is threatening or violent to a minor that the parents or other persons with whom the minor has a relationship of dependency or constraint impose actively or passively on the minor, causing or liable to cause serious harm to the minor in the form of physical or psychological injury (including honour-based violence and female genital mutilation);
- that professionals in this code are defined as: professionals employed by Saxion and who, in this connection, offer education, supervision or another kind of support to students of the institution, such as; the lecturer, study career counsellor, internship supervisor, the student counsellor, etc.;
- that employees in this code are defined as: persons employed by Saxion in accordance with an employment contract, as well as persons active within Saxion based on an employment agency, internship or secondment contract or based on a voluntary work agreement;
- that students in this code are defined as: each person within Saxion taking part in any form of education and to whom the professional provides his or her professional services.

Taking into account:

- the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- articles 1.20 and 1.21 of the Higher Education and Scientific Research Act,
- the Saxion Privacy Statement and Privacy Policy.

Adopts the following Saxion Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Reporting Code.

Step-by-step plan for signs of domestic violence.

Step 1 Identifying the signs.

The employee who observes signs of domestic violence reports this to the professional. The professional who suspects or determines that there is a case of domestic violence or child abuse: identifies the signs of domestic violence or child abuse and records these; records the contacts made regarding these signs; records the steps taken; and records the decisions taken and other relevant data.

Child check

The professional asks the student whether any minors are entrusted to his or her care, in all cases where his or her medical condition or other circumstances form a potential threat to the development or safety of these children. If children are dependent on the student, the following will be recorded in the file:

- the number and ages of the children;
- whether the student shares childcare with a partner or former partner or another adult.

Signs in parental behaviour

As there is generally no contact with the children of students in higher education, the professional will record any 'signs in parental behaviour' if a student's physical or mental condition or other circumstances could form a threat to the safety or development of any children dependent on the student. The Reporting Code steps also apply to these 'signs in parental behaviour'.

Step 2 Peer review with the internal counsellor and, where necessary, consulting Veilig Thuis (Advice and Reporting Centre for Child Abuse and Neglect) or an injury interpretation expert.

The professional discusses the signs of domestic violence or child abuse (as defined above) with the internal counsellor and, where necessary, requests the internal counsellor's advice regarding the next step. In consultation with the professional, the internal counsellor may request advice from Veilig Thuis or from an injury interpretation expert if there is a need for further clarification on the nature and cause of the injury.

If there is insufficient knowledge available within Saxion on the approach to specific forms of violence, the professional will always ask Veilig Thuis for advice on the next steps. The outcomes of the peer review and/or the advice offered by Veilig Thuis should be recorded.

If the professional needs support in preparing or conducting the interview with the student, the professional will consult the internal counsellor to determine who should conduct the interview with the student. The internal counsellor will take over the follow-up steps from the professional at the professional's request. The student will be informed of this.

Step 3 Interview with the student.

The professional or internal counsellor will discuss the signs with the student. The internal counsellor will also consult Veilig Thuis where necessary, in consultation with the professional. Generally, interviews with the student will be arranged as follows:

1. The professional will explain the purpose of the interview to the student.
2. The professional will describe the facts that have been determined and the observations that have been made.
3. The professional will invite the student to respond to this.
4. Following the response and where possible, the professional will present an interpretation of what he/she has seen, heard and observed.
5. At the end of the interview, the discussion will be summarised and the next steps will be discussed. The student's experience of the interview will also be covered as well as the option to share the signs with Veilig Thuis.
6. The student will be notified that a file is being formed in accordance with the Saxion Privacy Policy.

The professional/internal counsellor will only cancel this interview if he/she judges this to be responsible in connection with his own safety, the safety of the student or of others or if it could reasonably be feared that the student would withdraw and break contact, which would result in the student no longer being sufficiently protected from potential violence. If such situations occur, the professional will always act in consultation with the internal counsellor, and the internal counsellor will, in turn, discuss these cases with Veilig Thuis.

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

With a view to a possible report as referred to in step 5, the professional will make an appraisal of the risk of domestic violence or child abuse based on the signs, any obtained advice and on the interview with the student, and will discuss this with the internal counsellor. The nature and seriousness of the domestic violence or child abuse should also be considered.

Using the information from step 3, the professional and the internal counsellor will discuss the risk to and make an appraisal of the student's and employee's safety (using a risk assessment instrument where necessary). In cases of doubt, Veilig Thuis can always be consulted again at any point.

The professional will examine the following considerations. The internal counsellor will assist the professional where necessary, and/or will request advice from Veilig Thuis.

Considerations in step 4:

1. Based on steps 1 to 4 of the Reporting Code, do I suspect a threat of or actual domestic violence and/or child abuse?
 - **No** Conclude and record this in the file.
 - **Yes:** Continue with consideration 2.

2. Based on steps 1 to 4 of the Reporting Code, do I consider the situation to be one of immediate danger and/or structurally unsafe?
 - **No** Continue with consideration 3 in step 5.
 - **Yes:** Report to Veilig Thuis. Considerations 3 to 5 will be discussed with Veilig Thuis.

Step 5 Decisions: organising self help or reporting.

Saxion recognises making a report of potential domestic violence or child abuse to Veilig Thuis as being a professional standard and as such is necessary:

- in ALL cases that pose immediate danger and/or are structurally unsafe;
- in all OTHER cases in which the professional judges that he/she is unable to offer or organise effective help for the risks of domestic violence and/or child abuse, considering his competences, his responsibilities and his professional boundaries;
- If a professional offers or organises help to protect those involved from the risks of domestic violence and/or child abuse and observes that the unsafe situation does not stop or is repeated.

Considerations in step 5:

3. Am I capable of offering or organising effective help to ward off the threat or future threat of domestic violence and/or child abuse?
 - **No** Report to Veilig Thuis
 - **Yes:** Continue with consideration 4.

For Saxion it is not possible to offer or organise effective help to ward off the threat or future threat of domestic violence and/or child abuse if the professional:

- has insufficient options to form a current picture of the safety situation and/or
- cannot obtain sufficient insight of unsafe events in the recent history and/or of the facts that form the basis of the possible observed unsafe situation and/or
- has insufficient options to offer or organise appropriate and cohesive support that would result in a safe situation.

4. Do those involved accept support to ward off the threat or future threat of domestic violence and/or child abuse and are they prepared to commit to this?
 - **No** Report to Veilig Thuis.
 - **Yes:** Offer or organise help, continue with consideration 5.

If YES is answered to consideration 3, the professional will make agreements with the involved person about the chain partners to be involved (including in any event Veilig Thuis), the objectives, results, monitoring of results and timeframe on which results are to be evaluated.

5. Will the support lead to the desired results within the desired timeframe with respect to safety and/or welfare or restoring the welfare of all those involved?

- **No** Submit report or new report to Veilig Thuis.
- **Yes:** end support with agreements about monitoring future safe and unsafe situations with those involved and the cooperating parties.

Saxion's responsibilities for establishing conditions for a safe work and reporting climate.

To enable professionals to identify signs of domestic violence and child abuse in a safe working climate and to follow the Reporting Code steps, the Executive Board will ensure that:

- the objective, purpose and content of the Reporting Code is communicated within the institution and among students;
- two internal counsellors are appointed, preferably one in Enschede and one in Deventer, who are available to support professionals in identifying and following the steps mentioned in the Code. The two internal counsellors will be offered the necessary training and other forms of professional development;
- professional development opportunities will be offered regularly as well as other forms of development opportunities to enable the professionals to acquire sufficient knowledge and skills and maintain these at the required level for identifying signs of domestic violence and child abuse, and to be able to follow the Reporting Code and consideration framework effectively;
- the effect of the Reporting Code will be evaluated annually and, where necessary, actions will be taken to optimise the use of the Reporting Code;
- the Executive Board will communicate within and outside the organisation that the actions, as described in this Reporting Code, form part of the Saxion policy and that Saxion and Saxion professionals are expected to act in accordance with this Reporting Code;
- if a professional is confronted by a student or other party, whether justified or not, with respect to his actions in accordance with this Code, the Executive Board will ensure that the professional is sufficiently supported by Saxion and, where necessary, will be provided with sufficient external or internal legal support.