Introduction

Under Article 1.21 of the Dutch Higher Education and Research Act (WHW), institutions of higher education are obliged to adopt a code for reporting domestic violence, on the basis of which a step-by-step approach is provided for dealing with signs of domestic violence or child abuse. The institutions are also obliged to promote awareness and use of the reporting code among their professionals.

Purpose of the reporting code

Professionals and institutions can play an important role in drawing attention to domestic violence and child abuse. The purpose of this reporting code is to support and guide the professionals and liaison officers of Radboud University in the steps to be taken if there are signs of such violence.
Code for Reporting Domestic Violence and Child Abuse in Higher Education

Preamble

The Executive Board of Radboud University Whereas

Radboud University is responsible for providing a high-quality service to its students and staff members and this responsibility also applies in respect of its service to students or staff members who are (suspected of being) affected by domestic violence or child abuse;

on the basis of this responsibility, the professionals working at Radboud University are expected to be alert in all their dealings with students and staff members to signs of possible domestic violence or child abuse and to respond effectively to such signs;

Radboud University wishes to adopt a reporting code so that the professionals working at Radboud University know what steps they are expected to take if there are signs of domestic violence or child abuse;

‘domestic violence’ means physical, psychological or sexual violence, or the threat thereof, by someone in the domestic circle. ‘Violence’ here means the physical, sexual, psychological or economic violation of the personal integrity of the victim. This also includes elder abuse, violence against parents, female genital mutilation, forced marriage and honour-related violence. The domestic circle of the victim includes family members, members of the same household, a spouse or former spouse, a partner or former partner, and caregivers;

‘child abuse’ means any form of interaction of a physical, psychological or sexual nature that is threatening or violent towards a minor, which is actively or passively imposed by the parents or other persons with whom the minor is in a relationship where there is dependency or a lack of freedom, as a result of which serious harm is caused or likely to be caused to the minor in the form of physical or psychological injury. This also includes honour-related violence, forced marriage, female genital mutilation and the witnessing (as a minor) of domestic violence between parents and/or other members of the same household;

‘professional’ means any professional working for Radboud University who, in this context, provides students or staff members of the organisation with care, guidance, education or other means of support;

‘student’ means any person enrolled as a student with Radboud University;

Adopted at the meeting of the Executive Board
‘staff member’ means any person employed by Radboud University, whether on a permanent or temporary employment contract, to whom the professional provides professional services;

‘liaison officer’ means a designated person working for Radboud University. The liaison officer has a coordinating role and must always be consulted by the professional if there is any suspicion of domestic violence or child abuse. The liaison officer is the person who considers whether to involve the domestic violence and child abuse organisation Veilig Thuis and/or to file a report;

‘person concerned’ means a student or staff member within the meaning of this reporting code;

taking into account Articles 1.20 and 1.21 of the Dutch Higher Education and Research Act, guidelines of Radboud University pursuant to the General Data Protection Regulation, and guidelines and/or codes drawn up by Radboud University relating to (sexual) intimidation, hereby adopts the following Code for Reporting Domestic Violence and Child Abuse.

**Code for Reporting Domestic Violence and Child Abuse in Higher Education. Step 1: Identify the signs**

The professional at Radboud University identifies the signs that corroborate or disprove a suspicion of domestic violence or child abuse and reports them to the liaison officer.

The liaison officer records the instances of contact relating to the signs, as well as the steps taken and decisions made. The professional or liaison officer uses an alerting tool, if desired, when identifying domestic violence or child abuse.\(^1\)

The liaison officer describes the signs as factually as possible. If third-party information is used, the source is recorded.

If hypotheses and assumptions are also recorded, the liaison officer explicitly states that they are hypotheses or assumptions. The liaison officer makes a follow-up note if a hypothesis or assumption is later corroborated or disproved.

---

\(^1\) The sequence of the steps below is not mandatory. What matters is that the liaison officer runs through all the steps at some point in the process before deciding to file a report.

\(^2\) The list of sources provides additional sources that can be consulted, including tools for alerting and risk assessment.
The liaison officer only records diagnoses if the liaison officer or professional is competent to do so.

**Parental signs**

In higher education there is usually no contact with the children of a person concerned. Even if the professional or the liaison officer does not see the child, they may still ask themselves whether a child is safe with the parents. The liaison officer therefore records any ‘parental signs’ if the physical or psychological condition of the person concerned or other circumstances may pose a threat to the safety or development of the children who are dependent on the person concerned. The steps of the reporting code also apply to these ‘parental signs’.

If there are children who are dependent on the person concerned, the liaison officer records the following in the file, if possible:

- the number and age of the children;
- whether the person concerned shares responsibility for caring for the children with a partner or former partner or with another adult.

**Signs of violence by a professional in a caregiving or education-providing relationship**

If the signs relate to possible violence committed by a professional towards a student\(^3\), the signs must be reported in accordance with the internal guidelines\(^4\) of Radboud University. In that case, this step-by-step plan does not apply.

**Signs of violence between students**

Signs of possible violence committed between students are not covered by the step-by-step plan of this reporting code. These signs are reported in accordance with the internal guidelines\(^5\) of Radboud University. There is one exception to this rule: signs of possible violence are in fact covered by the reporting code if the violence takes place between partners who are both students or staff members of Radboud University, e.g. if they live together as spouses or partners.

---

\(^3\) In the event of sexual violence towards a student who is a minor, the board of the institution must be notified; the board must consult with the confidential educational inspector, and the violence may have to be declared (Article 1.20 of the Dutch Higher Education and Research Act).

\(^4\) Radboud University Complaints Procedure for Undesirable Behaviour

\(^5\) See under 4
Step 2: Peer consultation and, if necessary, consultation with Veilig Thuis

The professional discusses the signs with the liaison officer.

The liaison officer seeks advice from Veilig Thuis or from an expert in interpreting injuries if more clarity is required about (the nature and cause of) injuries. The liaison officer can submit the questions and concerns to Veilig Thuis anonymously.

Advice for specific forms of violence

Radboud University does not have sufficient knowledge of how to deal with specific forms of violence, such as honour-related violence, forced marriage, sexual abuse, female genital mutilation or elder abuse. In such situations, the liaison officer always seeks advice from Veilig Thuis on what to do next. This advice is also important for carefully weighing up the possible safety risks of any follow-up action.

The liaison officer records the outcome of the peer consultation and/or the advice given by Veilig Thuis.

Step 3: Meeting with the person concerned

The liaison officer discusses the signs with the person concerned. If assistance is needed with preparing for or conducting the meeting with the person concerned, the liaison officer consults a colleague who is an expert and/or Veilig Thuis. The meeting with the person concerned covers at least the following:

- the purpose of the meeting;
- a description of the facts established and the observations made;
- an interpretation by the liaison officer after the person concerned has responded to the facts and observations;
- the ability to share the signs with Veilig Thuis;
- communication to the person concerned that a file will be created in compliance with the (privacy) guidelines of Radboud University.

---

6 Forensic experts may be engaged by Veilig Thuis after notification.
7 In the case of female genital mutilation, the ‘Statement opposing female circumcision’ can be used https://www.pharos.nl/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Engelse_versie_Verklaring_tegen_meisjesbesnijdenis.pdf
8 After going through the assessment framework.
A report may only be filed with Veilig Thuis without first discussing the signs with the person concerned if:

- there are concrete indications that the safety of the person concerned, of the liaison officer or of another person is or might be in jeopardy;
- the liaison officer has good reason to believe that this meeting will cause the person concerned to sever contact and that, as a result, it will no longer be possible to protect the person concerned adequately from the possible violence.⁹

The liaison officer of Radboud University discusses these cases with Veilig Thuis.

NB: The option of seeking (anonymous) advice from and consulting with Veilig Thuis is always available, and this is separate from filing a report.

**Step 4: Assess the nature and seriousness of the domestic violence or child abuse and, in case of doubt, always seek advice (again) from Veilig Thuis.**

The liaison officer assesses the risk of domestic violence or child abuse on the basis of the signs, the advice obtained and the meeting with the person concerned. The liaison officer also includes in this assessment the nature and seriousness of the domestic violence or child abuse.

If necessary, the liaison officer uses a risk assessment tool when assessing the risk of domestic violence or child abuse.¹⁰

In case of doubt, the liaison officer always consults with Veilig Thuis (again). The employees of Veilig Thuis provide support for assessing the violence and the risks of harm and can advise on what to do next.

The following considerations¹¹ are run through by the liaison officer of Radboud University. If necessary, the liaison officer is assisted in this by internal experts and/or seeks advice from Veilig Thuis.

Considerations in Step 4:

1. **On the basis of Steps 1 to 4 of the reporting code, do I suspect (a threat of) domestic violence and/or child abuse?**
   - **No:** Close the case and record this in the file.
   - **Yes:** Continue with consideration 2.

---

⁹ In this case, Veilig Thuis will share with the person concerned that a report has been or will be filed.

¹⁰ Risk assessment tools can be found in the sources referred to in the reading list.

¹¹ Considerations 1 and 2 in Step 4 and considerations 3 to 5 in Step 5.
2. **On the basis of Steps 1 to 4 of the reporting code, would I say that there is an acute and/or structural lack of safety?**
   - **No:** Continue with consideration 3 in Step 5.
   - **Yes:** File a report with Veilig Thuis. Considerations 3 to 5 are worked through with Veilig Thuis.

**Step 5: Decide: organise help or file a report**

A report of possible domestic violence or child abuse must be filed with Veilig Thuis:

- in ALL cases of an acute and/or structural lack of safety;
- in all OTHER cases where liaison officers believe, in view of their competencies, responsibilities and professional boundaries, that they are not sufficiently able to offer or organise effective help to deal with (risks of) domestic violence and/or child abuse;
- if a liaison officer who offers or organises help to protect the person concerned from the risk of domestic violence and/or child abuse finds that the lack of safety persists or recurs.

Considerations in Step 5:

3. **Am I able to offer or organise effective help to avert the threat of (future) domestic violence and/or child abuse?**
   - **No:** File a report with Veilig Thuis.
   - **Yes:** Continue with consideration 4.

Radboud University cannot offer or organise effective help to avert the threat of (future) domestic violence and/or child abuse if the liaison officer of Radboud University:

- has insufficient opportunity to form an up-to-date impression of safety and/or
- cannot gain a sufficient insight into prior unsafe events and/or into the facts underlying the lack of safety that may have been identified and/or
- has insufficient capacity to offer or organise appropriate and coherent help resulting in safety.

4. **Will the person concerned accept help to avert the threat of (future) domestic violence and/or child abuse, and is he or she willing to do what is required?**
   - **No:** File a report with Veilig Thuis.
   - **Yes:** Offer or organise help; continue with consideration 5.
If the answer to consideration 3 is YES, the liaison officer of Radboud University makes arrangements with the person concerned relating to partners in the chain (including at least Veilig Thuis) who will be involved, the objectives, the results, monitoring of the results and the time frame for evaluating the results.

5. **Does the help lead to the necessary results with regard to the safety and/or welfare (recovery) of all persons concerned within the desired time frame?**
   - **No:** File a report (again) with Veilig Thuis.
   - **Yes:** Conclude help with arrangements for monitoring future (lack of) safety with the persons concerned and collaboration partners.

Adopted by the Executive Board of Radboud University at its meeting on 2 July 2019.

Prof. D.H.J. Wigboldus  
President

G.B. van Assem  
Secretary
Code for Reporting Domestic Violence &

Annex:


Sources (in Dutch only)


Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport, Basismodel meldcode huiselijk geweld en kindermishandeling (2016) [Basic model of the code for reporting domestic violence and child abuse (2016)],

Movisie, fact sheet: De meldcode bij vermoedens van eergerelateerd geweld (2014) [The code for reporting suspicions of honour-related violence (2014)],


Adopted at the meeting of the Executive Board on