



ASHURST CE AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL

Violence and Aggression towards Staff, including front-line Office Staff, Policy



1. Defining Violence

The definition of violence for the purpose of this policy is:

"any incident in which an employee is abused, threatened or assaulted by a student, pupil or member of the public in circumstances arising out of the course of his or her employment."

This includes verbal abuse and threats, rude gestures, sexual or racial harassment. Verbal abuse and threats, including rude gestures and innuendoes, are the most common types of incident.

The effects of being threatened or abused vary, violence can cause pain, suffering and even disability or death. Physical attacks are obviously dangerous but serious or persistent verbal abuse or threats can also damage employee's health and well-being through anxiety or stress.

It is helpful to try and categorise types of assault as follows: -

- Assaults by pupils;
- Assaults by pupils' families;
- Assaults from intruders on site.

It is useful to categorise the incidents into verbal threats, physical attack, verbal abuse, threatening behaviour, rude gestures, sexual or racial harassment.

2. Our Philosophy

- All violence is unacceptable, whatever form it takes and whatever reasons are cited for it.
- We recognise the risks to staff from violence at work and the obligations of the organisation to minimise the risks.
- Dealing with, or being subject to, violent behaviour is not considered to be a failure on the part of the employee.
- Violence is not considered to be an acceptable part of any job, nor is it part of the duties of an employee to accept violent behaviour.
- We recognise the potentially damaging effects of violence on individuals, work performance and the organisation as a whole, and are committed to combating it.

3. The Governing Body

The Governing Body, as employer, has a clear duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees, and the health and safety of non-employees who may be affected.

The Health and Safety Act 1974, Section 2(1): -

"it shall be the duty of every employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all his employees".

4. Individual Employees

Under Section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work Act, states that it is the

"duty of every employee to take reasonable care for the health and safety of himself/herself and other people who may be affected by his acts or omissions at work".

In practice this means that individual employees are required to:

- follow the rules and procedures as laid down in the policy and associated documents
- report all incidents of violence using the procedures laid down in policy documents

5. Dealing with Aggression

Developing skills and techniques in how to defuse and de-escalate confrontation may be beneficial. Examples are: -

- avoiding confrontation in front of an audience. The fewer people that are involved in an incident, the easier for the aggressor to back down without losing face
- asking another, preferably senior member of staff to help talk things through with the aggressor
- staying calm, speaking slowly so as not to be drawn into a heated argument
- avoid aggressive body language such as hands on hips, pointing fingers, looking down on the aggressor
- if in any doubt as to one's physical well-being, consideration should be given to summoning assistance appropriate to the circumstance. This may include contacting the Police.

6. Powers to Remove Trespassers: Education Act 1996, Section 547

Certain people may remove from the school premises anyone whom they reasonably suspect is committing or has committed an offence. These are: -

- a Police Constable;
- in an aided school, such as Ashurst CE Aided Primary School, a person authorised by the Governors.

The authorised person within school is the Head Teacher, or in their absence the Head Teacher's agreed representative. This is with proviso that in any case of trespass and nuisance, which involves violence or threats of violence, Police assistance should be sought.

Authorised staff are not advised to use physical force to remove a trespasser, other than in extreme circumstance. When faced with such a possibility the law does not allow individuals to use more force than is reasonably necessary in the circumstances.

7. Security Measures

Ashurst CE Aided Primary School has procedures in place for dealing with security including physical barriers such as fences, key pad and door entry systems etc to reduce the likelihood of violence. These physical barriers can be enhanced by:

- easily identifiable and accessible reception areas;
- use of ID cards;
- limited number of entrances;
- adequate lighting.

8. Reporting and Recording Incidents

At Ashurst CE Aided Primary School, staff are positively encouraged to report all incidents (see forms in Appendix 1).

Any incident which occurs should be recorded accurately and as soon after the event as possible. This information can be vital if legal proceedings are instigated at a later date.

There is a clear legal requirement to report all violent incidents that result in injury to employees to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

The use of Form "Accident and Violent Incident Report", in Appendix 1, will ensure that the Governing Body, as employers, are aware of such incidents and are able to meet the requirement of the

"Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations" (R.I.D.D.O.R.) 1995

to report acts of physical violence connected with work, which results in a member of staff suffering an over three-day injury, directly to the HSE.

All incidents meeting with the definition of violence (Section 1) should be recorded in a log kept by the school and those that result in injury reported on Form xx.

Employees may wish to contact their Trade Union Representative for support.

Members of staff need to be assured that it is not a sign of personal or professional failure to be attacked or threatened and reminded that under-reporting can expose them and other staff to serious risks.

9. Follow-up Actions

Investigation

Violent incidents will be investigated promptly and appropriate action taken to reduce the risk of recurrence and to support the member of staff involved.

De-brief

It is important to ensure that the member(s) of staff and, if relevant, pupils involved are offered the opportunity to a de-briefing by the Head Teacher as soon as possible after the event. Where appropriate, follow-up counselling may need to be considered.

Medical Check-up

Where appropriate a medical examination, advice and support should be offered/sought.

Notification of the Police

Those to whom incidents are reported, and the victim, will need to consider whether the Police need to be involved. This should be standard practice in the event of violent attack or serious threatening behaviour, unless the employee objects.

Standard Warning Letter

The Head Teacher may wish to consider whether it would be appropriate to write to the person in order to warn of further action should their behaviour continue. A model letter is included in Appendix 1.

If the behaviour continues after a letter being sent from school, advice and support should be sought from the LEA or Diocese.

Recording the Incident

All incidents of violence should be recorded and a standard record of incident form is found in Appendix 1. Where an injury has occurred, a WSCC form should be filled out and returned to the Health and Safety Section, Education Department, sample attached as Appendix 1.

Follow up Support for Staff

The extent and type of support available for victims should be dependent on the situation and the individual's needs. Support might include: -

- time away from work;
- counselling;
- compensation (e.g. criminal compensation);
- legal advice and help in taking proceedings;

The type of support needed should be investigated by the Head Teacher at the earliest opportunity. This should occur automatically and should not be dependant on the victim having to request it. Advice and support throughout this process will be sought from WSCC.

Approved by: On behalf of the Governor's Health and Safety Sub-committee.	Date: September 2022
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