

 SCC and Fierté Multi Academy Trust		HR Policy Handbook		
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Policy Title	Management of Violence and Aggression			

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Version Control

Version	Date Approved	Changes	Reasons for Alterations
Version 1	April 2009	Corporate Policy to replace Directorate guidance/policy.	Development of corporate policies.
Version 2	September 2015	Guidance separated from main document	
Version 3	September 2016	Guidance separated from main document	Academisation

Success Indicators

The following indicators will demonstrate the level of compliance with this policy and its procedures:

- a) Managers are aware of their responsibilities with regard to the effective management of work related violence.
- b) Unacceptable standards of behaviour and sanctions against unacceptable behaviour are communicated to staff, service users, pupils and members of the public. Where appropriate posters and leaflets are displayed.
- c) Managers are effectively risk assessing and managing the risks associated with work related violence.
- d) Managers share specific information with all relevant staff and external parties.
- e) Employees have received suitable information, instruction and where need established training.
- f) All work related violent incidents are reported by employees.
- g) Managers investigate all work related violent incidents and support staff post incident.
- h) Managers monitor and review local arrangements implemented to reduce the risk of work related violence.

1. Application

This policy applies to all working environments within the Trust/ County Council where it is identified that there is a risk of aggressive or violent behaviour.

2. Introduction

Staffordshire County Council views acts of violence and aggression towards its employees or any other persons under its care as unacceptable. The council will therefore, so far as is reasonably practicable, ensure that employees are protected from risks to their health, safety and wellbeing posed by violence and aggression.

Work related violence is defined as:

Behaviour directed by a service user, pupil, their relatives or carers, members of the public, visitors or other person which produces damaging and hurtful effects, physically or emotionally in other people.

This includes:

- Assault/abuse causing actual physical injury or distress.
- Verbal or written aggression which offends the individual.
- Damage to property.
- Assault to others including members of an individual's family.
- Stalking.
- Animal attacks.
- Threat or fear of any of the above.

Where the alleged offender is a member of staff these incidents will be covered by the HR Discipline Policy

This policy does not cover personal safety when lone working.

3. Aims and Objectives

To outline the strategies to manage the risks of violence and aggression in the workplace and provide support for the persons involved.

4. The Arrangements for Applying the Policy

Managing violence and aggression starts at a strategic corporate level. Local control measures designed and implemented by individual teams and services should be guided by the approach taken by their directorate, which in turn should fit with the corporate approach.

4.1 Communication of Standards of Behaviour.

The council believes that all staff, services users, their relatives or carers, members of the public, visitors etc have a duty to treat each other with dignity and respect and to behave in an acceptable and appropriate manner. In line with our commitment to equality, we strive to create an environment, free from harassment, where individuals are valued and cultural differences are understood and appreciated.

Unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated. Examples of unacceptable behaviour include:

- Offensive language, verbal aggression, swearing, unwanted or abusive remarks which makes staff feel unsafe
- Invasion of personal space
- Brandishing of objects or weapons
- Physical assaults
- Offensive gestures
- Threats or risk of serious injury to a member of staff, service users or visitors
- Near misses i.e. unsuccessful physical assaults
- Stalking
- Spitting at people
- Alcohol or drug fuelled abuse
- Unreasonable and/or abusive behaviour
- Any of the above linked to destruction of or damage to property

Unacceptable standards of behaviour and sanctions against unacceptable behaviour need to be communicated to staff, service users, pupils and members of the public. One way of achieving this is through posters and leaflets.

4.2 Risk Assessment

The council will adopt a risk based approach to the prevention of workplace violence and aggression, involving risk assessment, control measures, monitoring and review. High risk staff groups are identified and prioritised through this process. Where risk assessments indicate that a significant risk of violence and aggression exists, actions should be taken to reduce the risk as far as reasonably practicable. Measures which prevent the occurrence of violent incidents are preferable to those that reduce the severity of the violent incident.

Local managers are responsible for ensuring that risk assessments are carried out and the appropriate control measures implemented.

Managers and staff must work together to identify potential triggers for violence and aggression that may come from:

- the work environment.

- the job role,
- the actions of other people who work with you,
- the circumstances or individual factors of the service users with whom you normally expect to work with,
- the methods of communication or the way the service is delivered.

Guidance G01 Risk Reduction Measures details examples of risks and risk reduction measures. Appendix 1 details the causes of violence.

4.3 Partnerships and Integration of Resources

The council recognises that violence, crime and anti-social behaviour in the county has an effect on its employees at work. Strategies that work towards making Staffordshire a safer place for everyone are therefore relevant to this policy. The council will continue to work with other groups and agencies in partnership and with shared resources to fulfil the objectives of these strategies.

Good information is vital for ensuring the health and safety of persons exposed to the risk of violence. Managers should have access to relevant information including risk assessments, incident history and information relating to specific sites or persons. Communication and information sharing must be encouraged at all levels including external parties such as the police and NHS.

4.4 Domestic Violence in the Workplace

Staffordshire County Council recognises it has a duty to promote a safe and healthy working environment to provide support to any employee, male or female who is the victim of domestic abuse and to protect employees from the risk of violent attacks from partners, ex-partners or family members while they are at work. Refer to the HR policy Domestic Abuse for more information.

4.5 Training

Managers are responsible for identifying the training needs for staff as part of the ongoing risk assessment process. It is important that training records are monitored so that refresher training can be given when needed.

Training can prevent conflict situations from arising or escalating into violence. Such training should enable staff to recognise and leave situations that they consider unsafe. Assertiveness training (often part of customer care training) is invaluable to staff who work with individuals who use aggression to influence workers' decisions. Management of violence training needs to be directly relevant to the staff group. 'Break away' training is another example of training where a member of staff may need to actually break away from an assailant.

Supervision/Personal Performance Review

Staff Supervision/Personal Performance Reviews should address issues relating to the risk and fear of violence in connection with individual employees' work. It should also include a regular check on the staff member's awareness of this policy and where applicable the related policies on Lone Working and Restrictive Physical Intervention.

4.6 What to do if a violent incident takes place

If a member of staff is involved in a violent incident they must, if at all possible, remove themselves from the situation. If there is a risk of injury to the service user or others, assistance should be sought from colleagues.

4.6.1 The right to use reasonable force

Employees' have a right, established in law, to use reasonable force to defend themselves. This policy respects that right.

4.6.2 The use of restrictive physical intervention

In some settings the use of restrictive physical intervention is authorised as a technique in those situations where it is necessary for the protection of any member of staff, service user or any other person who may be present. Restrictive physical intervention can be used where a risk assessment identifies the need for intervention. In these situations, staff will be provided with the appropriate level of information, instruction and where appropriate training (refer to policy on Restrictive Physical Intervention).

Restrictive physical intervention must only be used as a last resort where the risk of physical injury is imminent or to avoid further injury (staff authorised to use this technique must refer to policy on Restrictive Physical Intervention).

Employees should clearly understand their civil rights and this is covered by restrictive physical intervention training and information detailed in the Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy.

4.7 Incident Reporting and Investigation

Incident reporting is an essential element of preventing violence and aggression. Incident reporting provides documentary evidence for:

- Monitoring the effectiveness of control measures
- Identifying and modifying those control measures in need of improvement or replacement
- Supporting the provision of appropriate resources and training
- Supporting further action such as court orders.
- Reporting to the HSE under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR)
- The evaluation of trends.

A member of staff who has been the subject of violent/abusive behaviour must report the incident to the senior member of staff on duty as soon as is practicable. Staff must report all incidents of violence, even if they are of a minor nature.

The senior member of staff will report the incident using the Violence and Aggression Report Form HSF9 . The completed form must be sent to the Strategic Health and Safety Service within:-

- 3 days of the incident for RIDDOR reportable incidents; or
- 10 days of the incident for minor i.e. non-RIDDOR reportable incident.

If a violent incident is reportable the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service will notify the HSE.

If an injury resulted from the violent incident the accident book must also be completed.

As it is not practical to record every incidence of minor verbal aggression using the Violence and Aggression Report Form, line managers must put in place a system for recording brief details of any incidents of perceived minor verbal aggression reported by their staff. The record should show date and time of incident, name of employee involved, name of aggressor and a brief indication of what was said. This summary record should be kept on site or with the line manager and will be audited by the senior manager and information may be requested by the Strategic Health and Safety Service at suitable intervals.

All incidents must be investigated thoroughly by the appropriate line manager. Incident investigations should be carried out as soon as possible after the event. Further information on carrying out investigations can be found in HR policy on Accidents.

Information from the investigation should be used when carrying out a post incident risk assessment.

The responsible line manager needs to make a decision as to whether the incident is sufficiently serious to require onward report to their senior manager.

4.8 Post Incident Management and Remedial Measures

Even with effective risk management strategies in place, incidents of violence, aggression and abuse at work may still occur. It is therefore an essential part of managing violence and aggression at work that appropriate procedures are in place following an incident. Appendix 2 gives guidelines on post incident management.

4.9 Police Involvement

Incidents involving the safety of staff encompass a very wide range of issues and by their nature are unpredictable. Accordingly the role of the police can and must vary to respond to those incidents.

Essentially the role of the police encompasses 3 major areas: -

- (a) The senior member of staff on duty at the time the incident is taking place may make a judgement that the issue is now beyond the ability of the staff to deal with and that assistance from the police is required. In those circumstances the senior member of staff should make a decision to dial 999 and seek urgent police help. In doing so the senior member of staff needs to be aware that the police will take charge of the whole incident upon their arrival.
- (b) Following an incident the police can be asked, at the request of staff, to investigate an actual criminal act. It is a matter for individual staff to decide whether they wish to make such an approach to the police and in taking that decision staff need to be aware of the inability of certain service users to understand their own actions and therefore to be held responsible in law for their actions.
- (c) Staff have a civil right to report an incident to the police and management will inform staff of that civil right. In some cases it would be appropriate to simply report the matter to the police without requesting that they investigate but

simply so that they can issue a crime reference number to the member of staff so that they can, if they wish, proceed with a claim to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA).

The above cannot fully encompass the complexity and variety of violent incidents which may arise. However, both senior managers and trade unions are available to advise at any time.

4.10 Prosecution and Legal Assistance

- (a) If the police decide to prosecute and the member of staff involved, or any witnesses are required to give evidence in court, then paid leave of absence will be granted.
- (b) Whether or not the police prosecute, an employee may themselves pursue the matter by taking private legal action against the assailant.
- (c) The County Council has Personal Accident (Assault) cover for employees sustaining bodily injury by assault as a result of which death or disablement occurs independently of any other cause within 24 months of sustaining such injury. The injury must have occurred when the employee was engaged in official duties in connection with the County Council's business. This includes journeys directly connected with the duties and direct travel between private residence and place of duty.
- (d) The employee may seek legal advice from their trade union / professional association who may decide to provide the necessary finance to enable private proceedings to go ahead.

4.11 Monitoring and Review

Managers must monitor and review the local arrangements in place as part of the Health and Safety Evaluation Checklist and Self Audit Tool.

5. Key Accountabilities

Policy Makers and Planners

Are responsible for:-

- Making sure that they are aware of this policy and G?? Lone Working and Violence and Aggression Risk Reduction Measures which supports this policy;
- Establishing arrangements to identify, evaluate and manage the risk associated with work related violence;
- Identifying high risk staff groups and ensuring that suitable assessment and monitoring arrangements are in place; and
- Ensuring the policy is implemented in their areas of responsibility and that safe practice is regularly monitored and promoted.

Implementers (line managers/supervisors)

Are responsible for:

- Making sure that they are aware of this policy and G01 Lone Working and Violence and Aggression Risk Reduction Measures which supports this policy;
- Communicating the standards of behaviour expected from staff, service users, pupils their relatives and carers and members of the public.
- Co-ordinating the completion of suitable risk assessments for work related violence, identifying potential triggers for violence and aggression and

ensuring that suitable control measures are put into practice and their effectiveness is regularly monitored.

- Establishing local procedures to implement the guidance into working practices;
- Ensuring that all employees receive suitable communication to make them aware of relevant policies, guidance, local procedures/risk assessments and their individual responsibilities.
- Assessing training needs for employees.
- Reporting and investigating incidents and supporting staff who have experienced a violent incident.

6. Legislative Framework

1. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
2. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations.
3. The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences. Regulations (RIDDOR).

7. Further Advice and Information

This policy document is for general guidance only. If you need any further advice on how to apply this policy please contact the Strategic Health and Safety Service.

Further background information on this topic is available on the following Websites:

www.hse.gov.uk

www.cica.gov.uk

8. Related Factsheets

HR117 Lone Working

HR119 Restrictive Physical Intervention

HR128 Domestic Abuse

HR 41 Staff Counselling

HR 94 Management of Stress in the Workplace

HR11 Discipline

9. Standard Documents

Appendix 1 Causes of violence

Appendix 2 Post Incident Management

Appendix 3 Guidance G01 Risk Reduction Measures

HSF 9 Violence and Aggression Report Form

HSF 10 Staff Care Feedback Form

This information can be made available in a range of formats and languages, including Braille and large print. If this would be useful to you or someone you know, please contact your Departmental HR Manager.

Useful Contact Numbers

Police – 08453 302010 (non emergency) or 999 (emergency only)

Causes of Violence

It is widely recognised that some forms of mental illness, physical or learning disabilities or emotional disorders can precipitate violent conduct. Similarly, persons abusing alcohol or drugs often display aggressive behaviour. These are very obvious causes but there are other, perhaps less apparent, reasons why violence occurs and indeed in some situations, staff may, unknowingly, through lack of awareness, contribute to the incident. The following list of possible causal factors, while not in any way exhaustive, should be borne in mind:

- The service user's insecurity and reaction to enforcement action.
- Frustration and anxiety resulting, perhaps, from a feeling of being out of control.
- Personal frustrations.
- Bereavement.
- The use of aggression as a conditioned, learned response to refusal of demands.
- Peer group pressure, scapegoating of individuals.
- Testing out of staff.
- Misleading information.
- Receiving important news.
- Presence of onlookers.
- Inability to communicate effectively.

Some violent episodes may, as indicated above, be caused by or contributed to unwittingly by staff themselves; for example:

- Inappropriate physical posturing, challenging, rough handling.
- An apparent need to dominate, to exercise authority, to win. As one writer observed, "Frequently they hasten into confrontations in which neither staff nor service users feel they can back down without significant loss of face".
- Fear of service user or poor relationships with them.
- The effects of stress, lack of relief, extensive hours resulting in reduced levels of toleration.
- Inconsistency in the imposition of controls, rules.
- Increased openness in dealing with service users thus facing them with unpleasant truths more often.
- Understaffing, inexperience and lack of support.
- Failure to pass on information to colleagues regarding violent or potentially violent service users.
- Acting in a patronising or pompous way.

Such listing of possible causes does not however, mean that the source of violent episodes can always be defined. Some incidents may have many complex, contributory causal factors. Alternatively, some may have simple origins and here, greater understanding of possible causes could perhaps facilitate prevention.

Signs of Potentially Violent Behaviour

The following list is not exhaustive but merely indicative of signs and signals to be alert to:

Appendix 1

- Restless behaviour involving pushing, noisiness and jostling, and general body language;
- Deliberately provocative conduct (name calling, hiding property etc);
- Attention seeking conduct;
- Sudden change in tone, volume or speech pattern;
- Over-sensitive reaction to correction or instruction;
- Threatening conduct, verbal abuse. Threats should be taken seriously and responded to appropriately.
- Previous history of violent conduct;
- Service user under the influence of alcohol, drugs or solvents.
- A noticeable behavioural change in a service user.
- A feeling of heightened tension.

All of the above, individually or in combination, can be indicators of potential aggression and, since most violent acts result from a build up and progression of factors, alertness to such signs and signals can enable earlier intervention and prevention.

Staff should note the following:

- Potentially difficult situations can often be anticipated and teams should endeavour to arrange or secure adequate staff/resources to deal with possible incidents.
- Staff should not overreact, question, or attempt to interview an intoxicated person. To do so could provoke violence. Calmness and reassurance is required.
- Service users who wish to talk should be listened to patiently

Post Incident Management

Support to Staff

Support for those who have experienced a violent/abusive incident is important and should aim to minimise any ongoing distress. Staff must receive full support and this will include the following:

- The immediate needs of the person(s) subject to violence and aggression e.g. first aid, medical treatment etc. are the priority.
- Following any episode of violence/abuse, there must be a full debriefing for all staff directly involved. This process of debriefing has two functions: to establish the details of what happened and to provide emotional support. The intention is to create a supportive system for staff to facilitate learning from the experience and to enhance the development of good practice in dealing with violent episodes. Such objective debriefing is to be standard practice and should normally be in two stages.

Stage 1

- (a) Managers should be involved in the factual debriefing to emphasise that incidents of violence are taken seriously. Managers should talk through the matter with those involved as soon as possible after the incident.
- (b) Emotional debriefing provides a supportive setting to allow people to cope more effectively. Such debriefing can include practical, informal support from colleagues as well as more formal systems of debriefing.
- (c) There must be no presumption of failure because violence has occurred. With the benefit of hindsight, staff sometimes feel a sense of failure when they have been involved in such an incident. They should be reassured that this is a normal reaction.
- (d) The staff counselling service will be available to offer counselling and support to all employees who have been involved in incidents of violence at work. However, should an employee choose to make their own counselling arrangements, they will be supported in doing so and in both cases, where necessary, allowed compassionate leave.
- (e) Those involved may need time off work following an incident and this should be offered. Staff should not be automatically sent home if they are likely to see the support they would receive from colleagues as more beneficial. However, if a member of staff requests to go home, they will be asked if they would like someone to accompany them. At the same time, it may be necessary to arrange for a friend or relative to spend some time with them. If the person does not wish to leave work, ask them if they wish to be relieved of certain duties for a while.
- (f) It is usually better for a member of staff to return to work as soon as possible, although they should not risk aggravating an injury. They should consult their doctor with regard to their fitness to return to work.
- (g) Staff must be informed of the legal options available to them in the case of an incident.
- (h) Staff should be asked to complete the Staff Care Feedback form HSF10 and return the completed form to the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service.
- (i) The Senior Officer must also ensure that all relevant staff are fully briefed about the incident.

Appendix 2

- (j) The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service is available to give advice to managers following a violent incident.

Stage 2

The second stage of the debriefing should involve the wider staff group. At an appropriate time, the Manager will call a meeting of the staff on duty to discuss the implications of the incident as a practice/learning issue. Violence/abuse will, in such circumstances, be viewed as a practice matter and not as a negative reflection on staff members' abilities. Discussing what has happened enables all to learn about the handling of future incidents and is often a helpful way of resolving personal feelings about the incident. The meeting will enable staff to discuss incidents together, participate in the planning of how to handle future visits/contact and benefit from having the support of colleagues.

ACT OR THREATENED ACT OF VIOLENCE - STAFF CARE FEEDBACK

The council is committed to providing persons subject to incidents of violence and aggression with all the help and support possible. It is county council practice to make you aware of your right to medical attention, to make available a copy of the safety of staff policies and arrange a debriefing.

The council provides a confidential staff counselling service. The counsellors can be contacted on a direct line telephone number 01785 277400/401. Information regarding the staff counselling service is available at your place of work and on the intranet.

In attempting to monitor the effectiveness of the safety of staff policies and quality of support provided to persons subject to incidents of violence and aggression, it would be helpful if you could complete the detachable section and return to the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service.

I hope you continue to feel supported and recover from this incident.

Thanking you for your co-operation.

Name: _____ Date of Incident: _____

Establishment/Workplace _____

Following the incident:

	Yes	No
1. Were you made aware of the availability of the Staff Counselling Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Informed of your Civil Rights?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Advised of your right to medical attention?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Did you receive medical attention if required?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Are you aware of/have access to the safety of staff policies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Advised of your rights to time out/off to recover?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Was the incident investigated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Did a debriefing take place?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Please comment on any further action you feel could have been taken.		

(a) Following the incident:

(b) To better prepare you for any possible incidents in the future:

Thank you for your assistance in completing this form. Please return to the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service.