



Violence and Aggression at Work Policy

Reviewed: Autumn 24

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Signed on behalf of governors_____

General

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, and the Management of Health and Safety at Work 1992 regulations, impose duties and obligations on employers to manage the risks associated to their workplace and their activities. These duties also extend to the protection of staff with regard to violence and aggression related incidents at work. Bradford Council does not tolerate bullying, harassment, aggression or violence of any kind, whether by an employee, manager, third party or a member of the public.

This overarching management guidance document links to the Council's Health and Safety at Work Policy and aims to advise and support managers whose employees may be exposed to violence and aggression in the workplace. It is likely that a number of services within the authority will have local policies, frameworks and working processes that are relevant to their working environment on this matter.

Definitions

The Health and Safety Executive defines violence at work as:

"Any incident, in which the person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work."

As examples this means:

- **Threatening behaviour** - including intimidation, bullying, ostracism, mobbing stalking, and harassment. The inappropriate use of social media and or telecommunication (Cyberbullying) and threats with weapons or dogs.
- **Verbal abuse** – The use of inappropriate words or behaviour causing distress, including shouting, swearing or insults, racial, or sexualised intent.
- **Physical violence** – “The intentional application of force to another person, without lawful justification, resulting in physical injury or personal emotional discomfort.” Including, hair pulling, slapping, punching, nipping, biting, kicking, spitting, hitting, butting, stamping or sexualised abuse. It may also include the more extreme forms of violence, using weapons (not just restricted to wooden/metal bars, chairs, sharp implements or bladed items), chemicals, setting off a dog or threatening to do so and firearms.

The above definitions apply to all employees at all levels, although it is understood that some employees may be at a higher risk of violence and aggression than others. The nature of violent and aggressive behaviour experienced by employees falls into two broad categories, behavioural or intentional (malicious), due to the work they do or the services they provide to the public.

Management Responsibilities

These responsibilities include:

- Remaining alert to the possibility of violence and aggression occurring to themselves and their employees wherever they may work and not knowingly putting them and others at risk.
- Ensuring all employees are aware of their health and safety responsibilities and that they need to take reasonable steps not to place themselves, or others, at risk of harm. Employees are also expected to cooperate fully with any corporate or local procedures that are introduced to help protect their safety.
- Identifying the possibilities of violence and aggression at work, assessing the level of foreseeable risk and implementing controls that either eliminate or reduces the level of risk.
- Implementing systems to ensure managers offer the appropriate level of supervision to employees who may face violence and aggression in the workplace, so they can work in reasonable safety.

- Making the best use of known information regarding individuals, groups, areas or environments, for example, as part of work activity/task planning. Where appropriate, also share authorised information which will help others to work safely. This may include sharing information across services and external agencies.
- Reviewing violence and aggression incident information and other related data, so it can be used as part of future work planning, or risk assessment, or working process reviews, as well as identifying potential hot spots.
- Ensure all threats of, or actual incidents of, violence and aggression towards employees are formally reported and recorded. Depending on the severity of the incident, this could be a simple log or record, or reported via the Council's online accident incident reporting software (Sphera), especially where injuries and/or absence occurs. Some incidents will also need to be reported to the police and usually the victim would do this, unless they are incapacitated. It is important for a manager to support this reporting activity. In some instances, the Police may have already been called to the incident scene.
- Following any violence and aggression incident, it is very important that those involved are offered suitable, on-going support as soon as is reasonably possible. This could be:
 - allowing for time out, a debrief, first aid, counselling, agreed absence from work, alternative duties or work patterns, in order for them to come to terms with what has happened. Each incident will need to be treated differently, as individuals will cope with this type of incident differently, so their support needs are likely to vary.
- Managers should ensure that all incident logs, records and online violence incident reports are completed accurately and in good time, ensuring that all of the facts are recorded, avoiding subjective opinion or hearsay.
- All violence and aggression incidents need to be investigated and appropriate actions taken to reduce the risk of future events. The level of investigation and actions required will vary, depending on the severity of the incident.
- Where the police are involved and are carrying out their own investigation, it may be difficult for management to carry out follow up investigations. However, this does not prevent managers from offering on-going support to those involved.
- Ensure that adequate training, instruction and information has been given to employees to enable them to deal with potentially aggressive and violent incidents while in work and when out and about.

Post Incident

- The employee's line manager and the head teacher should be informed of the incident as soon as possible. This is the responsibility of the victim.
- Where required, medical treatment will be sought for the employee. The school's designated first aider will be asked to provide assistance, and further medical treatment assessment sought as necessary (e.g. at hospital or from their GP).
- Senior leaders will take written statements from the employee, any witnesses, and the assailant (where applicable) as soon as possible following the incident.
- The head teacher will investigate the incident or will delegate this responsibility to a member of the SLT. A report will be produced following the investigation and agreed with the employee. A copy will be retained by Ingrow Primary and the manager with responsibility for health and safety. If the assault is being reported to the police, they will also receive a copy of the report.
- Following the incident, the risk assessment will be reviewed by the head teacher in conjunction with SLT.
- In cases where the assault was carried out by a pupil, an individual pupil risk assessment will be undertaken. Reference will need to be made to other policies including those addressing pupil behaviour, school security and safeguarding.

Additional Information

Employee Health and Wellbeing Team

As part of their service functions they can offer advice and support to managers and employees post incident, including mediation and counselling services. They can also offer support to those employees who have been involved in biting and needlestick incidents and may require immunisations.

Occupational Safety Team

The Occupational Safety team can advise and support departments, services and schools with regards to risk management and violence in the workplace. This team is responsible for reporting incidents, including violence-related incidents, to the HSE that meet the requirements of RIDDOR reporting regulations. They monitor all violence related incidents that have been reported via the online reporting system (Sphera) and collate suitable data for health and safety performance reports for senior management.

Online Accident Incident Reporting Module

The link to the Sphera online reporting module is on the [Occupational Safety website](#) or copy & paste the following web address into an up to date browser

<https://cityofbradford.spheracloud.net/tools/portal/accidents/LogAnonymous.aspx?65E92150294A4E3EAD58>

Note

The RIDDOR regulations 2012 require that acts of non consensual verbal or physical violence which result in specified injuries, and/or an absence from work for more than seven calendar days, need to be reported to the HSE.

Related Policies

- Health and Safety Policy
- Lone Working Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy