



# Violence at Work Policy

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## Update Information

This model policy will be subject to ongoing review and may be amended prior to the scheduled date of the next review in order to reflect changes in legislation, statutory guidance, or best practice (where appropriate).

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## 1. Scope

This policy applies to all staff in schools and academies. Its application also extends to volunteers, parents and all other visitors to the school.

Within this policy, references to the school, Headteacher, Governing Board and the Chair of Governors will, for academies and Academy Trusts, be taken to mean a reference to the appropriate equivalent within those establishments.

The recognised trade unions have been consulted.

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## 2. Policy Purpose

The school accepts its responsibilities and duties to provide a safe and healthy working environment for all staff. These requirements extend to the protection of employees from the risks of violence and aggression at work.

The school considers that violence is not an acceptable part of any job nor is it part of the duties of any member of staff to accept violent behaviour. The school is totally opposed to employees being subjected to violence as a result of their employment with the school.

This policy sets out arrangements for the management of violence and aggression that may occur during work or that is

work-related. It aims to minimise the risk of violence and ensure that where violence and aggression does occur the response is both appropriate and effective.

In the event where a member of staff suffers abuse, violence, or vandalism whilst at work, the Headteacher should apply appropriate measures in order to support that member of staff in carrying out their normal duties.

This policy describes measures that should be taken in the event of such an occurrence. However, these are not exhaustive, and each case should be considered individually.

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### 3. Definition of Work-Related Violence

The Health & Safety Executive's definition of work-related violence is: *"any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work"*.

Although the list is not exhaustive, violence and aggression include the following:

- intimidating behaviour, swearing, shouting
- personal insults
- verbal abuse, threats, gestures, stances
- possession of a weapon or item intended to be used as a weapon
- harassment on the grounds of sex, race, disability, age, religion and belief, sexual orientation, and gender reassignment
- bullying
- assault from grasping, poking, punching etc.
- assault causing actual bodily harm
- threatening use of animals.

Employees may be subjected to violence by:

- Pupils
  - Parents
  - Visitors
  - Intruders.
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### 4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 **Governing Boards** will be responsible for ensuring:

- Implementation of this policy throughout the school and that the policy is brought to the attention of all employees
- That procedures are in place to assess the risks of violence and aggression to employees and to put in place appropriate measures to eliminate or control the risks
- That incidents are reported
- That arrangements are in place for the appropriate and effective support of employees following an incident
- That arrangements are in place to monitor and review the level and type of violent incidents occurring.

#### 4.2 Headteachers/Senior Management Teams will be responsible for ensuring that:

- The risks of violence and aggression to employees are assessed and appropriate measures introduced to eliminate or control the risks identified
- Identified risks are documented
- When organising or allocating work to employees, the potential risk of violence is considered
- All identified employees are appropriately trained, informed and instructed
- All employees report any incident where they feel threatened, as defined by this policy
- Following an incident, employees are appropriately supported as outlined in this policy
- The type and level of violent incidents are regularly reviewed, and the effectiveness of existing measures examined and, where appropriate, revised
- Following a serious incident, where the employee is taken to hospital, the Authority Health and Safety Officer (or other relevant person identified by the school) is made aware by the quickest possible means
- A record of violent incidents is maintained and analysed to identify trends etc. The result of this should form part of the risk assessment review process.

#### 4.3 All employees will ensure that:

- They take responsibility for their own behaviour
- They take responsibility for their own health and safety and that of their colleagues and pupils
- They act in a way that does not incite or increase the likelihood of violence
- Any instructions or information detailing safe methods of working are followed
- Any incidents of violence and/or aggression, where an individual feels threatened, are reported immediately to the line manager, this includes witnessing violence to others
- They attend any programme of training identified for their needs, when nominated
- They comply with this policy.

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## 5. Risk Assessment Process

**5.1 Find out if there is a problem** – talk to employees about potential problem areas; identify any situations or instances where people could be harmed; refer to previous incident reports. Communicate your findings with all your staff so they realise that you recognise potential problem areas.

**5.2 Decide who may be at risk** – including caretakers, cleaners, those undertaking home visits, evening workers, lone workers, cash handlers, those in contact with the public, those working with individuals with challenging behaviours etc.

**5.3 Evaluate the risks and decide whether existing precautions are adequate or whether more should be done** – decide whether the risk is significant and if so whether the precautions you have in place adequately reduce the risk or control it so that harm is unlikely. Precautions may include changes to working practices, layout, training etc. Issues to consider include:

- The physical aspects of the premises
- Working practices and patterns
- Employee training
- Pooling of information on certain higher risk situations / individuals
- Contact with the Police.

## 5.4 Considerations

When carrying out a risk assessment, think about whether there is a risk associated with particular places, for example:

- Reception areas where administrative employees come into contact with the public
- An interview room
- Isolated locations.

Whether there are risks associated with particular working practices, for example:

- Employees working alone, visiting people's homes or out of office hours, or when travelling to and from work using the same routes or transport as pupils.

Whether there are risks associated with a particular person or people for example:

- Individuals who have a history of violence
- Those individuals who may have unpredictable behaviour associated with mental health, behavioural problems etc.
- Those who use medication to control behaviour.

What action has already been taken to manage and reduce risks identified, for example:

- Safe working practices
- Alarm systems
- Mobile phones.

For pregnant employees, a specific risk assessment must be undertaken and should include any potential risk of violence and aggression.

**5.5 Record your Findings** using a standard risk assessment form (see template [Appendix 1](#))

**5.6 Review your assessment on a regular basis and revise it if necessary**

Where the school introduces a new procedure, working practice, or where there is a particular circumstance, which could lead to a new and significant risk, the school must review the assessment. For example, if the school accepts a pupil that has been excluded elsewhere for violent or abusive behaviour, a risk assessment should be carried out.

It is good practice to review assessments on a regular basis to ensure that the measures put in place are effective and workable.

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## 6. Training

All employees, including new joiners, should receive awareness training on:

- This policy and procedure
- Work-related violence
- How to prevent work-related violence
- Reporting procedures and
- What to do following an incident.

Suitable and sufficient training will be provided to identify and manage risks of violence and aggression. This training will

take account of the findings of all risk assessments carried out by the school.

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## 7. Action to be taken following an Incident

Following an incident each of the following steps should take place:

- The wellbeing of employees is paramount and due consideration must be given to their feelings and wishes.
  - If appropriate, immediate medical assistance must be sought.
  - If appropriate, the incident should be reported to the Police (see [Section 9](#) of this Policy – “Involving the Police”).
  - CCTV footage of incidents should be kept in case they need to be referred to.
  - The employee must be given the opportunity to clarify their needs following the incident. This may include taking time out, going home etc. Arrangements must be made to provide cover if required.
  - As soon as possible after the event, when the employee is ready, the incident should be discussed with their line manager or other senior member of staff. Employees should be encouraged to talk openly and without fear of blame; the incident should not be seen as a failure on their behalf.
  - Written reports/statements should be obtained from the employee and any witnesses.
  - It is recommended that the employee also seeks advice from their union representative if they are a member of a union.
  - Line managers should ensure that the employee receives an offer of further support e.g. employee counselling scheme. This offer of support should be continuous and not simply immediately following the incident.
  - Where the employee brings a prosecution, leave of absence with pay will be granted to allow the employee to deal with the relevant proceedings e.g. giving evidence.
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## 8. Reporting and Recording Incidents

Whenever an employee experiences an incident of abuse, threat or violence, an Accident and Incident Form must be completed. The employee’s line manager should provide help and guidance in filling out this form which must then be copied to the Headteacher, and the Local Authority where appropriate. A template “Accident and Violent Incident Report Form” is available at [Appendix 2](#) and can be used by the school if it does not have its own reporting form.

The employee should also be advised that their union representative (if applicable) can provide help and guidance in reporting the incident.

The line manager will review the report and consider what action is appropriate e.g. change in working arrangements. The level and number of incidents may trigger a need to review the risk assessment. The line manager will note on the form any action initiated. All employees must be notified of any changes.

Any incident at work resulting in death or major/serious injury to employees causing them to be off from work for seven consecutive days or more must be reported under RIDDOR (Regulations as amended, see [Section 14](#) of this Policy).

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## 9. Involving the Police

Where appropriate, the Police should be informed as soon as possible. It is school policy for assaults on staff to be reported to the Police when it is reasonable to do so. The school may wish to establish a local protocol with the Police for dealing with assaults and violent incidents in the workplace.

The Police should be informed if the employee wishes them to prosecute on their behalf. Whether they will or not will depend upon the circumstances and the extent of any injuries sustained. If the Police are not prepared to prosecute on the employee’s behalf, the employee can still instigate proceedings through a private prosecution.

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## 10. Incidents occurring between Employees

Where an incident occurs between two employees, the duties outlined in [Section 8](#) of this Policy apply but the line manager must also immediately inform the Headteacher and forward a copy of the Incident Report Form.

Where an employee has committed an act of violence or aggression against a colleague, the line manager must undertake a risk assessment prior to the employee returning to work.

The employee may also be subject to disciplinary action.

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## 11. Preventative Measures in the Workplace

The workplace includes all school premises and buildings including those occupied by a site manager/premises manager/caretaker.

### 11.1 Reception Area

Reception areas of a school should be designed so as to reduce the likelihood of violence. The reception area should be easily identifiable, which allows visitors to be received, directed to their destinations, answer queries etc, and control access by unauthorised persons. The following should be considered:

- Location, preferably close to the main entrance
- Clear, unambiguous signage
- Appearance – good lighting, robust furniture and possibly some reading material
- Ease of contact with colleagues in the event help needs to be summoned
- Means of summoning assistance if required
- Access control e.g. visitors' badges, signing in etc.
- If alarms/panic buttons are to be used, they must be regularly tested to ensure good working order. Employees should be aware of actions to be taken if the alarm is raised. Remember to make any temporary employees aware of these procedures
- Where there is no reception area, locating the office near the entrance will mean employees can see anyone entering the building or the premises.

### 11.2 Building Design

In the design of buildings:

- Ensure that landscape areas do not act as a shield for potential intruders e.g. bushes, trees, dark areas etc.
- Avoid potential missiles in outdoor areas e.g. loose chippings, pebbles etc.
- Ensure prompt repair of minor damage and graffiti.

### 11.3 Security

Possible security arrangements at premises may include the following:

- Restricting public access e.g. school grounds or buildings
- External lighting/well-lit public areas
- Restricting number of entrance/exit points (not emergency exits)
- Erection of high-level perimeter fencing

- Installing entry control/surveillance systems (CCTV)
- Electronic security passes for staff.

#### 11.4 Training

As referred to [above](#).

The measures taken will depend on the results of the risk assessment. Measures must be appropriate and proportionate to the level of risk identified.

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## 12. Working Practices

### 12.1 Interviewing safely in the Workplace

When interviewing in the workplace:

- The interviewer should ensure that someone knows where they are and where possible they should use a room that is visible to others
- The interviewer should ensure that an accurate record is made of the person/s they are seeing and the reasons for the interview
- The interviewer should ensure that adequate arrangements are in place for them to raise the alarm if required. Measures may be as sophisticated as panic buttons/alarms or as simple as a coded sign being placed on the door. Whichever method is adopted, all employees must be made aware of actions to be taken in the event of the alarm being raised
- The interviewer should not arrange to meet someone alone when they are on their own in the building
- The interviewer should position themselves near the door – they should not put the interviewee between themselves and the means of escape
- The interviewer should keep waiting times to a minimum and explain any delays
- The interviewer should ensure that equipment in the interview is kept to a minimum. Lightweight furniture, clutter, ornaments etc as they could be potential weapons
- If a risk assessment highlights a potential risk for violence and aggression, consider holding the interview in pairs or consider a telephone interview where there is no real need to meet face to face.

### 12.2 Cash Handling

Consideration should be given to employing a security firm to handle cash. However, if employees are required to carry amounts of cash, then the following advice should be followed:

- If the amounts to be carried are substantial or the perceived risk is high, then an escort should be provided
- Where possible, transportation of monies should be by car rather than on foot
- Routes and timings should be varied where possible and surveyed to identify any vulnerable areas
- Means of contact and of summoning help should be established
- Individuals should call back to the office to notify of safe arrival
- Guidelines should be developed for actions to be taken in the event of approach and attack. This should stress that the protection of employees is paramount rather than school property, money or valuables.

### 12.3 Patterns of Work

In many establishments working late, during holidays, closures, early mornings etc., is part of the normal working pattern. Line managers should ensure that adequate arrangements are in place to manage the risks identified. Examples of good

practice include:

- Working in pairs
- Provision of well-lit areas
- Arrangements whereby someone is aware of who is working on the premises
- Means of the employee summoning assistance/raising the alarm if required
- Ensuring that measures are in place to keep the working area secure e.g. locking parts of the building where the individual may be working alone.

## 12.4 Alarm Key holders

Where it is necessary for key holders to attend establishments for out of hours alarm activations, the following procedures must be followed:

- Key holders must not enter a building alone but wait for the Police to arrive.
- In the presence of the Police the key holder should then proceed to enter the building and de-activate the alarm.
- Once the Police have conducted an inspection of the premises and declared that they are safe, the key holder should continue with any necessary action to ensure the security of the premises.
- If the Police do not attend the scene, then a second key holder must be contacted
- Under no circumstances must a building be entered alone.

## 12.5 Emergency Procedures

Line Managers should develop arrangements for dealing with emergencies. These will include actions to be taken in the event that concern for someone's safety is raised, either because they do not report back for duty, or employees raise the alarm etc.

All employees should be made aware of these procedures and arrangements should be in place to practice these.

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## 13. Employee Support and Counselling

An employee who has experienced a violent incident can contact the school's Employee Assistance Programme provider, if this is in place, and speak to a counsellor specialising in this field.

The employee may also be given appropriate leave of absence with pay to deal with issues directly arising from the incident e.g. attending to make a police statement, dealing with legal issues etc. This will be to the extent considered reasonable by the Headteacher and/or Governing Board.

Employees requiring medical treatment and/or leave of absence due to a violent incident will be eligible for such support in accordance with the scheme of Conditions of Service.

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## 14. What the Law Requires

There are four main pieces of health and safety law which are relevant to violence at work. These are:

### 14.1 Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 as amended

Employers have a legal duty under this Act to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of their employees at work. It requires that workplaces provide:

- Adequate training of staff to ensure health and safety procedures are understood and adhered to

- Adequate welfare provisions for staff at work
- A safe working environment that is properly maintained and where operations within it are conducted safely
- Suitable provision of relevant information, instruction, and supervision.

#### **14.2 The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 as amended**

Employers must assess the risks to employees, make arrangements to implement necessary measures, appoint competent people and arrange for appropriate information and training on health and safety for employees. This can be achieved through effective:

- Planning
- Organisation
- Control
- Monitoring and review.

The risks covered should, where appropriate, include the need to protect employees from exposure to reasonably foreseeable violence.

#### **14.3 The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) as amended**

Employers must notify their enforcing authority in the event of an employee accident arising out of or in connection with work and resulting in death or major/serious injury (as defined by the Regulations) with the employee being incapacitated for normal work for seven consecutive days or more.

This includes any act of non-consensual physical violence done to a person at work.

#### **14.4 (A) The Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 as amended, and**

##### **(B) The Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996 as amended**

In workplaces, where the employer recognises trade unions and trade unions are recognised for collective bargaining purposes, the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 (as amended) will apply.

In workplaces where employees are not in a trade union and/or the employer does not recognise the trade union, or the trade union does not represent those employees not in the trade union, the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996 (as amended) will apply.

Employers have a duty to consult with their employees, or their representatives, on health and safety matters. These Regulations set out how employees must be consulted in different situations and the different choices employers have to make.

Employers must inform and consult with employees in good time on matters relating to their health and safety. Employee representatives, either appointed by recognised trade unions under (A) or elected under (B) may make representations to their employer on matters affecting the health and safety of those they represent.

## 15. Appendix 1 - Risk Assessment Form - Template

### RISK ASSESSMENT FORM

Initial Risk Assessment	
Assessment for:	Date:
Potential risk(s):	
Who is at risk?	
Action proposed to reduce risk(s):	
Date of review:	
Risk assessment carried out by:	Line Manager:
Signed:	Signed:
Date:	Date:

## 16. Appendix 2 - Accident and Violent Incident Report Form - Template

### ACCIDENT AND VIOLENT INCIDENT REPORT FORM

To be used also for reporting dangerous occurrences

Please X : Is this report of an accident?  Dangerous occurrence?

Violent incident?

#### Important:

1. Accidents and dangerous occurrences: the form must be completed by a line manager or senior member of staff
2. Violent Incidents: Sections 1-4 can be completed by the person concerned, with the manager completing sections 5 and 6. Violent incidents, not just physical violence but also aggression, verbal, sexual and racial abuse, and intentional damage to property.
3. All sections must be completed.

1. Name of school: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 2. Details of the person injured/assaulted

Please X : Employee  Parent  Pupil  Contractor  Public  Trainee

Name (state Mr/Mrs/Ms): \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_ Payroll No: \_\_\_\_\_ Employed: \_\_\_\_\_ years

Normal working hours on the day of the incident: From: \_\_\_\_\_ To: \_\_\_\_\_

Actual working hours on the day: From: \_\_\_\_\_ To: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 3. Details of the incident (Continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

Date of the incident: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Precise location of the incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe exactly what happened. If a violent incident, please include details of the assailant (if known)  
(continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**4. Details of any injuries**

Nature of injuries (e.g. state if right or left arm): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

First aid treatment? Yes No If Yes, by whom: \_\_\_\_\_

Medical treatment? Yes No If Yes, name of hospital or doctor: \_\_\_\_\_

Detained in hospital for more than 24 hours? Yes No

Details entered in the accident book? Yes No Notified to the HSE? Yes No

**5. Investigation and action taken by the manager** (Continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

Please include details of any measures to prevent a recurrence and, if a violent incident, give details of the assistance offered to the employee.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**6. Investigation and action taken – Accidents only** (Not applicable to violent incidents)

Was the injured person: Was safety equipment:

Authorised to be there? Yes No Specified? Yes No

Authorised to do the work? Yes No Provided? Yes No

Trained to do the work? Yes No Being used? Yes No

Was the incident due to machinery? Yes No

If Yes, please give details:

I have investigated the incident and the details given on this form are correct:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Designation: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Policy created: 11/2004

**30 Jun 2021**

Policy has been reviewed and refreshed. Refer to the Schedule of Amendments for full detail. [Schedule of amendments](#)