

MERE SCHOOL

Guidance and Policy on Violence and Aggression to Staff

DEFINITION

The Local Education Authority defines 'violence and aggression' as:

'an incident in which an employee is abused, threatened or assaulted by another person in circumstances arising out of the course of his/her employment'.

This applies whether the member of staff is on or off duty and irrespective of the status of the perpetrator.

Examples of behaviour classed as 'violence' or 'aggression':

- kicking
- biting
- punching
- poking or pushing
- spitting
- scratching
- head butting
- tripping
- actions that restrict movement
- unwanted physical contact which results in no injury
- use of weapons
- use of missiles
- swearing
- other verbal or written abuse which causes personal offence or distress
- sexual, racial or other harassment
- bullying
- intimidation
- damage to personal property
- other aggressive behaviour
 - shouting
 - posturing
 - gestures
 - insults
 - innuendo
 - unreasonable demands or blackmail.

GENERAL POLICY

- Violence and aggression are unacceptable and no member of staff should be required to endure them as a normal part of their work.
- When staff do encounter violence and aggression all reasonable measures are applied to eliminate/minimise the risks.
- All incidents of violence and aggression must be reported and recorded on an Incident Form.

- Support will be offered after every incident.
- The Governors and Head Teacher have the responsibility to ensure that this policy is applied, with the support of the LEA.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Head Teacher:

- ensure that risk assessments are carried out across all work activities that they control and that appropriate measures are implemented commensurate to those risks.
- ensure that all staff identified through the risk assessment process, receive training at appropriate intervals in skills that can be used to minimise risks to personal safety.
- ensure that all staff are provided with clear instructions in respect of reporting incidents of violence and aggression and that all such reports are thoroughly investigated and responded to.
- offer and provide appropriate post-incident support to staff.
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy.
- ensure that all staff know about their responsibilities and of the measures used within the school to counter violence and aggression.

Individual Members of Staff:

- following working procedures and risk assessments.
- reporting likely or actual incidents of violence and aggression.
- taking due regard of their own personal safety and well-being and for withdrawing from a situation where the risk of actual or potential violence or aggression is high.
- recognising, encouraging and acknowledging positive behaviour.

PREVENTATIVE STRATEGIES

General Security

All school buildings have controlled access. All visitors report to the office to authorise their access and sign in the visitors' book. The school site has a distinct boundary with limited points of access and the site is as free as possible from debris or loose material that could be used as missiles. Each member of staff carries a personal alarm (see Procedures for Personal Alarm). A poster is displayed in the office so that all visitors are made aware that they are welcome, as long as they do not behave in an abusive or aggressive way.

Suitable Working Environment

Teaching Areas

Classroom layout is governed by space and teaching needs but wherever possible staff base themselves in a position which allows sight of all entrances and immediate access to at least one of them.

Reception Area

Our reception area is well signed, clean, well-lit and comfortable. Visitors are dealt with immediately on arrival. An explanation of any delay, with regular updates, is given. Reading materials and displays are provided.

Head Teacher's Office and other Interview Rooms

Seating arrangements allow for a quick exit and help is always readily available.

External Areas

All external areas used during hours of darkness are adequately lit and covered with the security cameras.

WORKING PRACTICES AND PATTERNS

Known Aggressors

School staff discuss and agree responses to individual pupils and other regular visitors who are known to be potentially violent or aggressive. All staff are made aware of the strategies and procedures used by the school to manage pupils who have violent, aggressive or abusive traits.

Meeting Parents/Visitors

If it is anticipated that a visitor may display aggressive behaviour, staff will not meet that person alone.

Lone Working

Staff try to avoid working in isolation. After functions, staff try to leave in groups, rather than individually.

Abusive Telephone Calls

If telephone callers become abusive or threatening, staff issue a caution. If the caller persists the phone is put down.

SCHOOL BEHAVIOUR POLICIES

Everyone in school knows and understands the boundaries of acceptable behaviour. The school Behaviour Policy clearly states the code of conduct and a framework for improving the overall climate of behaviour and discipline within school.

SUITABLE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

We create the best possible learning environment to encourage positive pupil behaviour.

TRAINING

All school staff at risk from violence will receive some level of training.

PHYSICAL INTERVENTION

Detailed guidance on this issue is available in the school's 'Policy on the Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils'.

SELF-DEFENCE

Leaving or getting away is the best defence but individuals do have a legal right to defend themselves or others, if attacked. (please see 'Policy on the Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils').

Responsive Measures

SHORT TERM DEBRIEFING

The nature and level of action following an incident will depend on the circumstances of each case. Some 'minor' instances may not require any action but it is important that no incident is dismissed as being too trivial to deal with without first exploring the effect of it with the member of staff involved.

Immediately after an incident involving physical assault, the Head Teacher or other member of staff will ensure that all necessary first-aid or medical treatment is arranged. Irrespective of the nature of the incident, it is probable that the victim will want to talk about it but may be feeling distressed or guilty. It is important that sensitive support is given at this point. Head Teachers should be aware that the victim may look to other colleagues to give emotional support and this may require some flexibility about the normal work routine. Further opportunities to talk about the incident should be provided after a period for reflection.

All parties involved in the incident should write down their recollection of the incident as soon as they feel able to and follow this up by recording their thoughts and feelings about the incident. The staff member should be reminded of the Staff Counsellor's service and that a trade union or professional association representative may be present at any meeting where a discussion of the incident takes place.

All incidents should be formally acknowledged. This may be orally and/or in writing. Head Teachers should recognise that the staff member involved may have a need for a specific type of acknowledgement.

Head Teachers should review risk assessments and working practices in the incident.

LONGER-TERM DE-BRIEFING

Victims of violence or aggression may need time to come to terms with the implications of the incident. Head Teachers should be alert to the possibility that the member of staff is underestimating his or her own needs.

Other staff who may have witnessed the incident or are likely to come into contact with the aggressor should be given information about the incident and its implications. It may be useful to arrange a staff meeting to discuss feelings about the incident and assess its impact.

Any staff development needs that are highlighted by the incident should be addressed.

If a member of staff is absent from work for a lengthy period following the incident, the Personnel and Occupational Health Services at County Hall can provide advice and assist in the rehabilitation of the staff member.

COUNSELLING

The LEA offers a confidential counselling service to all staff – details are in the Staff Room.

CHANGE OF DUTIES

The staff member and Head Teacher should agree any need to alter work duties as a result of the incident. This will be done so that the member of staff is not put under duress or made to feel guilty.

INVOLVEMENT OF THE POLICE

The police should be informed of all incidents where a member of staff has been assaulted. In some circumstances, the member of staff may not wish the police to be involved and this will be respected. In extreme circumstances, the Head Teacher may judge that the wider protection of the community requires that a report be made to the police, notwithstanding the wishes of the individual.

EXCLUSION OF PUPILS

Please see the school policy on 'The Use of Exclusion'.

WARNING LETTERS

The Solicitor to the Council will, at the request of a Head Teacher, issue a warning letter to any adult who has committed a serious act of violent, abusive or aggressive behaviour.

FINANCIAL RECOMPENSE

A member of staff who believes that they have suffered harm as a result of a work related incident should seek independent advice as to any civil claim they may have. The Governors of Mere School's Employers' Liability insurance will apply. Employees may also contact the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board. In order to pursue a claim the incident must be reported to the police within 24 hours and to the Board within one year.

LEGAL ADVICE AND INJUNCTIONS

The extent of support that may be provided to any member of staff wishing to pursue a civil case against the perpetrator of a violent act, will be a matter for the Chief Education Officer, the Governors and the Head Teacher to determine in each case.

In the event of the police taking criminal action against a perpetrator of violence, then staff will be briefed about the process and their role in it.

If the police decide to take action against a member of staff then the school and the LEA will be as supportive as the merits of the case allow although all staff should consider the benefits of legal support that may be available through membership of a professional association or personal insurance.

In some circumstances it may be appropriate for the LEA or the school to seek to have an injunction applied against the perpetrator. The Solicitor to the Council will advise in each case.

REPORTING PROCEDURES

Only by reporting incidents can working practices and procedures be adjusted to provide as much protection for staff as possible. The accumulative effect of several minor incidents can be just as harmful as that from those of a more serious nature and staff should not overlook these 'lesser' incidents.

Full guidance on the reporting of incidents is given in the Health and Safety for Schools Manual.

At Mere School we operate a log of minor incidents and the completion of an Incident Report and Investigation Form for more serious ones.

Should a major injury or an absence of more than 3 days from normal work duties that is attributable to an attack, then the incident must be reported to the Health and Safety Executive.

Summer Term 2007

Review: Summer 2010 (or earlier if necessary)

MERE SCHOOL
Minor Incident Report Form

MERE SCHOOL

Incident Report Form

Date of Incident:

Day of Week:

Time:

1 Member of staff reporting incident

Name

Work Address (if different from school address)

.....

Position

2 Personal details of person assaulted/verbally abused (if appropriate)

Name

Work Address (if different from school address)

.....

Job/position

Age

Sex

3 Details of trespasser/assailant(s) (if known)

.....

4 Witness(es) if any

Name

Address

Age

Sex

Other information

(Relationship between member of staff/pupil and trespasser/assailant, if any

.....

5 Detail of incident

TYPE OF INCIDENT (eg if trespass, was the trespasser causing a nuisance or disturbance and how: if assault, give details of any injury suffered, treatment received etc)

.....
.....

LOCATION OF INCIDENT (attach sketch if appropriate)

.....

OTHER DETAILS (describe incident, including, where relevant, events leading up to it; relevant details of trespasser/assailant not given above; if a weapon was involved, who else was present)

.....
.....

6 Outcome

(whether police called; whether trespasser was removed from premises under section 547; whether parents contacted; what happened after the incident; any legal action

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.....

7 Other information (to be completed as appropriate)

Possible contributory factors

.....

Is trespasser/assailant known to have been involved in any previous incidents?

.....

Give date and brief details (if known)

.....

Had any measures been taken to try to prevent an incident of this type occurring? If so, what? Could they be improved?

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If no measures had been taken beforehand, could action now be taken? If so, what?

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Name and contact details of police officer involved, and incident number or crime reference number, as appropriate

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Any other relevant information

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.....

Signed Date

Please copy and return as soon as possible to:

Head Teacher
Chair of Governors
Administrative Officer



MERE SCHOOL

**Violence, threatening behaviour
and abuse against school staff or
other members of the school
community will not be tolerated.**

