



VIOLENCE TO STAFF POLICY

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1. Introduction

Steel River Academy Trust recognises the potentially damaging effect that violence of any category can have on staff wellbeing. Any violence in the workplace is regarded as unacceptable and the Trust will take effective action to deal with such incidents.

Violence, whether actual or threatened, can sometimes be averted, or the risk minimised by precautionary measures arranged by the Trust and a sensible response from employees who have been adequately trained in dealing with conflicting behaviours.

This Guidance sets out to explain the issues in some detail and offers practical examples for some of the more commonly encountered risks which staff may experience. Employees should therefore read the whole document and understand all the basic principles in the event that they may be faced with a particular difficulty within their own job.

2. Trust Policy

Steel River Academy Trust takes a serious view of any incident of assault against its employees and in pursuance of its duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act will, in providing a safe place of work and minimise the risk of violence to all employees so far as is reasonably practicable.

As an employer, the Trust will fully support any member of staff who is assaulted or threatened in the course of their duties, unless it is found that it was they who acted inappropriately. This support involves assistance in obtaining legal advice and time off with pay for interviews and court appearances, as and if necessary.

The Trust acknowledges that no person should have to work in fear and that an incident of assault should not be seen as a reflection of a member of staffs' ability.

It is not possible to safeguard against all incidents as often they arise out of the ordinary. The Trust will however apply controls when the likelihood and expectation of risk could be presented, and these can be achieved by;

- Carrying out risk assessments for home visits and enforcement activities
- Provide conflict management training for relevant employees
- Change procedures around particular tasks
- No lone working in certain aspects of a role
- Involving a third party such as Social Workers and Police

3. Definition of Violence

Violence at work can include any incident in which an employee is abused, threatened or assaulted by a member of the public in circumstances arising out of his or her employment. As such it can include;

- Physical Attack – whether visible injury occurs or not
- Animal Attack – where an animal is used as a threat
- Verbal Abuse – when an employee feels threatened or intimidated (This includes sexual or racial abuse by a member of the public and could occur via cyber-aggression through text or email messages or social networking sites)
- Attack against personal belongings or trust property
- Any work-related incident involving an employee or their family which occurs away from the workplace

4. The Law

The main areas of health and safety law which are relevant to violence at work are;

- The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974;
Employers have a legal duty under the Act to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees whilst at work.
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999;
Employers must assess the risks to employees and make arrangements for their health and safety by effective;
 - Planning
 - Organisation
 - Control
 - Monitoring
 - Review

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

- The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR);
Managers must notify the Health & Safety Team in the event of an accident at work to any employee resulting in death, major injury or incapacity for normal work for 7 or more consecutive days. This includes any act of non-consensual physical attack to a person whilst at work. The Health & Safety Team will report the incident as necessary to the Health & Safety Executive in accordance under RIDDOR.
- Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 (a) and The Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996 (b)
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.

5. Planning to Avoid Violence

Health and Safety Legislation places a clear responsibility on managers to take certain preliminary measures to reduce the risk of violence at work;

- The Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999 states that; 'Managers must make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the identified risks with regards to the safety of their employees who are exposed to violence whilst at work'
- Risk assessments should firstly identify the hazards associated with the work which have the potential to cause harm. For example;
 - Home visits where people with known aggressive behaviour
 - Interviews with members of the public
 - Cash handling
 - Enforcing a rule
 - Denying a service due to non-compliance
 - Managing children who act in an unpredictable or violent manner or young children with limited communication skills
- Each identified hazard must be assessed for its risk;
 - Likelihood that harm will occur
 - Potential severity of harm from the hazard if realised
- All risk assessments must be recorded and include effective controls on relevant action required to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of staff. These controls must be reviewed annually or if circumstances change the assessment.
- Preventative and protective measures must be taken to avoid any identified risk of violence to staff.

Employees must also take care not to endanger themselves or their colleagues. They are warned against using provocative language or gestures towards children or members of the public and ignoring basic personal safety rules and/or school protocols when managing dysregulated children or meeting members of the public.

Reporting of Incidents

Whenever an incident arises which is classified as an assault, a Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council Notification of Assault Form must be completed.

To report an incident to the Health and Safety Team please complete the online accident reporting form at the following link:

[Notification Of Assault Form \[Health and Safety\] - Intro - My Account \(achieveservice.com\)](https://achieveservice.com/Notification-Of-Assault-Form-Health-and-Safety-Intro-My-Account)

This will report the incident directly to the health and safety team who will evaluate and contact the manager if any further information or additional investigation is required.

It is important that the form is fully completed and any additional documentation or photographs of the incident site are uploaded into the form to allow the health and safety team to correctly assess and categorise. Any incomplete forms received will be returned to the submitting officer and a request raised for them to resubmit the incident.

If circumstances dictate that personnel are unable to complete the online reporting form, then the paper-based Notification of Assault form should be completed and emailed along with any relevant documentation and photographs to healthandsafetyteam@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk (Please see Appendix 1)

6. Monitoring

It is important that all incidents in which employees feel threatened or have been assaulted are recorded appropriately. This will enable investigations to take place and preventative measures to be implemented in future, thus preventing other staff from going through a similar trauma;

- Instances of violence to staff whilst at work must be recorded on the Notification of Assault form (NOA as shown at Appendix 1) and where appropriate, forwarded to the Health & Safety Team.
School Leader should conduct an incident investigation at the earliest opportunity ensuring that all details have been captured.

We recognise that often physical violence from many of our younger children is often a form of communication stemming from underdeveloped emotional regulation, frustration or additional needs which often leads to them becoming easily overwhelmed with feelings. However, we will ensure that staff are fully supported in ensuring their own safety and the safety of other pupils. Our approach to these incidents will focus on proactive strategies, de-escalation and understanding the root cause of the behaviour, while ensuring comprehensive support for any staff member affected.

These incidents will be recorded on the 'School Incident Log' and shared/discussed with affected staff.

7. Positive De-Escalation Training for Employees

With effective training, employees can learn how to manage and defuse potentially violent situations or minimise the risk of actual harm occurring. They will be trained to investigate and understand the triggers rather than just react to the behaviour. The need for training for staff who could be exposed to violence during their normal duties will be identified and arranged by managers. CPD will deal with all aspects of violence before, during and after an incident and may include;

- Skills and techniques for dealing with fear and anxiety
- Information about the causes of violent and aggressive behaviour
- Recognition of possible risks
- Detailed knowledge or relevant procedures
- Communication skills
- Avoidance of behaviour that might 'trigger' aggression or violence
- Defusing and calming techniques
- Break away techniques and escape tactics – positive handling
- Support and counselling
- Effective risk assessment
- Environmental adjustments
- Restorative practices
- Clear record keeping

Lone Working Procedures and Training

The Trust is committed to protecting employees from personal injury resulting from the need to undertake lone working as part of their duties and the aim is to reduce the risks associated with lone working to '*as low as is reasonably practicable*'.

The Trust will, ***so far as is reasonably practicable***, ensure that;

- Employees who are required to work alone or unsupervised for significant periods of time, are protected from risks to their health and safety
- The risks to employees' health and safety are identified by suitable and sufficient risk assessments of the work activities, and where appropriate control measures are introduced to reduce the risk to an acceptable level or within statutory requirements
- Employees who believe themselves to be in serious or imminent danger and who for reasons of their own or another person's safety, remove themselves to a place of safety, will be supported by the Trust
- Employees are given information, instruction and/or training before being expected to work alone and with a 'known' individual. The degree of information provided with regards to an individual will be dependent on the risks associated and the outcome of the risk assessment

Refresher training will take place every 3 years or sooner if the need arises or processes change.

8. Secure Premises and Safety of Staff

The welcome that members of the public receive when they meet with Trust staff may well have bearing on how they act during their visits and meetings. Reception areas and waiting rooms should have easy access, good lighting and a customer-friendly atmosphere. Waiting times should be kept to a minimum and where there is a delay, the reason should be explained to the person waiting and

apologies made, especially if an appointment time has not been kept. If any employee thinks development of a situation where a threat of violence is impending, then they should call for assistance from a senior member of staff who should work to resolve the cause of aggravation.

It is important that security arrangements are kept to a high standard within all capacities. Arrangements should be constantly reviewed and their effectiveness tested from time to time. The following safety precautions should be considered;

- Doors must be kept secured where there is no need for the public to enter workplaces. There must be arrangements for securing the building when the office closes, and separate arrangements when staff are working late. Whatever devices are fitted to external doors, safe egress must be maintained at all times
- Where alarm systems are installed with readily available panic buttons, alarms should only ring in a permanently manned office area where staff are trained to respond. This response must be practised regularly
- Lighting outside buildings should be adequate to allow staff to exit safely at night. Car parks, particularly if out of view of the main thoroughfare, must be well lit
- Employees should not work alone in an isolated office or building which is open to the public. If staff work shifts or late into the evening, arrangements must be made for them to leave in safety. Any employees choosing to work late on their own must seek permission from management beforehand and be advised of the potential risks associated
- If an employee, (other than the school caretaker) is expected to open and lock up a premises, additional support measures such as another member of staff present and/or panic alarm/devices or the way to alert management and emergency services issued
- Installation of CCTV cameras should be considered for the security of the staff and the premises

Interviews within Trust building

Although interviews carried out within occupied premises are deemed less of a threat than those undertaken away from the building, there is still a potential for incidents to occur and the following precautionary measures must be considered;

- Interview rooms require an element of privacy, but must not be totally isolated from surrounding staffed offices
- When potentially volatile clients are being interviewed, arrangements must be made to ensure regular observations are made from outside the room
- A pre-arranged plan to interrupt interviews when trouble is anticipated must be in place
- Staff must always ensure when interviewing clients that they are seated between the client and door to maintain a clear escape path if needed
- Access to the interview room should be by controlled entry to prevent unauthorised access
- Staff working alone or regularly visiting potentially dangerous individuals or locations, must pre-arrange phone in times to ensure regular contact occurs

- If staff are delayed for any reason they must let their supervisor know at the earliest opportunity
- If a member of staff is late in calling or arriving back at the office and cannot be traced the police must be called
- If a member of staff must visit a client where there is a known history of violence or where they have to visit an isolated situation or have to deal with unpleasant aspects which could cause distress to the clients, the visit must be attended with at least 2 members of staff

Individual School Responsibilities

It is beyond the scope of this guidance to specify detailed plans for every school to deal with violence at work. Each school must, having consulted with their staff, produce and issue detailed safety arrangements, having carried out risk assessments for both general team activities and specific tasks such as dealing with and visiting members of the public at home or in the community.

9. The Role of the Police

In the case of a severe disturbance, assault or threatened violence and immediate assistance is required, the police should be called by dialling 999. If the matter is not as urgent and doesn't require immediate assistance (such as reporting criminal damage), the non-emergency number(s) should be dialled – 101 or 01642 326326.

If you have been assaulted you have the right to make a complaint to the police if you choose. In this event, the police must be informed immediately following the assault.

The police, via the Crown Prosecution Service, may prosecute an assailant but may be reluctant to do so in cases where there is a conflict of evidence, lack of supporting evidence, or where there is no actual bodily harm. Each case is, however, treated on its merits. If the police decide not to prosecute in a particular case, the employee concerned may pursue the matter by taking private civil legal action against the assailant.

10. Support for Employees

Support for employees will be provided in the form of psychological or moral support and financial support, which would cover normal earnings or compensation in the event of permanent injuries in accordance with *National Conditions of Service and insurance arrangements maintained by the Trust.

Where an incident has taken place, the circumstances will be thoroughly investigated in order to examine ways of preventing or minimising the risk of reoccurrence. Unless an employee's actions had been established as wholly inappropriate, their involvement in an incident should not be as seen as a reflection of their ability. Initial discussions by the line manager should therefore always be constructive, emphasising the positive aspects of what has happened and attempting to rebuild the confidence and encourage the member of staff to continue in their job.

Colleagues are expected to display an understanding and supportive attitude towards a victim of violence.

In cases of a more serious nature where specialist counselling may be needed, the circumstances should be referred to the Human Resources Team.

*National Conditions of Service provide for compensation in the event of death of permanent disablement arising from a violent or criminal assault suffered by employees in the course of, or as a consequence of, their employment. The amount of the compensation awarded varies according to the degree of disability. In addition, the Trust maintains insurance arrangements against which employees may be able to claim. Management should ensure that employees who are victims of assault are made aware of the above and, if necessary, are given support if pursuing a claim.

Sickness allowances payable under National Conditions of Service to employees absent as a result of physical attack at work are treated as a separate entitlement from normal sickness and it is therefore in employees' interests to identify the reason for their absence.

In exceptional cases, where employees or their families may be at risk because of their position, the Trust will take all reasonable security measures to protect the people concerned.

11. Reviewing the Policy

Whilst this guidance gives valuable information which may minimise the risk of violence, it cannot cover every situation that might arise. The Guidance will be widely circulated to employees who will be expected to familiarise themselves with its contents.

The information which is gathered as a result of reported incidents will be analysed and acted upon in order to minimise the risk of recurrence. Employee experiences and 'near misses' should be reported so that the councils review procedures can be as thorough as possible.

12. Other linked Policies

Please read additional linked Trust policies

- Lone Worker policy
- Parental Expectations and Conduct

APPENDIX 1

About the Incident			
Date		Time	
Section/ Establishment		Location	
Name		Job Title	
Manager/Head Teacher			
Police Reference (If applicable)			

Category of Assault			
Category A		Category B	
Category C		Category D	

What duties were you carrying out at the time of the incident?
Please give details of events leading up to the incident?

Please provide details of the incident as it occurred?
Please provide details of the action taken immediately following the incident including actions taken including those of any other person present?

Details of Assailant(s) if known	
Name	
Address	Alternative Address (If applicable)
Is it deemed necessary to record the assailant on the Caution Advised System? (Please note it is the managers responsibility to send out the Caution Advised notification letter to the assailant)	
Yes ☐	No ☐
Please provide a reason if the CAS First Notification letter should not be sent out	

Risk Assessment and Control Measures			
Category	Description of Risk	Action Required	Review Time
A	➤ Physical violence ➤ Displaying offensive weapons ➤ Animal attack ➤ Extremely threatening behaviour (e.g. 'I will get you when you finish work or I will burn your house down')	➤ No home visits to be undertaken ➤ Office visits only in secure interview rooms ➤ Ban from premises and with no personal or telephone contact. All contact only in writing	Annually
B	➤ Verbal assault using inappropriate language including sexual and racial references. ➤ Anti-social behaviour such as harassment/intimidation both to employees and members of public	➤ Headteacher writes to offender banning them from the use of the premises for a specified period of time	Half yearly
C	➤ Invading personal space ➤ Feeling a real threat to your own personal safety ➤ Damage to personal property	➤ Home visits to be carried out in pairs ➤ Office visits to be carried out in a secure interview rooms ➤ Warning letter to be sent out	Half yearly
D	➤ Verbal abuse using inappropriate language ➤ Showing aggressive body language/behaviour	➤ Treat with caution – seek further guidance from your line manager	Quarterly
Control Measures Agreed by Manager and Staff Member (Where Necessary)			

About the Incident			
Date		Time	
School		Location of incident	
Name		Job Title	
Senior Leader			

Post Accident			
Has an Investigation been completed?	☐	Have accounts/statements been gathered by all staff involved, including witnesses?	☐
Was the scene assessed immediately after the event?	☐	Has physical evidence been gathered? i.e. Photographs, videos etc.	☐
Has the member of staff received support and had the opportunity to discuss incident with a member of SLT?	☐	Has risk assessment been put in place/reviewed	☐

SLT record of events (brief summary)	
Signature & Date (school leader)	Signature & Date (staff member)

Appendix 2**Violence to staff - School Incident Log**

About the Incident			
Date		Time	
School		Location of incident	
Name		Job Title	
Senior Leader			

Post Accident			
Has an Investigation been completed?	☐	Have accounts/statements been gathered by all staff involved, including witnesses?	☐
Was the scene assessed immediately after the event?	☐	Has physical evidence been gathered? i.e. Photographs, videos etc.	☐
Has the member of staff received support and had the opportunity to discuss incident with a member of SLT?	☐	Has risk assessment been put in place/reviewed	☐

SLT record of events (brief summary)	
Has the incident resulted in any injury to the staff member? (If yes, provide details)	
Signature & Date (school leader)	Signature & Date (staff member)

***Please attach any evidence to this report (victim statement, witness statements, photographs, videos etc)**

Appendix 3

Violence to staff – Lead Investigator check list

Prior to any incidents

1. A general violence to staff risk assessment is in place for ‘occasional/snap’ incidents **(not to be used for any child with a history of aggressive/violent behaviour)**
2. Risk Assessments in place for all identified children. These should be reviewed after every incident and/or when significant changes in home environment occur
3. All relevant staff have received Team Teach training and level 2 restraint training when working with identified children
4. All training is logged and kept up to date
5. A lead person has been identified to report and record incidents
6. Complete near miss reports for all incidents that could have led to injury

Post Incident

1. SLT member to visit site asap after incident
2. Collect photographic/video evidence where possible. Secure any physical evidence
3. Complete incident report form (either 1 or 2). Keep reports factual – no opinions or assertions
4. Collect victim statements and witness statements asap
5. Collate all documents and attach to incident report to ensure a clear, traceable paper trail of all assaults
6. Check in on staff member asap after the incident
7. Opportunity for staff member to discuss incident and actions with a member of SLT within 48 hours of incident