

Paxcroft Primary School

Violence & Aggression against Staff Policy

Reviewed: February 2025

Next date of review: February 2027



PURPOSE

To set out Paxcroft Primary School requirements and responsibilities in relation to the management, prevention and reporting of violent incidents involving staff, visitors and service users.

SCOPE

This guidance procedure covers all staff employed in Paxcroft Primary School. This includes school staff, agency staff, and staff from other organisations, contractors, volunteers and visitors. The procedure describes the responsibilities of managers and staff to ensure that they know how to manage violent incidents, understand how to reduce the probability of violent incidents where possible and access and use the School's Violent Incident Report system (CPOMs and written form)

POLICY

Paxcroft Primary School intends to provide a safe and healthy working environment and safe practices at all times and aims to ensure the health and safety of its employees and others who may be affected by their actions, so far as is reasonably practicable.

The School will monitor levels of violent and aggressive behaviour, as reported, and offer appropriate training in the prevention and management of aggression as necessary. A robust overview will be maintained by the DSL, using information provided through the VIR reporting structure, in order that records can be routinely interrogated to enable monitoring / learning to take place.

REFERENCES TO LEGAL, CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND OTHER EXTERNAL DOCUMENTS, INCLUDING RESEARCH

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR)

DEFINITIONS

Violence is defined as :

- Aggressive physical contact which may or may not result in pain or injury
- Other non-physical aggressive behaviour directed towards an employee including :
 - Verbal abuse
 - Intimidating behaviour causing fear or concern
 - Sexual or racial harassment
 - Cyberbullying
- Violence to any property which may encompass a range of behaviour including:
 - Throwing a small item eg. cup, board cleaner, book
 - Destruction or ransacking of a building
- Violence towards staff

- Damage to personal or School property

ROLES

Managers are responsible for implementing this procedure.

AUTHORITY TO VARY THE PROCEDURE

Governing Body and / or Headteacher.

PROCEDURE CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION
2. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS
3. STRUCTURE & CONTENTS
4. RECOGNISING POTENTIAL VIOLENCE
5. PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE
6. HANDLING AN AGGRESSIVE INCIDENT
7. ADDITIONAL SUPPORT & ADVICE
8. REPORTING PROCEDURE

1. INTRODUCTION

We must have a system for reporting and managing violent incidents that arise in our premises or affect our staff or others who may be affected.

Paxcroft Primary School has a single system of violent incident reporting which can be initiated locally, by staff or managers, based on each incident's outcome and the personal feelings and considerations of each person at the time of the incident.

This guidance procedure provides some guidance for the management and prevention of such incidents and identifies the specific reporting mechanism that is to be embraced in order that information can be collated and trended, in order to identify areas where violent incidents are prevalent, with a view to investigating, mitigating or reducing these incidents as appropriate.

2. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 Employers owe a duty of care for the health, safety and welfare of all employees whilst they are at work and to other people who may be affected by their activities. They must comply with the statutory duties contained within the Act, as amended, as well as those supporting regulations.

Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 Prominent among the requirements of these regulations is the duty to carry out suitable and sufficient risk assessments on all work activities. This includes activities where violent incidents may be inherent or where it is reasonably foreseeable that they may occur.

Reporting of Incidents, Diseases & Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR) Certain specified incidents must be reported to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) within a given time period as advised at SGP 17-07 and <http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/index.htm>

3. STRUCTURE & CONTENTS

This guidance procedure has been designed to provide implementation guidance for managers and an information source for all employees. It explains the actions required and the performance standards expected of those managers and staff.

4. RECOGNISING POTENTIAL VIOLENCE

Recognising the potential for violence is often possible. At other times, it will be more difficult as it is not always premeditated and may not have an obvious cause. The analysis of previous Violent Incident Reports can identify useful indicators of potential triggers and patterns of violent incidents.

Whenever there is the potential for a violent or aggressive incident, a risk assessment must be carried out and recorded as a legal requirement, and action taken to reduce the risk to a tolerable level that is as low as reasonably practicable. The risk assessment must identify risks from all sources including clients, general public, client's family and friends, and visitors or other parties that have the potential to become involved.

Factors associated with violence include isolation, stress, frustration, fear and experiences of violence in a person's past, especially in childhood. Contributory factors include the effects of alcohol and certain drugs.

Situations involving sanctions are potential triggers of a violent reaction. These can include a move to physically restrain to prevent injury or even a misinterpreted move to provide comfort.

Some psychotic states are associated with violence, and some physical illnesses can sometimes cause a person to react violently.

All threats must be treated seriously.

Managers and staff must discuss and decide upon appropriate actions in situations where the potential for violence is identified in accordance with the risk assessment. If restraint is to be used, it should only be as part of an overall strategy and used only in accordance with training provided.

5. PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE

Very straight forward precautions can be taken to avoid potential aggression. Planning for the avoidance of violence is a task for managers to undertake in consultation with their staff. The impact of the employee's attitude and behaviour in a given situation must not be underestimated.

Employees must feel secure in their work and this is to be facilitated by the introduction of safe working practices. This might be made possible for example, by the proximity of a 'stand by' person, by pre-arranged interruptions, effective lone working systems or by the use of verbal telephone codes requesting assistance, as well as by conventional alarm systems.

Attention must be given to an effective lone working system which includes the reporting in and back up arrangements for staff visiting client's homes, especially where there may be a risk of violence. Systems must be established for staff who work in isolation to ensure that their location is known. Call-back or similar systems must be available as appropriate, particularly for lone workers and/or those working outside office hours. The Lone Working Risk Assessment should be used to assist in identifying these effective procedures.

Objects with the potential to be used as weapons must not be left lying around. Employees must also be aware that the wearing of items such as neck chains, pendant earrings, body jewellery etc. may increase the possibility of personal injury.

A system for raising an alarm must be available for employees, as appropriate, and the response tested on a periodic basis to ensure that it works effectively.

Preferably, employees should not be left alone without the ability of raising an alarm, but where this is unavoidable; other equally effective methods of reducing the risks must be considered.

All service users who telephone School staff must always be treated with courtesy, and waiting time must be kept to a minimum in order to reduce impatience or potentially violent situations.

All employees, including front line and support staff, who may have contact with members of the public, either by face-to-face or by telephone, must receive local induction / in-service training in the management of potentially violent and aggressive situations.

Managers and employees must discuss which situations may give cause for concern and what action is needed to help employees to feel secure and this should be recorded as part of the supervision process.

Managers must take action to support employees who identify instances when they have been or may be afraid, as a result of previous or potentially violent situations.

It is often useful for managers to have good working relationships with the local police.

Violence can be followed or caused by loss of credibility. It is accepted that the employee may lose personal credibility or confidence during or following a violent incident and that this credibility will be regained in time or as necessary.

Employees should have an awareness and, where appropriate, be trained in the use of non-threatening postures and the value of maintaining physical distance from an aggressive source.

6. HANDLING AN AGGRESSIVE INCIDENT

The following points of practice may help to defuse a potentially violent situation. The list is not exhaustive and other actions may be necessary and equally appropriate.

- When violence is threatened, employees should attempt to keep control of the situation.
- Attempts should be made to discuss with the violent person his or her frustrations and problems.
- Assistance from other employees may be summoned. Any other members of the community in the vicinity who are at risk must be encouraged to move somewhere safe.
- Physical safety of people is more important than the security of buildings or cash. There will be occasions when staff will need to retreat and help others to retreat to a safe distance, but only when this does not increase the risk of injury to any other person. Such decisions are not easy and are to be based on the balance of risks to all parties involved.
- One of the difficulties with which staff have to come to terms, is the decision whether or not to use physical restraint. Very occasionally, and as a last resort, physical restraint will be necessary although many people, managers included, may feel uncomfortable about intervening in this way. If all else fails, physical restraint may help to control a violent situation but it must be employed with minimum force and in accordance with training received and corporate policy and local branch procedures.

- Unless unavoidable, members of the public should not be involved in controlling an incident. Colleagues can immediately be requested to help, as appropriate, and police may then be summoned if circumstances dictate their presence.
- Employees involved in violent incidents must always have the opportunity to discuss what has happened in detail with the manager and with colleagues and counselling must be offered.
- The extent of immediate and delayed shock to all those affected by an incident must never be under-estimated. Any employee suffering shock or injury as a result of violence should seek medical attention and be offered appropriate support and advice.
- Any implement used in an attack must be retained, provided this can be done without causing further difficulty or risk of added injury.

A review of all the aspects of a violent incident, including a decision on any action to be taken against the aggressor or any plans for working with the aggressive party, must be decided upon and an action plan must be devised, implemented and locally recorded as appropriate.

The question of police involvement and prosecution must be given early consideration by the line manager, taking advice from branch management and the legal section as necessary.

Violent incidents must be reported and recorded at the earliest opportunity in accordance with this procedure and using Violent Incident Report Form (see details below)

7. ADDITIONAL SUPPORT & ADVICE

An employee suffering from shock or injury as a result of a violent incident must seek medical advice. Appropriate assistance is to be provided to a member of staff after an assault, for example by home visiting, escorting to the doctor or awaiting a doctor's visit, and to ensure appropriate sensitivity when informing relatives or friends (as discussed or agreed) etc.

In discussion with the manager about an incident, the employee may, where appropriate, wish to be accompanied by a friend or representative to various related meetings or appointments.

The manager, acting on behalf of, and with the consent of the employee, may decide to inform the police of any incident or assault which occurs whilst carrying out official duties. Under certain circumstances, the employee may not wish the police to be informed and although that wish will be taken into account, the School has a responsibility to protect employees and, in the event of a serious offence, the police may have to be informed. Managers should seek appropriate specialist advice from senior management and the legal section as dictated by the circumstances at the time of the incident.

If the police decide not to prosecute, the individual has a right to proceed with a private action.

The employee has the right to report the matter personally to the police and should inform their line manager should they decide to do so.

If an employee wishes to pursue a claim through the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority, (CICA), they must apply in accordance with guidance at Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority.

8. REPORTING PROCEDURE

All Violent Incident Reports (VIRs) are reported using CPOMS and a written Violent Incident Form

- If this only involves students, CPOMS logs the incident

- If this involves students, affecting an adult who has been injured, CPOMS and the Violent Incident Form are used
- If this does not involve students, only the Violent Incident Form is used

Reporting of all violent incidents ensures that local management staff are aware of such incidents and that appropriate action has been taken to support those involved and reduce the risk of a similar incident occurring in the future. Records of all violent incidents are required to meet all legislative requirements and to enable the monitoring of trends, whilst assisting in determining policy direction and ensuring the effective targeting of training resources.

Managers and staff should be aware that teams and units submitting VIRs are not viewed as problem areas or as poorly managed, but rather as taking the appropriate and responsible approach which is to be strongly encouraged. Staff should always be strongly encouraged to complete the VIR form and under no circumstances should they be discouraged from completing a VIR form following a violent incident.

Each work unit or team must have a clear process to ensure that VIR forms are always accessible, and are completed and distributed in accordance with the following procedure:

- As soon as practicable, an employee must report the incident to their line manager or the most senior member of staff available who can advise on the appropriate action.
- The manager and the employee must together complete the Violent Incident Report form as soon as practically possible following the incident. This is in addition to the completion of any other related documentation including completion of the Accident Book or Accident Book Report Form, following guidance, in the event of injury.