



St Stephen's RC Primary School

Violence and Aggression towards staff

Vision

A world class school for children that want to make the world a better place as God intended

Mission Statement

'Love one another, as I have loved you.'
John 13:34

Our Values - St Stephen's CARES

Compassion, **A**mbition, **R**ejoice, **E**xcellence, **S**ervice

C ompassion	<i>be compassionate in all of our actions</i>
A mbition	<i>be ambitious – better ourselves and those around us</i>
R ejoice	<i>be rejoiceful – celebrate the Good News</i>
E xcellence	<i>be excellent in everything we do – work hard always</i>
S ervice	<i>be a steward of the Lord – a service to the community</i>

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Introduction

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines workplace violence as “any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work” and states that it can include verbal abuse or threats as well as physical attacks. This policy sets out how St. Stephen’s will seek to prevent workplace violence, and the procedures that will be followed if a violent incident occurs.

At St. Stephen’s we believe that all of our employees have the right to a safe working environment, free from threatening, abusive or violent behaviour, and recognises its legal obligations under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, to provide such an environment.

We acknowledge and accept its legal duties under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 to undertake risk assessments that seek to identify and eliminate or reduce the risks to employees’ health, safety and welfare, including the risk from violent or abusive behaviour.

Violence, abuse, assaults or threats of such behaviour can have serious consequences for individuals and schools, and the school is committed to taking all necessary steps to prevent such incidents in schools. The school will fully investigate and support all employees affected by assaults.

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the public sector equality duty to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity, monitoring of the procedure will be undertaken to collect information such as: the type and frequency of incidents reported; any areas of concern to be addressed; and any additional training required.

Definitions

Assault – this refers to any form of violent conduct against a member of staff. It may be physical, psychological, sexual and/or verbal. It also refers to threats of and attempted assault of any kind, and includes abuse and threats made via the telephone or via social media. Behaviours associated with assault may include, but are not limited to: hitting, pinching, biting, spitting, swearing, offensive gestures and unwanted physical contact such as unnecessary touching.

Secondary trauma – this refers to the potential impact on staff of chronic exposure to working with pupils suffering from unregulated stress.

Manager – this includes the Headteacher, members of the Senior Leadership Team and line managers.

Employee – this refers to all members of staff including those employed on fixed term contracts, supply teachers employed via an agency or directly by the school,

trainees and student teachers, apprentices and contractors employed by the school.

Parents – this includes a guardian or carer.

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
- Extreme or repetitive verbal or written abuse which causes personal offence or distress
- Sexual, racial, homophobic or other harassment
- Bullying including cyber bullying
- Intimidation
- Damage to personal property
- Other aggressive behaviour
- Shouting
- Posturing
- Gestures
- Insults
- Innuendo
- Unreasonable demands or blackmail
- Allegations which turn out to be vexatious or malicious.
- Please note, this list is not exhaustive.

General Policy

Violence and aggression are unacceptable. However, given the nature of the services we provide, it is acknowledged that some staff may, on occasion, encounter violence or aggression and therefore the school takes reasonable measures to eliminate or minimise the risks.

- Risk assessments will be undertaken for specific pupils with known difficulties.
- Staff will receive training from time to time on measures to be taken in different circumstances.
- All incidents of violence and aggression must be reported to a member of the school Leadership Team
- Where a member of staff has to use positive 'handling procedures' as a result of violence in the school, these should be recorded on CPOMS
- Following an incident of violence or aggression, support will be offered by the school – where necessary staff should be directed to access support from our Health Assured scheme.
- Staff are expected to take account of their own safety when considering their actions in intervening in any incidents of violence or aggression.

Preventing assaults - risk assessments

School will conduct regular and suitable risk assessments in relation to assaults on employees. The risk assessment will be kept under regular review and updated as necessary.

The risk assessment procedure involves:

- Establishing the risk of violence and assault on employees.
- Considering the risk of stress and/or secondary trauma which arises from working in fear of violence and assault.
- Taking steps to remove these risks.
- Where removal of the risk is not possible, reducing the risk by any necessary changes in working practices or by introducing appropriate protective and supportive measures.

Control measures taken to reduce the risk of violence and assault may include but are not limited to: the provisions of alarms for staff; revision of lone working and/or emergency procedures and changes to the working environment such as improved lighting or room layout.

Where the behaviour of an individual pupil presents a demonstrable and ongoing risk to the health, safety and wellbeing to other members of the school community, and implementation of the school's pupil behaviour policy has had little or no effect, an individual behaviour risk assessment will be considered.

Incidents that will result in a pupil behaviour risk assessment include, but are not limited to:

- pupil carrying out – or threatening to carry out – any form of physical or sexual assault, whether in or outside of school.
- a pupil is found to be carrying a weapon, or threatens to bring a weapon into school – such as a knife, ball-bearing gun etc.

The school will inform all employees of the outcome of the risk assessment (including any relevant pupil behaviour risk assessments), and ensure that this information is included in the induction for all new members of staff.

The school will monitor the effectiveness of control measures by monitoring incident rates and equality characteristics of staff affected by assaults.

The school will also gather information about the causes of violence in schools, and will use this information to inform the risk assessment and prevention process. This process may involve engaging with external bodies and through the provision of training and pupil assemblies.

Roles and Responsibilities

The governing body is responsible for the provision of measures to safeguard its staff. It delegates the implementation of the measures provided for within this policy to the Headteacher of the school.

The Headteacher and Leadership Team will:

- ensure that risk assessments are undertaken where required;
- ensure that relevant staff receive training at appropriate intervals in skills that can be used to minimise risks to personal safety;
- ensure that all staff are aware of the procedure to report incidents of violence and aggression;
- ensure that all such reports are thoroughly investigated and responded to;
- offer and provide appropriate post-incident support to staff; and
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy.

Additionally, under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR), the school is responsible for reporting the following to the HSE:

- all accidents to employees resulting in deaths or 'specified injuries' (list available at: [hse.gov.uk/riddor/specified-injuries.htm](https://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/specified-injuries.htm)).
- all accidents which result in an employee being off work due to injuries for more than seven days.

- all accidents to non-employees which result in them being killed or taken to hospital and which are connected with work.

Any violence or abuse in relation to one or more protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) may constitute illegal harassment under the Equality Act 2010.

Individual members of staff are responsible for:

- following working procedures and risk assessments;
- reporting likely or actual incidents of violence or aggression; and
- taking due regard for 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. An exception to this is where any formal plan (e.g. a care plan) relating to a pupil, requires an alternative, prescribed course of action to be followed.

Preventing Assault - Liaising with police

The school will notify the police if needed and to respond promptly when incidents occur.

The school may also liaise with the police to address violent incidents within the wider community or within the vicinity of the school. For instance, the school may report concerns about potential dangerous activity, such as knife crime, to the police for further investigation.

Procedure to follow following a serious assault

If an employee is assaulted or is threatened with assault, the following action will be taken:

- The employee will be allowed to access a private area for as long as necessary following the incident.
- The employee will be advised to contact their trade union, if they have not already done so.
- The employee's line manager and the Headteacher should be informed of the incident as soon as possible.
- 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).
- In the case of physical injuries, if at all possible, photos should be taken.

- School will encourage you to contact Health assured.
- The incident will be recorded and witness statements taken, as soon as possible after the incident.
- The Headteacher will conduct an investigation into 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 the employer, 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 Headteacher, in conjunction with the employer. 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.
- If a member of staff suffers an assault away from their normal workplace, but the assault arises in the course of, and via the performance of, their professional duties, support will be provided via this process.

Dealing with weapons

If a member of staff has grounds to suspect that a pupil is in possession of a weapon, or there has been an incident involving a weapon, they should immediately inform a member of SLT. Employees are not expected to, and should not, deal with the incident on their own.

The Headteacher will make a decision about whether the pupil should be searched, with or without their consent, referring to the school's confiscation policy and Department for Education (DfE) guidance.

If a weapon is found, or the pupil refuses to cooperate, the police should be called immediately. If a weapon is found during a search before the police have arrived, it should be seized and kept in a safe, secure place until the police arrive.

If a pupil is found to be in the possession of a weapon, the behaviour/ exclusion/ safeguarding policy will be instigated and an individual pupil risk assessment will be undertaken. Depending on the circumstances of the incident, sanctions may include exclusion on a temporary or permanent basis.

Assaults by visitors/intruders

In the case of an assault by a visitor or intruder, the manager dealing with the incident will in the first instance inform the police, requesting their prompt attendance, and ensure that all staff and pupils are safe and secure.

If abusive, aggressive or insulting behaviour or language from a parent presents a risk to staff or pupils, or makes them feel threatened, the school may use common law powers to bar the parent in question from the premises. If a bar on a parent is deemed necessary, this will be put in writing from the Chair of Governors, giving the parent a formal opportunity to put forward their views before the bar is made permanent. Following any representations from the parent, the bar will be confirmed or removed.

Furthermore, it is a criminal offence, under section 547 of the Education Act 1996, for a person who is on school premises without lawful authority to cause or permit a nuisance or disturbance. It also allows for the removal and prosecution of any person believed to have committed the offence. Therefore, in cases where the assailant is known (including if they are a parent), a letter will be sent stating that their behaviour is unacceptable, and they are no longer permitted to come onto the premises in the future without an appointment. If they do persist in entering the school premises and displaying unreasonable behaviour they will be treated as a trespasser and will be liable to prosecution.

Assaults by pupils

Where an employee is assaulted by a pupil, the pupil's conduct will be dealt with via the school's pupil behaviour policy. If the pupil remains in school, as part of this process, an individual pupil behaviour risk assessment/behaviour plan will also be carried out and the outcome shared with all employees that have contact with the pupil in question. The school's safeguarding lead will also be consulted following an assault by a pupil as there may be child protection issues to consider.

Sexual assaults

The school's risk assessment will also specifically consider the risk of sexual assault and harassment against employees. Sexual harassment is defined as "unwanted conduct that violates an individual's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment". It may take the form of unwanted verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature and it is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010.

Incidents within the school vicinity

School will also consider the risk of violent incidents, such as knife crime, not occurring directly on the school premises but in the wider vicinity of the school. The risk assessment will consider the possibility of such incidents occurring, and whether violent incidents have previously occurred in the community. If there are concerns about criminal or dangerous activity taking place, the police will be contacted

If a violent incident occurs that impacts on the school, such as one involving knife crime, the following steps will be undertaken:

The Headteacher will convene a rapid response meeting with the police. This is particularly important if there is a continuing risk, for instance, if the perpetrator is still at large.

Counselling will be offered in the aftermath of the incident to the whole school community (staff, pupils and parents).

Support for victims of assault

Employees that have experienced an assault will be permitted time off to meet with their trade union representative, the police, legal counsel and to attend court if necessary.

If the employee sustains an injury arising from an assault at work, and it is necessary for them to take sick leave, the employer will advise them.

Following an assault, the employer will discuss with the employee whether they feel ready to return to their normal duties and advice will be sought from the employer's occupational health provider. Reasonable adjustments will be made in line with OH recommendations.

The employer acknowledges that employees may experience stress and/or anxiety following an assault or arising out of the threat of assault. The school will offer counselling for employees following an assault.

