



# Violence & Assaults Against Colleagues

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## 1.0 Introduction

This policy sets out how our Trust will seek to prevent workplace violence in its academies, and the procedures that will be followed if a violent incident occurs. This may include, but is not limited to, threats of or actual abuse from pupils/students, parents/carers, visitors, or intruders.

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. HSE statistics also show that teaching and education professionals have a higher than average rate of violence at work.

Our Trust has a responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of all colleagues (including contractors / agency staff / governors), and pupils/students, and that of any visitors to our premises. Violence and abusive behaviour is unacceptable, and colleagues and others must be protected as far as is reasonably practicable. The policy does not apply to genuine accidents where there is no intent of violence or assault on either colleagues or pupils/students.

All colleagues have a responsibility to cooperate with their employer, and follow the instructions in relation to health and safety matters. Headteachers / line managers responsible for implementing the Policy will be briefed on how to apply it.

Please see section 12 for definitions of terms such as ‘assault’ and ‘colleague’ used within this policy.

## 2.0 Preventing assaults – risk assessment

Each academy will conduct regular and suitable risk assessments in relation to assaults and violence on colleagues, and is responsible for ensuring that related site-specific operational procedures are fully documented and communicated. [Additional guidance](#) and a [generic risk assessment form](#) are available.

### 2.1 Academy Level Risk Assessment

Colleagues, nominated Trade Union Health and Safety Representatives, Link Health and Safety Governors all play an active role in the risk assessment process. The risk assessment will be kept under regular review and updated as necessary. In-school trade union representatives should be consulted in good time about matters affecting the safety of their members. It is recommended that these are discussed at Academy H&S Committee meetings (or equivalent forum).

The risk assessment procedure involves:

- establishing the risk of violence and assault on colleagues, including those who may be more at risk than others (e.g. lone workers)
- considering the risk of stress and/or the potential impact on colleagues of chronic exposure to working with pupils/students who are themselves suffering from unregulated stress
- 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 via an action plan.

Action plans should be monitored by the Headteacher / Principal (or their designate) and Governors to ensure that all items identified have sufficient resources allocated and have been addressed. The plan should include the following:

- Action required
- Action by whom
- Risk priority
- Projected timescales
- Date completed

Control measures taken to reduce the risk of violence and assault may include, but are not limited to:

- issuing communications / notices regarding expected behaviours and the possible consequences of contravention (link to Academy Behaviour Policy)
- the provisions of training / supervision / procedures (e.g. working in pairs) for colleagues so they can carry out their duties safely and effectively.
- Provide training opportunities on dealing with aggression, de-escalation / disengagement techniques, team teach, and personal safety
- Equipment e.g. alarms, CCTV, school phone, walkie talkies
- revision of lone and/or off-site working guidance/policies
- review and practice of emergency / lockdown procedures
- changes to the working environment such as improved lighting or room layout
- review of procedures for the start and end of the school day
- pupil/student assemblies
- engagement with external bodies
- budgeting for the engagement of a private security firm
- Purchasing a knife wand / knife arc

## 2.2 Individual Risk Assessment

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

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

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

### 2.3 Students with SEND

For some children with identified SEND, particularly those with Communication and Interaction (C&I) or Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) special needs, volatile behaviour may be part of the pattern of their disability, and sometimes their main form of communication. In these cases the academy will already have made individual plans (which may be called a Care Plan, Pupil Passport, Individual Education Plan, Individual Behaviour Plan or personal risk assessment) that describe the student's 'triggers', repertoire of challenging behaviours, and most importantly how staff can support them to de-escalate, deflect, distract and avoid physical confrontation.

In the event that staff who have been trained to use these approaches, and who are following the child's individual plan, experience challenging behaviour as part of a suboptimal outcome for the student, then this is not automatically expected to be recorded as Violence at Work. It should be recorded as part of the monitoring of the student's special educational provision, reported to parents in line with individual plans, and any injuries reported and recorded in line with our Trust's Health and Safety at Work policy. Support should be provided to the colleague(s) concerned.

In exceptional circumstances it may also be recorded as Violence at Work, if there is evidence that the behaviour was intentional or targeted to cause harm to adults, rather than an expression of the child's internal SEND-derived needs. Similarly, if a SEND pupil is frequently / regularly assaulting colleagues, it should be considered under this Policy.

### 2.4 Communication & monitoring

The academy will inform colleagues of the outcome of the risk assessment (including any relevant pupil/student behaviour risk assessments), and ensure that relevant information is included in the induction process for all new colleagues, including supply teachers and colleagues employed via an agency.

Our Trust will monitor the effectiveness of control measures by monitoring incident rates (recorded via Parago) and equality characteristics of colleagues affected by assaults, and through meaningful engagement with the workforce and their trade union representatives. Our Trust will also gather information about the causes of violence in academies, and will use this information to inform the risk assessment and prevention process.

### 3.0 Liaison with the police

Academies should establish a protocol with the local police for dealing with assaults and violent incidents. This should allow the police to be notified and to respond promptly when incidents occur.

Liaison with the police may also be required to address violent incidents within the wider community or within the vicinity of the academy. For instance, the academy may report concerns about potential dangerous activity, such as knife crime, to the police for further investigation. In any case of escalation (e.g. complaint) or need for abnormal consideration (e.g. increased gang related problems), school leaders should work with the police in conjunction with their Chief Education Officer to ensure a coordinated approach.

Colleagues may, of course, contact the police directly if they feel the need to do so.

### 4.0 Reporting procedures

Our Trust believes that all assaults against colleagues should be reported and investigated, even if they initially appear trivial.

Academies will:

- record all assaults on colleagues via Parago using the Violent Incident Report Form. This form can be completed by a colleague and/or their line manager. The form has two parts: stage one for reporting the incident, and stage two for documenting the actions taken.
- monitor this data and make it available to colleagues and the recognised trade unions on request and subject to considerations of confidentiality (e.g. via Academy H&S Committees)
- ensure colleagues are made aware, at regular intervals, of the reporting procedures and how / from whom to access the reporting form.

Our Trust will monitor reporting via Parago, and provide data to our Trust's H&S Committee.

The violence and abuse reporting form should be completed as soon as practically possible following a violent/abusive incident or following a threat of violence. The colleague will be given as much time as is necessary out of their normal duties to complete the form. Once completed, the form will be passed to the colleague's line manager who is responsible for ensuring it is processed and recorded using the Parago online report form, action will then be taken in accordance with this policy.

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

- all accidents to colleagues resulting in deaths or 'specified injuries' (list available at: [hse.gov.uk/riddor/specified-injuries.htm](http://hse.gov.uk/riddor/specified-injuries.htm))
- all accidents which result in a colleague 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, gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy/maternity, marriage & civil partnership) may constitute illegal harassment under the Equality Act 2010.

## 5.0 Procedures to follow if an assault occurs

Colleagues who feel that they are in serious and imminent danger, and who withdraw from a situation accordingly, must report this to their headteacher immediately. The incident must be recorded on Parago (see section 4) and support will be provided to colleagues as appropriate to the situation (see section 11).

If a colleague is assaulted or is threatened with assault, the following action will be taken:

- The colleague will be allowed to access a private area for as long as necessary following the incident.
- The colleague will be advised to contact their trade union, if they have not already done so.
- The colleague's line manager and the headteacher should be informed of the incident as soon as possible. The headteacher must inform the Chief Education Officer of the incident.
- Where required, medical treatment will be sought for the colleague. The academy'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). Our Trust will pay for reasonable charges (e.g. from a doctor, dentist or optician) incurred following and arising from the assault.
- In the case of physical injuries, if at all possible, photos should be taken. Special leave with pay for immediate medical advice / treatment should be given. Recuperative time off work should be recorded as sickness absence (see section 11).
- If appropriate, the colleague should also be encouraged to attend an appointment with the employer's occupational health provider. Occupational health advice may be sought following both physical and verbal assaults, as there may be stress and anxiety arising from an incident.
- Alternatively, or in addition, professional counselling services are available from our Trust's Employee Assistance provider Bupa by calling 0800 269 616 - support is free, confidential, and available 24/7

- The incident will be recorded, as soon as possible after the incident, in line with the procedures set out in this policy.
- The headteacher is responsible for ensuring written statements are taken from the colleague, any witnesses and the assailant (where applicable) as soon as possible following the incident. The statements will be taken and processed in line with the [Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service \(ACAS\) guidelines](https://archive.acas.org.uk/media/4483/Conducting-workplace-investigations/pdf/Conducting_Workplace_Investigations.pdf) [https://archive.acas.org.uk/media/4483/Conducting-workplace-investigations/pdf/Conducting\\_Workplace\\_Investigations.pdf](https://archive.acas.org.uk/media/4483/Conducting-workplace-investigations/pdf/Conducting_Workplace_Investigations.pdf).
- 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 provided to the colleague. A copy will be retained by our Trust. 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 and further advice sought if appropriate. In cases where the assault was carried out by a pupil/student, an individual behaviour risk assessment will be undertaken. Reference will need to be made to other policies including those addressing pupil/student behaviour, academy security and safeguarding.
- If appropriate, contact our Trust's Head of Marketing & Engagement for advice on communication, publicity and dealing with the media.
- Ensure that the colleague is supported (see section 11) and speak with the colleague concerned, as appropriate to the situation, in relation to resolution (e.g. restorative conversation / reintegration meeting). This should also be recorded in Parago.

If a colleague 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.

It should be noted that under the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations (1977), officially appointed Trade Union safety representatives also have the right to investigate accidents and other dangerous occurrences in the workplace, and to present their findings to management.

## 6.0 Dealing with weapons

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

The headteacher will make a decision about whether the pupil/student should be searched, with or without their consent, referring to the academy's confiscation policy and

Department for Education (DfE) guidance (available at: [gov.uk/government/publications/searching-screening-and-confiscation](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/searching-screening-and-confiscation))

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

If an external person / intruder came on site, or threatened to come on site, with a weapon the Academy would need to go into lockdown protocol - covered below in 8.0.

## 7.0 Assaults by pupils/students

Where a colleague is assaulted by a pupil/student, their conduct will be dealt with via the academy's Behaviour Policy. The pupil/student will be removed from lessons and isolated from others. Behaviour sanctions, including exclusion may be required. A fixed term exclusion may be necessary in order to investigate the circumstances around the assault.

As part of this process, an individual behaviour risk assessment will also be carried out and the outcome shared with colleagues that have contact with the pupil/student in question. The academy's safeguarding lead should also be consulted following an assault by a pupil/student as there may be child protection issues to consider.

Where a pupil/student has assaulted a colleague, and they return to the academy, consideration should be given as to how to minimise contact between the colleague and the student if this is the colleague's wish, and in any event care should be given to supporting the colleague with the return to the classroom. Academies may use practices such as restorative meetings to assist with re-establishing relationships.

## 8.0 Assaults by visitors/intruders

All academies have an agreed lockdown procedure, which all colleagues are briefed on. For further advice please contact our Trust's Head of Facilities.

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 colleagues and pupils/students are safe and secure, following the procedure in this policy for responding to incidents.

If abusive, aggressive or insulting behaviour or language from a parent presents a risk to colleagues or pupils/students, or makes them feel threatened, academies have 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, 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 academy 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 academy premises and displaying unreasonable behaviour they will be treated as a trespasser and will be liable to prosecution.

See also section 9.0 for incidents within the academy vicinity.

The action taken by individuals at the time of an incident will be dependent on what is reasonable in the circumstances, and colleagues are expected to exercise professional discretion on what is appropriate in any given situation. Colleagues should take in to account:

- their professional duty of care towards safeguarding and promoting the welfare of their pupils/students (Keeping Children Safe in Education, DfE)
- the need to act in accordance with the procedures and guidelines provided by their academy
- The responsibility to look after their own health, safety and welfare, and that of their colleagues.

## 9.0 Incidents within the academy vicinity

Our communities value the work of colleagues in supervising students in the immediate vicinity (e.g. bus stops) and this is important in how the local community judges the academy by the behaviour of students travelling to and from school. Academies are responsible for establishing good working practices for the beginning and end of the school day.

The academy will also consider the risk of violent incidents, such as knife crime, not occurring directly on the academy premises but in the wider vicinity of the academy. The risk assessment will consider the possibility of such incidents occurring, and whether violent incidents have previously occurred in the community. However, academy colleagues will not be required to monitor public areas outside of the academy vicinity,

and 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 academy, such as one involving knife crime, the following steps will be undertaken:

- The headteacher/principal 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 may be offered in the aftermath of the incident to the whole (or sections of the) academy community (colleagues, pupils/students and parents) as appropriate.

## 10.0 Sexual assaults

The academy's risk assessment will also specifically consider the risk of sexual assault and harassment against colleagues. 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, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature and it is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010.

## 11.0 Support for colleagues

Colleagues employed directly by our Trust who have experienced an assault/intentional act of violence will be permitted reasonable paid time off to meet with their trade union representative, the police, legal counsel and to attend court if necessary. Our Trust will assist colleagues in reporting violent incidents to the police, with their knowledge and consent.

If the colleague sustains an injury arising from an assault at work, and it is necessary for them to take sick leave, the academy will advise them of their additional entitlements to sick pay for those suffering injury at work (in accordance the Burgundy Book / Green Book for colleagues employed directly by our Trust). Short term absences due to injuries arising from an assault at work will be discounted from absence indicators under our Trust's Supporting Attendance Policy. Long term absences of more than four weeks will be managed in line with the Policy.

Following an injury, the manager will also signpost the colleague to the possibility of obtaining compensation through the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority, and will offer assistance in making and pursuing an application where appropriate, but will not fund a colleague's legal costs.

Following an assault, the manager will discuss with the colleague whether they feel ready to return to their normal duties and advice will be sought from the employer's occupational health provider. If the colleague is not able to complete their normal duties, arrangements will be made for amended duties on a phased return basis - for instance, a reduced timetable or shortened working hours. The colleague will receive their normal salary during this period of amended duties. This process of phased return will be managed in line with our Trust's Supporting Attendance Policy.

Our Trust acknowledges that colleagues may experience stress and/or anxiety following an assault or arising out of the threat of assault. Counselling following an assault is available from our Trust's Employee Assistance Programme. If necessary, the colleague may receive paid time off from work during normal working hours to attend counselling.

## 12.0 Definitions in this policy

- 'assault' refers to any form of violent conduct against a colleague. It may be physical, psychological, sexual, verbal or online (e.g. "trolling"). 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, kicking, pushing, biting, spitting, shouting, swearing, insults, offensive gestures, use of weapons and racial or sexual abuse, unwanted physical contact such as unnecessary touching, malicious / vexations statements or videos posted online.
- 'manager' includes the headteacher/principal, members of the senior leadership team and line managers
- 'colleague' refers (unless otherwise stated) to all colleagues where a specific duty of care is owed, which includes those employed on fixed term contracts, supply teachers employed via an agency or directly by the academy, trainees and student teachers, apprentices and contractors employed by the academy
- 'parent' includes a guardian or carer
- 'academy' includes a college, hub office, or any other educational establishment which is part of Co-op Academies Trust

## 13.0 Review

Data in relation to reported incidents will be made available to relevant H&S Committees (see section 4) at both academy and Trust level.

This policy will be reviewed once every three years, in conjunction with our Trust H&S Committee and JCNC.