



**Policy for: Violence and Abuse towards staff**

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## **1. Introduction**

The purpose of this Policy and Procedure is to identify how the Academy Trust will support staff who are at risk of violence and abuse. In common with other front line public sector services, staff in education can be subjected to abuse and violence by parents and relatives of pupils, guardians/carers, members of the public as well as pupils themselves.

It is recognised that this is likely to be a small minority of people who act like this. The majority are very appreciative of the support and education given by our employees. However, employees of the Trust should be able to come to work without fear of violence, abuse or harassment by any individual or group.

The Trust recognises that whilst this could occur on the premises, there is a high possibility that this could occur elsewhere. This policy applies as long as the incident is in connection with their work for the Trust.

Whilst there have been only a few incidents involving Trust staff compared to the NHS, the Trust takes the safety of its staff very seriously.

This Policy works in conjunction with the Trust's Policy on Persistent Complaints and Harassment.

## **2. Legal position**

The Trust has a duty of care to protect the health, safety and welfare of its employees "as far as is reasonably practicable" under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

The Trust will not tolerate abusive behaviour, anti-social behaviour or violence aimed at its staff, this includes telephone calls and cyber abuse. It operates a Zero Tolerance Policy and any appropriate instances will be reported to the police.

Abuse can occur in many forms either written or verbal – all are encompassed under this Policy.



Posters to this effect will be displayed in Academy and Trust reception areas so that it is appropriately publicised and placed on the website.

### **3. When to use this Policy**

This Policy is not to be used for small incidents which can be easily resolved. It is for serious incidents including, but not limited to:

- Abuse or discriminatory comments contrary to the Equality Act 2010 e.g. racial, sexual orientation
- Physical threats or intimidation (including hand gestures, standing very close, etc
- Assault
- Breaching school security procedures (such as unauthorised access)
- Verbal threats, shouting or inappropriate language including swearing and derogatory terms either in person or over the telephone
- Threats of any kind made via social media, email, letter, etc
- Harassment in any form, including but not exclusive to malicious and vexatious campaigns, via social media, face to face or by any other means.

This policy should not be used to counter valid complaints which have been raised. These will be dealt with via the Complaints Procedure laid down by the Trust.

It is recognised that there are times when emotions are high and reactions to situations can mean that this policy could be invoked e.g. a child protection or safeguarding issue. Any connected incident must be recorded and reported and a judgement made as to whether it was a reaction to the situation or actually an issue for this Policy. If in doubt, appropriate action as specified by this policy should be taken.

### **4. Advice to parents, carers and visitors for raising concerns with staff**

To ensure that interactions between staff and parents, carers and visitors are productive and non-confrontational the Trust offers the following advice:

- Make an appointment to see the relevant person. If you arrive at the Academy without an appointment they may not be able to give you the time that you need.
- Make a note of the things that you wish to discuss or are unhappy about. It will help to clarify the issues and help you when you meet the member of staff.
- Don't jump to conclusions. What has made you angry may not be exactly what has happened in reality.
- Deal with your anger before going to the Academy. An angry confrontation will normally get a defensive response rather than a helpful



one. Academy staff may also refuse to speak to you while you are angry and this could leave you more frustrated.

- Consider being accompanied when you have your meeting if you find it difficult to manage meetings.
- Don't expect an immediate solution. The person that you are talking to may need to investigate your concerns before being able to take any action or reach a solution.
- If you feel that your concern has not been dealt with effectively then you should request a copy of the Academy's complaints procedure, or visit the Academy's website where you can download a copy yourself. This will give you more information on how to deal with your concerns both informally and formally.

## **5. Reporting incidents**

All incidents of abuse, threats or violence must be reported to the Principal or other designated senior leader. This should be done in writing stating

- Date of incident
- Who was involved
- Where it occurred
- Any witnesses
- What led up to the incident
- What happened
- What abusive comments, threats or violence happened
- Any previous incidents or issues with this person or any connected persons

If violence is involved the police should be called automatically and a report made to them as well as to the Principal.

The Trust also has a legal duty under [RIDDOR](#) regulations to make a formal report to the Incident Contact Centre if any of their staff experience a physically violent incident which results in death, major injury or absence from work for seven days or more.

The Trust/Academy will take advice from the Police as to what should happen next which could include

- Banning the individuals involved from the Academy premises
- Pressing charges
- Assisting staff in gaining restraining orders
- Excluding the pupil
- Reporting incidents to appropriate authorities e.g. MASH

## **6. Supporting members of staff**

The Trust will actively support any member of staff who has been involved in an incident of this type. In addition to the support already offered by the Trust's

Employee Assistance Helpline, each employee will be assessed individually as to what other support might assist the member of staff to remain at work or return at the soonest possible opportunity.

The Central HR Department will work with the Academy and the member of staff, their GP or other support to assess appropriate mechanisms for each individual depending on the type of incident. This could include access to counselling or other mental health support strategies.

### **7. Re-building the relationship with the Academy**

If a parent, carer or visitor behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of staff of the Academy or Trust community the Principal or designated senior leader will seek to resolve the situation through discussion.

In the first instance, unless inappropriate due to the level of unacceptable behaviour, the Principal or designated senior leader may invite the parent, carer or visitor to a meeting to discuss the event(s), clarify the expected behaviour and look to form strategies to manage future situations of potential conflict.

Should this be impossible to achieve or inappropriate the Principal may invoke the sanctions set out in Section 5 of this policy.