

SAFETY OF STAFF POLICY

General Statement

The policy should be read in conjunction with the School Health & Safety Policy and School Behaviour and Restraint Policies.

The Albany School wishes to give a clear message to staff that aggression; threats, abuse and violence are unacceptable. A poster to this effect may be displayed by schools and other educational premises at the discretion of the Head Teacher.

In the context of the policy the Council adopts the Health and Safety Executive definition of violence which is defined as:

“Any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work”
(HSE)

The Havering Code of Practice for Violence and Aggression defines ‘verbal abuse’ as:

“Language which is perceived to be abusive because it contains sexist or racist comments, threatens actions violence, is intimidating, or includes persistent bad language”.

Aim

It is recognised that staff may at times be subjected to an assault (verbal or physical) from pupils and members of the public.

In line with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 the policy will provide a framework to implement measures to prevent and reduce the risk of violence and to protect staff.

Objectives

- To support all members of staff with clear responsibilities and guidance.
- To ensure that staff are safe in their working environment.
- To minimise the risks of violence to members of staff, pupils and visitors by physical and other means where appropriate e.g. physical alterations to property, implementing safe systems of work as a result of risk assessments and improving working practices.
- To provide appropriate training for staff in recognition, avoidance and management of potentially violent situations.
- To encourage reporting of incidents.
- To give personal support to employees after violent or potentially violent incidents have occurred.
- To recognise that there may be a need, in the interest of safety, to support staff using physical restraint when under specific circumstances or serious threat or danger.

Review and Monitoring

This policy will be monitored through the receipt of incident report forms and the process of risk assessment which will be audited at least annually. Review will take place as often as is necessary through the process of monitoring and the development of internal and external good practices.

Responsibilities

The Head Teacher in conjunction with the Governing Body will be responsible for:

- Providing guidance, support, and offering appropriate training
- Investigating (where appropriate) incidents and making recommendations.
- monitoring and reviewing incidents and control measures to ensure effectiveness.
- developing, with staff, an appropriate procedure for preventing and managing violence using the risk assessment process.
- effectively communicating procedures to all staff members, supply staff, volunteers and visitors as appropriate.
- developing staff awareness via induction of new staff, supervision and regular discussion at staff meetings.
- ensuring access to and provision of training for staff in procedures for the recognition, avoidance and management of potentially violent situations.
- issuing clear instructions about how to control violent behaviour, clearly defining the extent, and under what circumstances, physical restraint is accepted.
- review procedures in light of experiences as often as is necessary to ensure the safety of staff members, pupils and visitors as required.
- ensuring that the necessary procedures are in place to ensure the back-up from colleagues is available, should the need arise in “potentially” violent situations.
- establishing good working relationships with the local police.
- excluding pupils in line with the school’s behaviour policy if other sanctions and strategies have proved to be insufficient. (There is a statutory process governing the exclusion of pupils and this must be adhered to).
- excluding members of the public from the site where violent behaviour is encountered.
- ensuring records are maintained regarding violent pupils/members of the public and take necessary measures in terms of procedure. The information should be shared with those who may be at risk e.g. other members of staff within the Local Authority such as Social Workers, Education Welfare Officers and other support workers.
- giving careful and sensitive consideration to expressions of concern by staff members and pupils. The threat or act of violence should not be taken lightly.
- ensuring that all incidents are investigated promptly and thoroughly, implementing any necessary remedial measures and involving others as necessary e.g. Behaviour Support, Health & Safety, Pupil Services etc.
- ensuring staff are aware of their responsibility in reporting incidents and that the relevant health and safety recording paperwork is completed.

Members of Staff must:

- familiarise themselves with policies and procedures, guidelines and instructions, and ensure that they work in line with the requirements.
- in line with agreed standards, report and record all incidents of violence, (both physical and verbal), threatened violence or aggression, to their manager immediately.
- attend such training as deemed necessary.
- be aware of counselling support and occupational health services.

- recognise safety is a dual responsibility; there is a general duty to co-operate with school requirements and not to deliberately put themselves or others in danger.

Arrangements for Implementing the Policy

Proactive Arrangements

- Risk Assessment

The Head Teacher, in conjunction with staff and governors will carry out personal safety/security, stress and violence risk assessments in order to identify the hazards and control measures to minimise the risks to staff, pupils and visitors.

Where significant hazards are present individual risk assessments will be carried out on pupils and/or members of the public.

The findings of the risk assessments will be shared with all staff that may be at risk.

Risk assessments will be reviewed as often as necessary and at least annually.

- Safe Systems of Work

From the risk assessments, safe systems of work will be developed to ensure that those who may be vulnerable to violence are protected. Examples of safe systems of work include:

Lone Working

- **Staff should not work in school any later than 8:00pm**
- Staff need to have a heightened awareness of risk when alone. They need to consider; the increased dangers of dealing with intruders; how they would deal with usual accidents such as trips and falls; the professional risks of working alone with a child.
- Staff who lone work need to be capable of assessing their own risk and taking appropriate action. Dangerous activities such as; dealing with hot things; lifting; electrics; or working at height should be avoided when alone.
- Particular consideration needs to be given when staff are for instance; unwell; have particular medical conditions; or are pregnant, if they have to lone work separate risk assessments should be completed. Staff should seek clarification and support if they are lone working, or have any concerns about their vulnerability at work.
- Where possible staff should work with or in close proximity to colleagues.
- **Where this is not possible, staff should not work in buildings outside of the main school building or on upper stories after 6:00 p.m.** The staffroom along the main corridor is available for staff to work.
- Where possible staff should have access to a radio or telephone.
- If staff are working on their own at any time outside of the school day, they should email the site team to this effect giving details of where they are working and for how long – this should be done where possible before 3.00pm – site staff work around the school site after 3.00pm and do not have mobile access to emails.
- If staff are aware that they will be working late they should ensure that their vehicle is parked in a well-lit area of the school.

Meeting with Parents and Members of the Public

- All meetings with parents and members of the public should be by appointment except in extreme cases. Parents and members of the public should be made aware that they are not able to turn up unannounced expecting to meet with a member of staff.
- All meetings with parents or members of the public should take place in meeting rooms, conference room or head teacher's office.
- If the meeting is potentially of a difficult nature then two members of staff should always be present.
- Brief notes should be made of the meeting or an entry made in Behaviour Watch in case of future repercussions.
- Where appropriate the door should be left open.
- If a meeting becomes heated it should be terminated immediately and the other party informed that the meeting will continue at a later date with the presence of a third party.

Telephone Calls

- If a telephone call becomes abusive then the call should be politely terminated.
- Brief notes should be made about any phone call to parents or members of the public or an entry made in Behaviour Watch.
- Staff should not use their personal mobile telephones to contact parents under any circumstances.

Training

Induction training and health and safety awareness will be provided to all members of staff (on a prioritised basis).

Personal safety training will be provided to all staff (on a prioritised basis).

A range of specific training will be available for staff based on training needs analysis e.g. restraint training, Team Teach training, including positive handling techniques.

The training needs will be reviewed as often as necessary and at least annually.

Reactive Arrangements

- Recording and Reporting Incidents

Internal reporting systems will be in place for staff to record incidents in line with the set procedures.

All violent incidents will be reported to the LA in line with the requirements. Where necessary, incidents will be reported to the police.

Risk assessments will be reviewed in light of incidents to ensure that the necessary control measures are in place and effective.

De-briefing sessions will take place with relevant staff after an incident (as required). The objective will be to identify what might need to be changed or what worked well within the debriefing process.

Incidents will be evaluated, trends identified and a report will be made to the Governing Body as per the standard agenda.

- Training

Training will be reviewed in light of incidents to ensure that the level of training is appropriate.

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- Support

Post incident support will be made available to members of staff (as required). The services will range from in-house support through the school procedures and risk assessments or externally through a referral to the Local Authority Occupational Health Service provision. The support also includes the option to meet with a counsellor.

It is the responsibility of each individual member of staff to ensure that they follow safe working practices and report any incidents or concerns to the relevant line manager.