

Torfield and Saxon Mount Academy Trust



Violence At Work Policy

March 2021

Next review due March 2024

Violence and Aggression at Work Policy

Torfield and Saxon Mount Academy Trust

Date: March 2021

Document summary

This policy outlines the procedure for managing the risk of violence and aggression to staff and service users and provides guidance to employees and managers on the action to take following any reported act of violence or aggression. Violence is defined as purposeful or reactive behaviour which produces damaging or hurtful effects, physically or emotionally, on people.

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Related information

Incident Policy

First Aid Policy

Violence at Work Policy

Key points

- The content of this Policy applies to all Torfield and Saxon Mount Academy Trust employees and covers arrangements for mitigating and reporting acts of violence in relation to work activities
- Individual incidents of violence may range from threats or verbal abuse to serious bodily harm
- There is a need to recognise that frequent verbal abuse may result in high levels of stress and lead to longer term effects on health
- All acts of violence and aggression to employees must be reported using the online reporting system
- The Board of Directors will, so far as is reasonably practicable, do all it can to reduce the risk of violence to employees and provide support to those who suffer from such actions.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Board of Directors understands that sometimes, due to individual circumstances, people won't always be calm and polite when they call or visit us and they may not always abide by relevant local procedures. Staff will always do their best to deal with these situations, including, where appropriate, to politely end an abusive call or to ask a visitor to leave our premises if the abuse continues. Staff can also calmly and professionally walk away having made arrangements for another member of staff to take over.

1.2 The Board of Directors is committed to support any employee, who suffers violence or aggression in the course of, or arising out of, their work duties.

1.3 The definition of 'abusive' is "language which is foul or otherwise upsetting and/or behaviour which is threatening." 'Violence' is defined as "purposeful or reactive behaviour which produces damaging or hurtful effects, physically or emotionally, on people". We do take account of our pupils' cognitive abilities and the impairments they may have that affect their ability to behave appropriately at times. We ensure there is a robust and consistently applied behaviour policy to support this aspect of the schools' work

1.4 Any act of aggression or violence towards an employee should be reported to the employee's manager without delay, and the appropriate online incident form completed. This will enable the manager to establish any pattern of violence from particular sources, areas or individuals. The manager should offer as much support as reasonably possible to the employee (see paragraph 3.2 below).

1.5 An employee who has been caused actual bodily harm has the right to report the matter to the Police, and to seek a prosecution of the offender, either by the Police or, in certain circumstances, to initiate legal proceedings himself or herself.

1.6 The Board of Directors will give appropriate support, through the Academy Trusts legal advisors in cases involving an offence or assault. This may involve general legal advice to the employee, liaison with the Police, advice as to how to obtain legal assistance to proceed with a private prosecution or civil claim, and, in certain circumstances, meeting the legal fees for such an action if they are not recoverable from the assailant or instituting criminal proceedings in the name of the Board of Directors.

1.7 It is anticipated that in most cases where an offence of assault occasioning injury is committed against an employee by a visitor to the school, the Police would prosecute the offender. An order for compensation for personal injury could be made as part of a sentence, or a claim for criminal injuries compensation could be pursued by the employee.

1.8 Where threats are made to an employee by a visitor in the course of his/her employment, the Executive Headteacher and/or Board of Directors will consider sending a formal letter to the person concerned warning that legal action will be taken if a breach of the law occurs. Any threats should be reported to the employee's manager.

1.9 When a caller is abusive over the telephone, the employee may warn that person that if their language or behaviour continues to be abusive, and they do not stop, the telephone call may be ended by the employee. However, the employee must tell the person what they are going to do and why, before doing so. For example, they may say: "*I am unable to continue this discussion (give reason) but if you leave your number I will arrange for my manager to call you back*". The definition of "abusive" is language which is foul or otherwise upsetting and/or behaviour which is threatening. Such incidents must be reported using the online incident reporting system. Employees must report to their line manager should such an incident occur, providing as much detail as possible.

1.10 All visitors are asked to read our safety statements on entry to the school, including the statement regarding tolerance and respect. If a visitor becomes abusive, violent or disruptive, employees may ask them to leave the premises, provided this does not put them or others at risk. All employees must be aware of any local procedures in such cases. **In cases where an individual is presenting serious risk to staff or service users staff should call for police assistance immediately by dialling 999.**

1.11 Any absence from work by an employee which directly results from an incident of violence sustained during the legitimate discharge of his/her duties will be treated as work related 'sickness' absence.

1.13 The Academy Trust has established procedures for ill-health retirement and redeployment which can be utilised in individual cases as necessary. The Board of Directors makes provision for ex-gratia payments to be made to employees whose personal belongings are damaged in the course of their duties. Any ex-gratia payments are made without admission of liability.

2. Specific Action by the Board of Directors

2.1 In addition to the principles listed above, the Board of Directors has initiated a number of measures aimed at assisting with the process of dealing with violence to employees.

2.2 Violent incidents can cause great distress. For this reason, it is intended that positive support should be available to all employees involved in serious incidents. This process will begin on receipt of the report to the manager concerned. A checklist of action to be taken will be issued to managers (model procedure attached).

2.3 All employees are therefore required to report incidents involving violence which occur during the course of their duties by using the online incident reporting system and advising their manager of the occurrence as soon as possible.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 The Executive Headteacher will:

3.1.1 ensure that arrangements are in place for implementing this policy

3.1.2 periodically monitor of the implementation of this policy

3.1.3 ensure that all managers/supervisors are aware of the policy and are given appropriate training and information in order to be able to determine what constitutes violent behaviour and take appropriate steps to deal with it in accordance with the requirements of the policy.

3.2 The Head of School will:

3.2.1 identify any groups of employees within their area of responsibility who are considered to be most at risk from violence

3.2.2 work with the director of operations and / or Executive Headteacher to identify and implement any risk reduction measures that could be reasonably undertaken

3.2.4 consider suitable training arrangements so that employees identified as being particularly at risk of violence are able to participate in programmes which are relevant to their needs.

3.2.5 ensure so far as possible that all incidents of violence are reported on the online incident report system and notified to the appropriate senior manager

3.2.6 remind individuals who have suffered from violence at work of the staff counselling service

3.2.7 review the arrangements specified above on a regular basis to ensure that appropriate action has been taken in the department.

3.3 Employees will:

3.3.1 comply with the requirements of this policy

3.3.2 comply with any advice and instruction given from line managers and through training

3.3.3 ensure that they report to the Head of School and via the appropriate reporting system any incidents relevant to this policy, whether or not physical injury has resulted.

Appendix 1: Model Procedure Sheet

1. Violence at Work: Procedure following an assault on an employee

- 1.1 The Head of School who receives information about an assault on an employee will give immediate attention to the care of the employee and other employees who may be at similar risk. If the employee concerned has suffered injury or shows signs of shock he/she must be immediately advised to seek medical attention. If appropriate, the police should be informed if there has been serious injury or a potentially serious incident has occurred providing the employee is in agreement.
- 1.2 If an assault happens on Academy Trust School premises the Head of School will, where practicable, seek to exclude the offender from the premises. However, if the offender is a pupil, regard must be paid to the Head of School's legal obligations for ensuring the immediate safety and well-being of the pupil as well as continued provision of the service.
- 1.3 The Head of School or designated manager will interview the employee who has been assaulted as soon as possible and will ensure that full details of the incident are recorded on the online incident/accident reporting system especially if the employee has been injured.
- 1.4 The Head of School will be supportive to the employee in accordance with the Board of Trustee's stated policy, having regard to the operational instructions of the department, and provide an immediate opportunity to discuss the circumstances of the incident.
- 1.5 The Head of School should normally inform the police of any serious assault on an employee which occurs in the course of, or arising out of, his or her official duties, although regard must be paid to any supplementary guidance issued by line managers and the views of the employee concerned.
- 1.6 If the police are not attending, factual written statements should be obtained as soon as possible, by the Head of School, from any witnesses. These should include the witnesses' names and addresses, and preferably be obtained on the day of the assault. The employee who has been assaulted similarly should be asked to prepare a written statement as soon as possible after the incident. The statements should be retained by the Head of School as they may later be requested by the Insurance and Risk Manager in respect of any legal or insurance claims.

- 1.7 If an implement is used in an incident it should be retained by the Head of School provided this can be done without difficulty or risk to themselves or others.
- 1.8 The Head of School will institute an investigation of the circumstances surrounding the incident, including current systems of work and procedures, and take any proportionate and appropriate steps to prevent a recurrence.
- 1.9 In the event of an assault being caused by an employee of The Board of Directors, the Disciplinary Procedure will be applied as appropriate.
- 1.10 The Head of School will have regard to the Torfield and Saxon Mount Academy Trust's policy on violence in undertaking any other action which is deemed necessary in individual cases.
- 1.11 The Head of School will make all employees affected by the violent incident or aggression aware of the support services available to them, such as staff counselling and mediation.

2. Incidents of verbal abuse and/or threatening behaviour

- 2.1 The Head of School will apply the same principles listed above to incidents which fall short of actual assault, as appropriate.
- 2.2 Online incident reports should be completed by employees in the event of serious threats or repeated incidents of verbal abuse from the same source or in the case of an employee who hangs up on an abusive telephone caller.

3. Communication of Information

- 3.1 The Head of School will report specific incidents of assault or serious abuse/threatening behaviour to senior management in order that existing policy and practice can be reviewed and amended where necessary. This will also help with the process of monitoring the level of violence at work in the school.
- 3.2 Where a member of the public is violent or abusive and fails to modify their behaviour, steps may need to be taken to prevent or restrict their use of the service.
- 3.3 In addition to this procedure sheet, all staff should ensure they are aware of the policies and procedures which are available on the Read Only drive in the policies folder.