

Abuse, Threats and Violence Towards Staff			
Current Status	Operational	Last Review:	Sept 2020
Responsibility for Review:	Group HR Director & Shared Services	Next Review:	Sept 2022
Internal Approval:	SAT SET	Originated:	Sept 2015

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1.0 Policy Statement

- 1.1 Suffolk Academies Trust is responsible for protecting the health and safety of staff in the Trust and shares the duty of care in relation to the physical and emotional well-being with the Trustees, the Local Governing Body and the Principal.
- 1.2 Suffolk Academies Trust believes that abuse, threatening behaviour and violence against school staff are unacceptable and should not be tolerated.
- 1.3 The Chief Executive and College Principals will ensure that the Trust is a safe place in which to work and that prompt and appropriate action will be taken on behalf of the staff if they are subjected to abuse, threats or violence on Trust premises.
- 1.4 If a parent/carer has a concern, Trust staff will always listen to them and seek to address them through the appropriate channels.

2.0 Scope

- 2.1 This policy provides advice and guidance to colleagues regarding the Trust's response to abuse, threats and violence towards staff from parents, guardians and other visitors. (It does not deal with such behaviour on the part of students which is covered under separate guidance).

3.0 Types of abusive, threatening and violent behaviour

All staff have a right to expect that the Trust and the college in which they are based is a safe place in which to work and that prompt and appropriate action will be taken on their behalf if they are subjected to abuse, threats or violence by parents and other adults on Trust premises.

3.1 Abusive and aggressive language

The most common example of unreasonable behaviour is abusive and aggressive language (shared verbally, in writing or via social media) for which the most widely used remedy, where informal action is not considered to be appropriate or has proved to be ineffective, is the withdrawal of permission to be on college premises.

3.2 Assault

- 3.2.1 If a person recklessly or intentionally applies unlawful force on another or puts another in fear of immediate attack, it is an offence in law, which constitutes an assault. The Police will be contacted immediately in such cases.
- 3.2.2 There is also a racially aggravated form of assault where there is a racial element to the offence, which carries higher penalties.
- 3.2.3 It is important to note that no physical attack or injury needs to have occurred for a common assault to have taken place. It is sufficient for a person to have been threatened with immediate violence and put in fear of physical attack for an offence to have been committed.

3.2.4 There are three categories of assault.

- Common assault
Involving the treat of immediate violence or causing minor injury (such as a graze, reddening of the skin or minor bruise).
- Actual Bodily Harm
Causing an injury which interfered with the health or comfort of the victim (such as multiple bruising, broken tooth or temporary sensory loss).
- Grievous Bodily Harm
Causing serious injury (such as a broken bone or injury requiring lengthy treatment).

3.3 Harassment

3.3.1 Situations can arise where staff find themselves subjected to a pattern of persistent and unreasonable behaviour from individual parents which is not abusive or overtly aggressive but which can be perceived as intimidating and oppressive. In these circumstances staff may be faced with a barrage of constant demands or criticisms (on an almost daily basis) which, whilst not particularly taxing or serious when viewed in isolation, can have the cumulative effect over time of undermining their confidence, well-being and health. Again, harassment may be in the form of verbal, written or social media communication.

3.3.2 Such situations are comparatively rare but, when they do arise, they can have a damaging effect on staff and be very difficult to resolve. If the actions of a parent appear to be heading in this direction, the Principal will inform the parent clearly but sensitively that staff feel unduly harassed. In such circumstances the Principal will consider:-

- a) Advising the parent of the Complaints Procedure to enable a formal investigation to take place
- b) Banning the parent from the college premises
- c) Making a complaint to the Police if the behaviour does not desist or improve.

3.3.3 The parent should be left in no doubt about the gravity of the situation.

3.3.4 In extreme cases, the behaviour of the parent may constitute an offence and the Police will be contacted.

4.0 Measures to avoid, prevent and minimise incidents

4.1 Routine security

- a) Signs are in place at the college entrance to make it clear that all visitors should report to reception.
- b) Further signs on college premises clearly point the way to reception.

- c) All visitors must sign in at reception and receive a visitor's badge, which they must wear at all times in the college.
- d) Visitors not wearing a badge should be politely challenged and escorted to reception.
- e) If a member of staff has any suspicion about a stranger, they must inform reception, who will contact the Principal or other Senior Manager immediately.
- f) If a stranger is abusive or a nuisance in any way, the member of staff must not take direct action. Staff must never put their own safety at risk.
- g) When staff are in college in the evening, they should stay in the areas designated for use for that particular event and not go to other parts of the building. Staff working alone should ensure Reception/ Concierge staff are aware of their location.

4.2 Training

4.2.1 Training in personal safety and conflict management will be provided to any concerned staff, assisting them:

- a) To improve their confidence and skills in dealing with aggression and with the resulting stress
- b) To defuse potentially difficult and dangerous situations
- c) To avoid, reduce and prevent violent attacks
- d) To minimise the risk of personal injury

4.3 Risk Assessment

4.3.1 Where necessary, the Trust will carry out an assessment of risk to staff and others arising from the behaviour of an abusive, threatening or violent parent or visitor whose behaviour has been, or may be, a cause for concern.

The risk assessment will:

- a) Identify and assess the risks
- b) Determine appropriate actions
- c) Monitor the results
- d) Provide feedback

4.4 Banning Parents or other Visitors from College Premises

4.4.1 It is a criminal offence, punishable with a fine, for a person to trespass on Trust premises and cause a nuisance or disturbance. Parents and some other visitors normally have implied permission to be on site at certain times and for certain purposes and they will not therefore be trespassers unless the implied permission is withdrawn.

4.4.2 If a parent or other person behaves unreasonably on Trust premises, the Principal will write to them confirming the withdrawal of the implied permission. If a person who has been banned subsequently trespasses and causes a nuisance or disturbance the matter should be referred to the Local Governing Body, the Trustees or escalated to the Police.

4.4.3 It is important throughout this process that full records are kept of each incident, including details of any person(s) who witnessed the behaviour of the trespasser(s) since evidence will needed should the situation escalate.

4.4.4 Anyone who is dissatisfied with the ban and wishes to object against it should be referred to the Trust's Complaints Procedure.

5.0 Action Required in the Event of an Incident

5.1 In the event of an incident, staff should:

- Speak calmly-do not raise their voice.
- Be assertive but not aggressive.
- Be polite but firm.
- Seek assistance by telephoning reception in the first instance- reception will contact the Principal or a member of SLT.
- In case of emergency in Reception, staff should sound panic alarm to seek assistance.
- Think about escape route, should the need arise.
- Walk away from an abusive situation and report it immediately.

5.2 Action when an incident occurs

5.2.1 All staff are expected to follow the above advice in the case on an incident.

5.2.2 All cases of assault, and all incidents, will be regarded as serious and should be reported to the Principal who will report the incident to the Police as appropriate.

5.2.3 The Principal will ensure that sympathetic and practical help, support and counselling are made available to the victim.

5.2.4 Support can be obtained from:

- The College Principal and/or staff colleagues.
- HR Team
- The Trust's Employee Assistance Programme.
- Occupational Health
- Member of Staff's Professional Association
- Victim Support

5.2.5 In non-urgent cases, staff should report the incident to their Line Manager who will inform the Health & Safety Manager, who in turn will inform the College

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Principal (see 5.3 Recording and Reporting the Incident). The College Principal will ensure that an incident log is created for possible further reference. Written witness statements may be required to assist internal review and inform potential changes in policies and procedures.

5.2.6 In case of emergency, staff should telephone reception asking for immediate police attendance explaining:

- There is danger to life
- There is a likelihood of violence
- An assault is, or is believed to be, in progress
- The offender is on the premises
- The offence has just occurred and an early arrest is likely
- Staff should then inform the Principal.

5.2.7 The College Principal will speak to the victim before confirming to the police how the Trust wishes to proceed. The Police may also take into account any views expressed by the College Principal as to the action which the Trust would like to see taken.

5.2.8 Police will take a written statement from the victim in order to investigate the offence in the most appropriate and effective manner. In certain cases the victim may be asked by the Police if he or she wishes to make a complaint or allegation against the alleged offender. The decision on whether or not to prosecute is made by the Police or Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) on the basis of the evidence and with due regard to the relevant gravity or public interest factors, including the Victim's Statement.

5.2.9 Advice is available at all times to the Trust from Suffolk County Council and the Police.

6.0 Recording and reporting the incident

6.1 All incidents involving abuse, threats or violence to members of staff must be reported and recorded:

- a) To comply with Health and Safety at Work Act and Regulations, the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) and Social Security Regulations.
- b) To collect evidence which may later be necessary if procedures are brought against an assailant
- c) To help in reviewing policies and informing future risk assessments
- d) Staff should fill in the Incident Report Form (IRF) as soon as possible after the incident. This should be used for recording all incidents, including those involving abuse, threats and violence to Trust staff from parents and other visitors. Completed reports should be handed to your line manager who will ensure

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they are given to the Health & Safety Manager. The Health & Safety Manager will ensure the College Principal is kept informed. (If assistance is required to complete the form, staff should contact the Health & Safety Manager or a member of the HR Team).

7.0 Further guidance can be found in the DfE document accessed here:-

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-and-college-security/school-and-college-security>

Revision History - Abuse, threats and violence towards staff

Revision date	Reason for revision	Changes made
April 2020	Reviewed every 2 years	Section 1.0 Inclusion of commitment to parent/ carers that if they have a concern, staff will always listen to them and seek to address them through the appropriate channels.
		Clarification that action will be taken against unreasonable behaviour such as abusive and aggressive language whether that is shared verbally, in writing or via social media.
		Reminder to staff of lone working arrangements.
		Updated link to the Government website.
Sept 2020	SAT Review	Updated SAT elements, all sections
		4.0 c) removal of lanyard colour
		6.1 (d) Incident report form location changed