

Work-Related Violence, Cyber Abuse, and Abusive Visitors Policy

Status	Optional
Reviewed by	Local governing body
Frequency of Review	Annually
Date of Approval	September 2026
Date of review	September 2027
Author	Principal

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Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant statutory guidance, legislation, and government advice including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996 (specifically Section 547 regarding nuisance or disturbance on school premises)
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Online Safety Act 2023
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Communications Act 2003 (Section 127)
- Public Order Act 1986
- Defamation Act 2013
- DfE (2026) Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
- DfE (2023) Controlling access to school premises
- DfE (2023) School and college security
- DfE (2022) Searching, Screening and Confiscation: Advice for schools
- DfE (2022) Use of Reasonable Force in Schools
- HSE (2009) Preventing workplace harassment and violence

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- CCTV and Data Protection Policies
- Exclusion and Suspension Policy
- Home-School Agreement
- Visitors Policy
- School Emergency Action Plan / Lockdown Policy
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

Definition of Violence



The school follows the definitions used by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) for the purposes of this policy:

- Work-related violence: *"Any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work."* This encompasses verbal abuse, written or electronic threats, physical attacks, sexual misconduct, and violent acts directed toward a member of staff's property.
- Incident: *"An unwanted, unplanned event that has potential to cause harm/injury."*

Roles and Responsibilities

The Local Governing Body (LGB) will:

- Fulfill their statutory duty of care under health, safety, and welfare legislation to ensure staff and pupils operate in an environment safe from violence, aggression, or harassment.
- Ensure all staff are informed, via the Principal, of situations or individuals likely to present a risk of violent or aggressive behaviour.
- Maintain an ongoing programme of risk assessments regarding workplace violence in consultation with the Principal.
- Guarantee that adequate, regular training is delivered to staff (e.g., de-escalation techniques, dynamic risk management, and the lawful use of reasonable force).
- Oversee policy implementation and review its operational effectiveness annually.

The Principal will:

- Conduct a comprehensive work-related violence risk assessment in liaison with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and review it at least annually.
- Communicate all relevant findings from workplace violence risk assessments to affected staff.
- Ensure tailored risk assessments are executed where there is a known risk of violence or aggression towards staff (e.g., pupils with severe behavioral needs or parents with a history of hostile conduct), adhering to the Equality Act 2010.
- Monitor all reported incidents of violence, abuse, and cyber-harassment, taking dynamic corrective action where required.
- Ensure all current and incoming staff read, understand, and know how to operationalise this policy.

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will:

- Take all reports of work-related violence, threats, cyber-harassment, or abusive behaviour seriously and respond immediately.
- Log all incident details meticulously and coordinate physical, emotional, and operational support for affected individuals.
- Cultivate an open, supportive culture where staff are encouraged to report near-misses, low-level threats, and high-level incidents without fear of reprisal.

All Members of Staff will:

- Perform their duties in line with professional standards and school values.
- Follow established protocols for preventing, managing, recording, and escalating incidents.
- Immediately report any instance of probable violence, verbal abuse, electronic harassment, or safety hazards to the Principal or an SLT member.
- Participate in designated training sessions.
- Conduct continuous personal safety assessments in dynamic situations and prioritize their own safety and that of the pupils.
- Never accept or ignore instances of work-related violence directed toward themselves or colleagues.
- Cooperate fully with law enforcement, multi-agency safeguarding hubs (MASH), and investigating officers where formal inquiries arise.

Preventing Work-Related Violence

- Premises Security & Surveillance: CCTV systems operate in accordance with the CCTV and Data Protection Policies (UK GDPR compliant) to maintain safety, deter crime, and gather evidence. Surveillance will be used to identify perpetrators and support police investigations where required.
- Prohibited Items: Where a pupil is suspected of carrying a prohibited item or an item banned under the Behaviour Policy, searches will strictly adhere to DfE statutory guidance (*Searching, Screening and Confiscation*).
- Dynamic Risk Assessments: Staff faced with emerging threats will conduct dynamic risk assessments to prioritize immediate safety, establish physical distance, and summon emergency support.
- Trigger Awareness: Staff interacting with individuals known to present behavioral risks will be informed of specific triggers, warning signs, and de-escalation protocols.
- Training: All staff receive induction and ongoing refresher training covering workplace violence, de-escalation, handling parental aggression, and cyber safety.

Responding to Incidents



When a member of staff is subjected to verbal abuse, threats, or physical aggression:

1. Immediate De-escalation & Alert: The staff member should apply basic de-escalation measures if safe to do so, maintain distance, and alert a colleague or SLT member using internal call-out systems.
2. Emergency Escalation: If an immediate physical threat exists, staff will trigger emergency procedures, move non-essential personnel and pupils to safety, and contact emergency services (999).
3. Reasonable Force: Authorised staff may use reasonable force strictly in accordance with DfE guidance (*Use of Reasonable Force in Schools*) to prevent a pupil from injuring themselves or others, or causing severe damage to property. Force must be necessary, proportionate, and a last resort.
4. Medical Support: First aid or emergency medical care will be provided immediately to any injured party.
5. Debrief & Support: The school will provide structured debriefing sessions, occupational health referrals, access to confidential counselling, time off to recover where necessary, and legal guidance for serious criminal matters.
6. Pupil Support & Sanctions: Affected pupils/witnesses will receive pastoral and safeguarding support. Responsible pupils will face sanctions under the Behaviour Policy, up to and including suspension or permanent exclusion.

Record Keeping and Reporting Incidents

All incidents, including online abuse and verbal threats, must be formally logged.

Incident Logs Must Include:

- Time, date, and location of the incident.
- Comprehensive, factual description of events.
- Names of victims, perpetrators, and witnesses.
- Assessment of injury, property damage, or distress caused.
- Contributory factors or identified triggers.

Statutory Reporting (RIDDOR & Safeguarding):

- HSE RIDDOR Reporting: The HSE will be notified without delay if an act of work-related physical violence results in:
 - The death of any person.
 - A specified injury to a worker (e.g., fractures, amputations, loss of sight).
 - An over-seven-day incapacitation of a staff member.
 - A non-worker (e.g., pupil or visitor) being taken directly from the scene to a hospital for treatment of an injury.

- Safeguarding: Any incident involving physical violence by or towards a pupil will be reviewed against *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)* protocols.

Abusive Visitors & Barring from Premises

The Governing Body welcomes positive engagement with parents and visitors. However, aggressive, abusive, or violent conduct towards staff or the wider school community will not be tolerated.

Unacceptable Visitor Conduct Includes (but is not limited to):

- Shouting, intimidation, or aggressive body language (in person, on the phone, or via virtual meetings).
- Swearing, spitting, pushing, hitting, or throwing objects.
- Racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, or disablist abuse.
- Aggressive digital communication (e.g., abusive emails, capitalised text, hostile social media posts targeting staff or their families).
- Breach of campus security or trespass.

Barring Procedures (Section 547 Education Act 1996):

- Right to Bar: A parent or visitor does not have an unconditional right to enter school premises. If an individual displays abusive or threatening behaviour, the Principal (acting on behalf of the Governing Body) can ban the individual under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996.
- Written Notification: The individual will be informed in writing by the Principal that they are barred (or that the school intends to bar them), stating the reasons, duration, and representation steps.
- Right to Representations: The individual will be given a set deadline (e.g., 5-10 working days) to submit written representations against the bar.
- Interim Bar: Pending representations, an immediate temporary bar may be applied if safety risks dictate.
- Final Review: The decision will be formally reviewed by the Governing Body within a specified timeframe. If a barred individual breaches the ban and enters the premises, police will be called to remove them for causing a nuisance or disturbance.

Abuse and Cyberbullying via Digital Technologies

Cyber abuse directed at staff via social media, email, messaging apps, or online portals is treated with the same severity as face-to-face abuse.

Relevant Legal Statutes

Online harassment and threats may constitute criminal acts under the *Protection from Harassment Act 1997*, *Malicious Communications Act 1988*, *Communications Act 2003 (s.127)*, *Public Order Act 1986*, *Defamation Act 2013*, and the *Online Safety Act 2023*.

Operational Protocol for Cyber Abuse:

1. Evidence Preservation: Staff must not delete or respond to abusive messages. Screen captures (including dates, times, sender details, and full URLs) must be taken and stored securely.
2. Reporting: Report the issue immediately to the Principal or SLT lead.
3. Internal Action: If the perpetrator is a pupil or co-worker, the matter will be handled under the Behaviour Policy or Staff Disciplinary Procedures.
4. Takedown Requests: The school will support the staff member in contacting service providers/hosts to enforce terms of service violations and remove harmful content. Under the Online Safety Act 2023, platforms carry heightened obligations to address illegal or harmful content.
5. Law Enforcement Engagement: If threats of harm, hate speech, or severe harassment are present, the designated SLT lead will report the matter to the police. If the perpetrator is anonymous, police can utilise statutory mechanisms (including RIPA powers) to trace sender data.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Principal and the Governing Body, or sooner following major incidents, changes to statutory guidance, or identified operational gaps.

Approval and Metadata

- Author: Mrs Joanne Young, Principal
- Approved By: Local Governing Body
- Date Approved: September 2026
- Next Review Date: September 2027