

MANAGEMENT OF VIOLENCE AND AGGRESSION AT WORK POLICY

Introduction

The problem of violence and physical or verbal aggression in the workplace requires the commitment and co-operation of all staff in order to arrange working practices and training, which will assist in the handling of violent and/or aggressive incidents. To achieve this, guidelines for the management and containment of violence in the workplace are contained in this document.

The College has a statutory responsibility under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act (HSWA) 1974 to identify the nature and extent of risks and to provide measures which will achieve a safe workplace and safe systems of work. Violence at work is recognised as a hazard to which health and safety legislation applies and is as much a risk to employees as is unguarded machinery or toxic fumes.

In addition, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (MHSWR) 1999, place a clear responsibility on the College to undertake a risk assessment of all risks, including violence.

The College attaches the greatest importance to the personal safety of employees, students, visitors and other persons carrying out authorised tasks on behalf of the College and recognises its legal and moral responsibility to reduce risk to staff, students and others to the lowest reasonably practicable level. As part of this duty the policy and its effectiveness will be kept under review.

The College will accept vicarious liability provided that employees adhere to the Colleges' policy, procedure and guidelines and reserves the right to exclude persistently violent students and/or visitors.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

DEFINITION

The College defines violence as:

"Any incident in which a member of the College staff is verbally abused threatened or assaulted by a student, parent/carer or member of the public in circumstances relating to his/her employment".

ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Whilst the Principal is ultimately responsible for the application of this policy the responsibility for its implementation is delegated as described below.

Directorates Management Teams and cross-College Managers are required to implement the policy fully within their areas. As a minimum this will require that arrangements are in place to:

- Identify hazardous activities and areas
- Complete risk assessments which identify existing / additionally required controls and which allow categorisation of staff into risk groups (see below for guidance). Risk assessments must be reviewed at least annually.
- Classify, investigate and analyse all incidents

The following guidance will be applied in preparing risk assessments:

High Risk: Staff constantly in direct contact with students/visitor groups, who, based on past experience, present a higher than normal risk (such as staff in interview situations with students/parents/carers who may be under high stress).

Medium Risk: Staff constantly in direct contact with students and visitors

Low Risk: Staff who have minimal direct contact with students/visitors

The College will:

- Strive to minimise violence risks, including the provision of facilities where required e.g. CCTV, adequate lighting, etc
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the violence policy and procedures
- Provide appropriate training and education for staff which will be commensurate with the degree of risk they face i.e. vary from high to low risk situations as indicated by the risk assessment.
- Continually monitor the effectiveness of the training in reducing the risks to staff.
- Record all violence incidents and participate in the investigation processes

The following measures shall be adopted:

- In the event of unacceptable behaviour by students where they have been verbally/physically abusive, intimidating or threatening towards staff, the College's Student Behaviour/Disciplinary Policy will be implemented. Where a visitor has been verbally/physically abusive, they can at the discretion of the Principal (or his deputy) be excluded from College premises.
- The College will develop mechanisms to ensure that it receives as much information as possible regarding students who are, or have previously been, violent and aggressive.
- Where action has been taken by the Police/College which has resulted in successful prosecutions or exclusion from College, this information will be circulated to staff. This again will reinforce that the College will not tolerate violence and aggression and demonstrate that the College takes the issue very seriously.
- Ensure staff induction programmes include specific reference to potential difficulties in their own sphere of responsibility and that where accidents/incidents do occur that they are systematically reported, reviewed and the necessary action taken to prevent a repetition of a similar incident/accident
- Ensure that staff understand what is expected of them with regard to dealing with violent incidents
- Ensure that where members of staff have identified an area of risk, or where it is felt that staff could be placed in imminent danger, appropriate action is taken to remove or minimise that risk
- Ensure that records, including actions taken as a result of the risk assessment process, are maintained
- Ensure that staff are de-briefed as soon as possible after an incident. (The way in which the incident was handled should be discussed, not to criticise, but to offer constructive feedback, so as to improve.)
- Ensure staff have access to appropriate advice and support post-incident. Staff should be seen by the Personnel Manager, who can arrange for advice/support (for example, through Occupational Health).

It is not practicable to define a model for managing all violent incidents. Each incident must be handled in the light of the current situation and circumstances as they develop.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

All College staff should exhibit a duty of care and mutual support for their colleagues. All should be aware of

risks and ensure they do not subject themselves or their colleagues to unnecessary or foreseeable risk.

It is the responsibility of all employees to conduct themselves in a manner which combines professional service with a concern for the feelings of others, including colleagues and managers but especially students and members of the public.

Violent behaviour represents an offence under the College Disciplinary Procedure which may constitute gross misconduct and could therefore result in dismissal.

STAFF SUPPORT

In the unlikely event of legal proceedings being brought against an employee of the College the decision whether or not to take disciplinary action against that employee and make arrangements for appropriate support in the event of any Court action will be taken at senior management level. Consideration will be given to whether or not the employee was acting reasonably within the scope of his/her employment.