

# Managing violent & abusive visitors

This policy is applicable to all students, staff, parents and visitors of The Wellington Academy

## DOCUMENT CONTROL

<b>Responsible position:</b>	<b>Approved by:</b>
Deputy Head	Headteacher/LGB
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## RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

<b>Policy Name</b>	<b>Date Issued</b>
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy	September 2022
Behaviour for learning Policy	September 2022
Health & Safety Policy	June 2022

## REVISION RECORD

Date	Version	Revision Description
Sept 2020	1	Revised in-line with current policies and guidance
Sept 2021	2	Revised in-line with current policies and guidance
October 2022	3	Revised in-line with current policies and guidance and Trust branding

## INTRODUCTION

The Wellington Academy will ensure compliance with the relevant legislation regarding the requirements and responsibilities in relation to the management, prevention and reporting of aggressive and violent behaviour by visitors. The Trust will ensure best practice and extend the arrangements as far as is reasonably practicable to others who may also be affected by our activities.

The Wellington Academy encourages close links with parents and the community. It believes students benefit when the relationship between home and school is a positive one.

The vast majority of parents, carers and others visiting our school are keen to work with us and are supportive of the school. However, on the rare occasions, when a negative attitude towards the school is expressed, this can result in aggression, verbal and/or physical abuse towards members of school staff or the wider school community.

The Trust expects and requires its members of staff to behave professionally in these difficult situations and attempt to defuse the situation where possible, seeking the involvement, as appropriate, of other colleagues. **All members of staff have the right to work without fear of violence and abuse, and the right, in an extreme case, of appropriate self-defence.**

We expect parents and other visitors to behave in a reasonable way towards members of school staff. This policy outlines the steps that will be taken where behaviour is unacceptable.

### **Types of behaviour that are considered serious and unacceptable, that will not be tolerated:**

Shouting at members of the school staff, either in person or over the telephone

Physically intimidating a member of the school community

The use of aggressive hand gestures

Threatening behaviour

Shaking or holding a fist towards another person

Swearing

Pushing

Hitting (e.g. slapping, punching and kicking)

Spitting

Breaching the school's security procedures

Damage to school property

This is not an exhaustive list; it seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour. **Unacceptable behaviour may also result in the police being informed of the incident.**

### **Procedure to be followed**

If a parent/carers or other visitor behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of the school community, the Headteacher may, (but reserves the right not to) seek to resolve the situation through informal discussion and mediation.

Where all relevant informal procedures have been exhausted and aggression or intimidation continue, or where there is an extreme act of threatening behaviour (verbal or physical), a visitor (including a parent) may be banned by the Headteacher from the school's premises for a defined period of time.

### **In imposing a ban, the following steps will be taken:**

In the first instance, it may be appropriate for the Headteacher to give any aggressive parents or visitor a verbal warning, by speaking to them privately to:

- Let them know their behaviour is unacceptable
- Remind them that any further instances will require further action

After or instead of a verbal warning the perpetrator will be informed, in writing, that they are banned from the school's premises, subject to review after a reasonable period of time to be determined by the Headteacher,

and what will happen if the ban is breached e.g., police involvement or an injunction application may follow.

After a written warning has been issued the perpetrator retains the right to give their version of events and contest the decision to be banned. Details of how they can do so are set out in the letter issued by the Academy.

Where an assault has led to a ban, a statement indicating the matter has been reported to the police will be included with the written communication

The chair of governors will be informed and asked to review the decision of the Headteacher.

Where appropriate, arrangements for students being delivered to and collected from the school gates will be clarified.

Non-compliance of the ban will lead to the Headteacher contacting the Police to support with the removal from the premises, this can also lead to prosecution under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996.

### **Making a complaint**

Meanwhile should the perpetrator wish to make a complaint in relation to the incident they should follow the school's complaints procedures.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Headteacher is responsible for providing the direction of this policy through consultation with relevant partners and for ensuring that staff are supported in implementing the policy.

The Headteacher should:

- Ensure that risk assessments are carried out across all work activities that they control and that appropriate measures are implemented commensurate to those risks. Guidance on risk assessment is given below;
- Ensure that all staff identified through the risk assessment process, receive training at appropriate intervals in skills that can be used to minimise risks to personal safety. The range of training to be considered is set out in a later section.
- Ensure that all staff are provided with clear instructions in respect of reporting incidents of violence and aggression and that all such reports are thoroughly investigated and responded to.
- Offer and provide appropriate post-incident support to staff.
- Monitor the effectiveness of this policy.
- Ensure that all staff know about their responsibilities and of the measures used within the workplace to counter violence and aggression.

### **Individual members of staff are responsible for:**

- following working procedures and risk assessments;
- reporting likely or actual incidents of violence or aggression;
- Taking due regard of their own personal safety and well-being and for withdrawing from a situation where the risk of actual or potential violence or aggression is high.

### **Preventative Strategies**

The Academy will need to be open to the public at some points, wholly or in part. Access will never be uncontrolled and should only be via the main school reception where visitors to the site will be signed in. Systems to register all visitors, including the use of identification badges, will help minimise unauthorised access. Staff should challenge any unauthorised persons. Registered visitors should check out and return their badges after use.

Keys and door entry combinations should be restricted to authorised personnel only and combinations should be regularly changed.

A means of summoning emergency assistance should be available in areas where there is a significant possibility of encountering violent or aggressive behaviour. The immediate environment around each premise should be as free as possible from debris or loose materials that could be used as missiles.

### **Suitable Working Environments**

The Academy reception areas should, where practicable, be properly staffed and be kept in a clean, well-lit and comfortable state. It will have adequate space with sufficient seating. Using the waiting areas as a thoroughfare should be avoided if possible.

Rooms allocated for meeting with members of the public should be carefully arranged to put people at ease and ensure that the risk of aggression is minimised while maintaining the need for confidentiality. Staff should sit between the interviewee and door to ensure a swift exit. The room should not be lockable from the inside and wherever possible there should be a vision panel to enable checks to be made by other staff, when necessary. Other safety measures may include the selection of ornaments that are ineffective as weapons.

A means of summoning emergency assistance should be available in areas where there is a significant likelihood of encountering violent or aggressive behaviour. Any such system must be regularly tested including the reaction to the alarm from other staff.

All external areas used during hours of darkness must be adequately lit.

**Working Practices and Patterns** The following guidance applies to all academy staff although some may be more relevant to particular circumstances.

Staff should recognise that their own attitudes and modes of behaviour are likely to be reflected by those using or coming into contact with the academy.

Before meeting a visitor, staff should refer to any information available about that person's potential for violence. For this to be an effective precaution, it is essential that all relevant information about previous incidents is recorded and shared with staff. If it is anticipated that a visitor may display aggressive behaviour then staff should consider whether to meet with that person alone and should prepare their responses to any violent or aggressive behaviour in advance of the meeting.

Staff should avoid working in isolation, particularly out of normal hours. After evening functions, staff should consider leaving in groups rather than individually.

If telephone callers become abusive or threatening, staff may issue a caution along the lines of, 'if you continue to be abusive, I shall put the telephone down', and then do so if the caller persists.

Whenever working away from an academy, staff must always ensure that a colleague has details of their programme and whether or not you are intending to return to the academy. Local procedures must be in place to respond to concern about the non-arrival or return of colleagues. (See *Section 6.9* on Lone Working).

When travelling by car or cycle, staff should ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy, that the route is planned, that the foot journey at their destination is as short as possible and that vehicles are left in well-lit and secure areas.

Staff should avoid wearing clothing or jewellery that could be grabbed and used to inflict injury on the wearer.

Staff involved in emergency responses should take account of the advice within this section as far as is possible and should not, *in any circumstances*, place themselves or colleagues at undue risk.

It is essential that any member of staff, receiving any information indicating that a pupil, parent, or visitor may pose a risk to staff, logs this information appropriately.

The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff

member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances. All instances of physical intervention must be recorded in accordance with academy policies.

All staff who may be potentially involved in physical intervention must have access to the Trust's advice referred to in this document and any other local guidance that has been produced.

### **Self Defence**

Leaving or getting away is often the best defence using any pretext that may work but individuals do have the legal right to defend themselves, or others, if attacked. The amount and degree of defensive force used must be proportional to the level of risk being faced. This will depend upon the circumstances. You do not have to be hit first if you are in genuine fear of being injured.

### **Protective Equipment**

Personal protective equipment may provide a degree of protection or reassurance to staff in some circumstances. Risk assessments should identify when equipment should be issued to staff and it should only be issued once information and training in their use has been provided.

If personal alarms are issued, they need to be carried so that they are easy to reach in an emergency. They may deter an attacker but may also aggravate a situation. Mobile telephones can be used to summon assistance or to obtain information from colleagues that may help to defuse a situation.

### **Lone Working**

The nature of our activities is such that many employees are sometimes required to work alone and / or away from their academy and / or out of normal school hours.

The risk of violence and aggression towards staff increases in a lone working situation and therefore all lone working activities will be subject to a risk assessment. The Headteacher or Deputy Head Teacher must assess the situations, either generically or individually, and ensure that reasonable practicable precautions are implemented. **N.B. Those assessed at high risk *must not* be allowed to continue.**

If the perceived risk warrants it, such precautions might include:

- cancelling the visit / appointment / meeting;
- re-arranging the venue;
- re-scheduling the time of the visit / appointment / meeting;
- specific selection of staff;
- additional staff being present;
- providing detailed information to colleagues about your intended itinerary;
- training in conflict diffusion techniques for staff;

In addition to these higher-risk precautions, all lone workers must log, with their Line Manager, their intended movements throughout any lone working period during school hours. The log should include information which will allow your movements to be traced should you fail to return safely either to the school or your home. ***Note that the carrying of a mobile phone does not abrogate this requirement, as you may be unable to receive a signal or be incapacitated from using it.***

For low-risk lone working periods after normal school hours, then it is sensible to inform someone at home of your itinerary and of the action to take should you fail to arrive home. If there is no suitable person at home, then staff may, for their own reassurance, want to arrange a system whereby a colleague is primed to alert someone if confirmation of a safe return is not made.

A locally arranged escalating procedure must be in place to alert the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher if any member of staff is unaccounted for at the end of any high-risk lone working period or in any other circumstances giving cause for concern.

### **Short-term Debriefing following an incident**

The nature and level of action following an incident will depend on the circumstances of each case. Some 'minor' instances may not require any action but it is important that no incident is dismissed as being too trivial to deal with without first exploring the effect of it with the member of staff involved.

Immediately after an incident, the Headteacher/ Deputy Head teachers will ensure that all necessary first aid or medical treatment is arranged.

It is probable that the victim will want to talk about the incident but may be feeling distressed or guilty. It is important that sensitive support is given at this point. The Headteacher / Deputy Head teacher should be aware that other colleagues are likely to be seen as primary emotional supports and this may require some flexibility about the normal work routine continuing. Further opportunities to talk about the incident should be provided after a period for reflection.

All parties involved in the incident should write down their thoughts and recollection of the incident as soon as they feel able to. The staff member should be reminded of the local procedures for accessing a counsellor and that a trade union or professional association representative may be present at any meeting where a discussion of the incident takes place.

All incidents should be formally acknowledged. This may be verbally and/or in writing. The Trust recognises that the staff member involved may have a need for a specific type of acknowledgement.

The Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher should review risk assessments and care and support programmes in the light of the incident. This should include the sharing of information protocol to ensure that all staff and other agencies are made aware of risks.

### **Longer-term Debriefing**

Victims of violence or aggression may need time to come to terms with the implications of the incident. The Trust should be alert to the possibility that the member of staff is underestimating his or her own needs. Other staff who may have witnessed the incident or are likely to come into contact with the aggressor should be given information about the incident and its implications. It may be useful to arrange a staff meeting to discuss feelings about the incident and assess its impact. Any staff development needs that are highlighted by the incident should be addressed. If a member of staff is absent from work for a lengthy period following the incident, the Trust's HR Department and Occupational Health Service can provide advice.

### **Counselling**

The Headteacher should refer employees to the Occupational Health Service (OHS), where there are welfare or attendance issues that appear to be related to the violence or aggression incident. The OH Service will provide appropriate recommendations for supporting such employees. When the occupational health professionals consider that an employee could benefit from counselling, this will be made clear in the report supplied to the Trust.

### **Change of Duties**

The staff member and their line manager should agree any need to alter work duties as a result of the incident. This should be done such that the member of staff is not put under duress or made to feel guilty.

### **Involvement of the Police**

The police should be informed of all incidents where a member of staff has been assaulted. In some circumstances, the member of staff may not wish the police to be involved. However, the Headteacher has the final decision and may judge that the wider protection of the community requires that a report be made to the police, notwithstanding the wishes of the individual. If, during the incident, a child is assaulted or abused, this **must** be reported in the first instance to the DOFA for Allegations, who coordinates the local multi-agency response.

### **Employers Liability**

A member of staff who believes that they have suffered harm as a result of a work related incident should seek independent advice as to any civil claim they may have. Employees may also contact the Criminal Injuries

Compensation Authority. Details can be found at [www.cica.gov.uk](http://www.cica.gov.uk). In order to pursue a claim the incident must be reported to the police within 24 hours and to the Authority within one year.

### **Legal Advice and Support**

If an employee is a victim of an assault which gives rise to criminal proceedings, then the Crown Prosecution Service and Victim Support can give information relating to the criminal process. The Trust cannot bring a civil action for damages on his/her behalf, save to the extent that this is necessary in order to request an injunction to prevent further assaults or harassment. If an injunction is to be sought against the perpetrator, the Solicitor to the Trust can advise on each case as to whether the circumstances justify such an application or whether alternative action may be more suitable.

Any employee who believes that they have suffered harm as a result of a work-related incident should seek independent advice as to any civil claim they may have. The Trust's Employers Liability insurance will apply where legal liability is established against the Trust or any other employee.

Employees may also contact the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority, as outlined in *section 7.6* above.

### **If an employee is alleged to have committed an offence**

Where an employee is the subject of a criminal investigation as a result of allegations made by one of the Trust's clients, the Trust cannot provide legal advice or representation to that individual. This is so, even where it appears that the employee has followed the Trust's procedures.

If the police decide to take action against a member of staff then the Trust will be as supportive as the merits of the case allow. However, the Trust is also unable to provide financial assistance to an employee to seek his or her own legal advice and representation from another source. Nor can it reimburse an employee's legal costs in the event of a prosecution not proceeding or ending in an acquittal.

In light of these two paragraphs, **it is strongly recommended that staff consider membership of an appropriate Trade Union**. Alternatively, staff may want to consider the possibility of taking out private insurance cover for such eventualities.

### **If a third party claims compensation**

Where an employee is the subject of civil proceedings arising from an incident in which a third party alleges injury, the matter will be dealt with under the Trust's insurance arrangements, thus protecting individual employees. The only circumstances where employees may find themselves outside the protection of the Trust's insurance are where criminal acts have been committed or where the individual has been negligent.

### **Exclusion of Students**

Statutory guidance on excluding students from the academy can be found in the Academy's Behaviour Policy. In the event of a permanent exclusion, reference should be made to the Trust's policy on this and give the parent a chance to make any representations before any decision is implemented.

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### **Training**

Staff within the Trust who are likely to be at risk from violence will require some level of training. The type and frequency of training will differ according to the nature of the risks faced. The Trust should identify and provide suitable training in skills that may include de-escalation techniques; breakaway techniques; the use of force to control or restrain.

### **Reporting Procedures**

Full guidance on the reporting of incidents is given in the Health and Safety Policy.

Only by reporting incidents can working practices and procedures be adjusted to provide as much protection for staff as is possible. The accumulative effect of several minor incidents can be just as harmful as that from those of a more serious nature and staff should not overlook these 'lesser' incidents.

The Trust will use these reports to identify measures that can reduce the likelihood of any recurrence as well as spotting regular or repeated perpetrators and victims. All reports will also be monitored centrally and regular cumulative reports will be compiled to identify trends and areas for further action.

The Executive Headteacher / Deputy Head teachers should be aware that if a major injury is attributable to an act of non-consensual violence for a work-related incident, then the incident must be reported to the Health and Safety Executive without delay by either telephoning 0845 300 9923 or on line by going to [www.riddor.gov.uk](http://www.riddor.gov.uk).

Where an injury results in an absence of more than 7 days from normal work duties then the HSE must also be informed on line by going to [www.riddor.gov.uk](http://www.riddor.gov.uk).

### **Further Support and Advice**

Health and Safety Executive  
The Pithay  
Bristol BS1 2ND  
Tel: 0117 988 6000

Department for Education  
Castle View House  
Runcorn  
Cheshire WA7 2GJ  
Tel: 0370 000 2288

British Association for Counselling  
& Psychotherapy  
BACP House,  
15 St John's Business Park,  
Lutterworth,  
Leicestershire LE17 4HB  
Tel: 01455 883300

Victim Support South West region  
9A The Butts  
Ilminster  
Somerset TA19 0AY  
Tel: 01460 258556