



**HOLY FAMILY RC PRIMARY SCHOOL
ROCHDALE**

**SAFETY FROM VIOLENCE
AND AGGRESSION
POLICY**



Policy on Safety from Violence and Aggression

Mission Policy

Holy Family School exists to serve its parish and community by promoting excellence academic, creative and spiritual learning.

Based on the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Roman Catholic Church, the school seeks to provide a happy, safe and inspiring environment where children, staff, parents and visitors feel secure, loved and respected.

Holy Family Roman Catholic School encourages all its members:

Through WORK: to develop his or her full potential as part of the community and as a unique person made in the image and likeness of God.

Through WORSHIP: to learn to know and love God and to recognise and respond to the person of Christ in others.

Through WITNESS: to celebrate Gospel messages including justice and peace

1. Part 1 – Policy Overview

1.1. Introduction

Holy Family RC Primary School fully realises that any of its employees, in the course of their duties which bring them into direct contact with the public, might at some stage face potentially violent situations. The school, in line with its Health and Safety Policy and as a caring employer, wants to ensure that everything possible is done to reduce the threat from existing risks to a minimum. This is done in accordance with the following principles:

- Violence against staff is unacceptable, and employers carry a legal and moral duty on behalf of the community as a whole to do everything reasonably possible (within the constraints imposed by the duty of care to service users and resources) to keep school staff from harm, and those workers have a similar duty to colleagues and themselves.
- Service users have responsibilities as well as rights, and one of these responsibilities is to not abuse School Staff.
- Both risk and harm arising from violence can be significantly reduced by staff and employers working effectively together, drawing on the evidence and good practice, and with the support of the School.
- Good staff care as far as the risk of violence is concerned is rooted in a sound human resource and workforce development strategy.



- This concerns all staff, in every role and setting where there might be an incident of violence towards staff.

1.1.1. Definition

Research into and management of violence and abuse against school staff has been dogged by problems of consistent definition. The definition below was adopted by the Health and Safety Executive, and as our definition needs are consistent with those of other organisations, is used for Holy Family RC Primary School. It also provides an 'encompassing' rather than a restrictive framework, which is preferable given the wide scope of potential situations.

Violence and aggression towards staff is defined as:

'Incidents where persons are abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work, involving an explicit or implicit challenge to their safety, well-being or health.'

This definition is taken to include verbal abuse or threat, threatening behaviour, any assault (and any apprehension of unlawful violence), and harassment, including harassment or discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability or religion. This extends from what may seem to be minor incidents to serious assault and murder, and threats against the worker's family.

1.2. Aims

The aim of this policy is to set out the responsibilities of Heads, and employees, to give advice and guidance, in:

- Assessing the risk to employees.
- Developing strategies for the prevention of incidents.
- Identifying reasons for the occurrence, and how to prevent similar future incidents.
- Dealing with the consequences of violent, aggressive or threatening behaviour, so that the safety of employees and others is considered at all times.

1.3. Scope of the Policy

This applies to behaviour by members of the public, including service users, but not by or between staff, where other management arrangements exist, i.e. Safer Working Practice and Staff Conduct Policies.

1.4 National Policy and Legal Context

Main legislation is The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, under which:

- Employers have a legal duty under this Act to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees.



- Employees also have a responsibility for taking reasonable care for their own health and safety, and that of others who may be affected by what they do, or do not do, and complying with safe systems of work.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (MHSWR) 1999 are also important. Under these, employers have a legal duty to assess the risks to employees and **must** make arrangements for the effective management of health and safety through adequate planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review. The risk assessments should, where appropriate, include elimination or control of the risk of employees' exposure to reasonably foreseeable violence.

2. Practical Application

2.1. Reducing Risk from Public Interaction

Holy Family RC Primary School will endeavour, as far as is reasonably practicable, to reduce the risk of violent, aggressive or threatening behaviour towards its employees during the course of their work by:

- Examining and improving working environments and administrative systems.
- Improving relevant employee skills through learning and development.
- Communicating this policy to staff.

This aims to reduce incidents which could lead to members of the public, service users and employees expressing anger in a violent or aggressive way. This includes assessing the risks to employees of, violent or aggressive behaviour and providing:

- Safe systems of work.
- Appropriate control measures to protect employees.
- Relevant guidance and training of employees in how to deal with violence and aggression.
- Suitable and sufficient information, instruction, training and supervision as is appropriate.

2.1.1. The Role of Management

The problem of violence at work is often associated with the main purpose of an organisation such as providing a service to the public. The task of prevention or control must be seen as an integral part of the management of that service or enterprise. Holy Family RC Primary School will support, as far as is reasonably practicable, employees who have become victims of violence and aggression during the course of their work by:

- Assisting with the identification of the assailant(s) or aggressor(s).
- Allowing paid time off to victims, and victim's witnesses who are school employees, to assist police and make court appearances and to consult with their recognised trade union/legal representative.
- Where appropriate offering relevant legal advice.



- Offering employees confidential welfare counselling and support.

2.1.2. Employees Responsibilities

Employees will have responsibilities to:

- Deliver a high standard of service taking appropriate action not to escalate potentially awkward situations.
- Observe procedures to ensure the health and safety of members of the public, fellow employees and themselves at all times.
- Report all occurrences of violence, aggressive / threatening behaviour and serious verbal abuse and near misses to their line Head.

2.2. Good Practice

2.2.1. Recognising the Problem and Taking Action

In recognising the problem, the School will not expect employees to go alone into known potentially dangerous situations. Heads and supervisors must therefore ensure that risk assessments are carried out on all Service users and their environments, as well as employees working environments so as to ascertain what level of risk from violence employees may be exposed to.

Heads of services should first take steps to establish if there is a violence problem by identifying employees who have an interaction with the public, and who are therefore potentially at risk.

This should be followed by a systematic Risk Assessment of all relevant activities undertaken by the employee, with the objective of reducing risk to an acceptable level. Heads are reminded that the findings of the risk assessment must be discussed with the safety representatives and employees affected prior to implementation.

2.2.2. Aggressive / Threatening Behaviour and Verbal Abuse

Where an individual is threatening an employee (whether face to face or on the telephone) it is acceptable to end the interview, or put the phone down, after giving due warning of your intentions in a polite manner. This includes verbal abuse of an employee on the grounds of their race, gender, sexual orientation or disability.

2.2.3. Assault

The employee who has been assaulted may need to:



- For the time being be relieved of any duties, as assault can affect judgement and leave people feeling vulnerable or disoriented.

- Have access to first aid where available. If appropriate be referred to a hospital. Where he/she suffers shock or injury, the employee should in any event consult a doctor as soon as practicable and obtain a written medical statement concerning the injuries.

- Be encouraged to contact their Trade Union or Professional Association for support.

- Prepare a written statement as soon as possible. Factual written statements should be obtained as soon as possible from any witnesses, and names, addresses and ages (in the case of young persons) should also be recorded.

All statements should include as much information as practicable about the incident and the background to it. Relevant Incident Report Form(s) will be provided by the Head and must be completed. If an implement or weapon is used in an attack, this should be retained where possible, providing this can be done without difficulty or risk.

In the event of a deliberate physical assault on an employee, the Head in consultation with a representative from Legal Services should normally consider the access to the service that will be permitted to that individual in the future.

The Head, normally with the consent of the employee that has been assaulted, needs to inform the Police of any incident of deliberate assault in the event of an incident that is serious enough to cause injuries. For any injury that is serious, the reporting to the police does not rely on the employee's consent, as Holy Family RC Primary School needs to give a strong message that it is unacceptable for their staff to be treated in this way. Also not reporting to the police could affect later claims for compensation from the criminal injuries board. In any discussions with their Head about the assault, the Head must inform the employee that they have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or friend. Sympathetic consideration will be given to compensating the employee for loss of or damage to clothing and personal effects resulting from the assault.

If the situation warrants the immediate involvement of the Police, they should be called by dialling 999.

For all incidents the forms need to be forwarded to the relevant Health and Safety Team. The manager of the person involved in the incident will carry out an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the incident and record their findings, and forward these to their line manager and to the Health and Safety Team.

2.2.4. Use of Force as Self Defence

In violent physical contact, everyone will be hurt to some degree. Employees must be aware of being over-confident, in that they may fail to exercise proper care.

Employees should consider their own safety as a matter of priority, and attempt to escape from any threat of violence, where appropriate to do so.



The use of force as a means of self defence may have serious consequences for employees, e.g. being charged with assault, being dismissed or being seriously injured themselves.

The following points should give some guidance on the legal use of force as a means of self-defence:

- Self-defence is permitted in law.
- Self-defence is permitted in law to the extent of what is ‘reasonably necessary’ to stop the attack.
- Self-defence is not permitted in law beyond what is ‘reasonably necessary’ in time and degree to stop the attack.

3. Monitoring, Review and Issues after Incidents

3.1. Review and Monitoring

This policy and guidelines are to be reviewed by the Governing Board, and its success monitored through measuring changes in levels of violence over time, and compliance with safe working practices. The value of learning should be outlined in Guidelines for Heads, with further suggestions for post-incident support.

3.2. Protection from Further Assault, Abuse and Threats

In cases of aggressive / threatening behaviour and or verbal abuse, a formal letter of warning can be issued by the Head of the service. There also needs to be a strong letter, if the staff member wants this, for repeated verbal abuse, indicating that this is unacceptable treatment of employees.

If there are reasonable grounds for believing the employee may be further assaulted or threatened, the School may seek an injunction restraining the assailant. This also applies for persistent harassment or stalking.

3.3. Legal Action

The Head and the assaulted employee should consider jointly whether the matter should be referred to the police. If they fail to agree, then either may refer it. Where serious injuries occur, the senior staff member or Head must contact the Police.

The employee also has the right to report the matter personally to the Police or initiate a private prosecution with DCC support.

The School will report to the Police any person on its premises without lawful authority or responsible cause, who causes or permits nuisance or disturbance to those using the premises lawfully. If this fails to satisfactorily resolve the matter, the School will consider bringing proceedings to obtain an injunction to exclude the person from the School premises, or in the case of certain educational premises, to



which the provisions of the Education Act 1996 apply, bring a criminal prosecution under the powers given by that Act.

This policy has been approved and adopted by staff and Governors

Signed (Chair of Governors) Date

Signed (Headteacher) Date