



Working Together

Violence and Aggression at Work Procedure

November 2017

History of Changes

Version	Description of Change	Authored by	Date
1.1	Add reference to Lone Working Policy and Procedure	K Drum	20 th Nov 2017

Introduction

Employees who deal directly with the public may face aggressive or violent behaviour. They may be sworn at, threatened or even attacked.

This procedure is aimed at providing practical advice on how to tackle the situation and College procedures for dealing with violence and aggression at work.

The Health and Safety Executives working definition of violence is:

“Any incidence in which an employee is abused, threatened or assaulted by a member of the public in circumstances arising out of the course of his or her employment”. Verbal abuse and threats are the most common types of incident. Physical attacks are comparatively rare.

Most people accept that physical force against an individual is an example of violence, but violence can take many forms, including:

- Verbal abuse and threats (with or without a weapon)
- Rude gestures and innuendoes
- Sexual or racial harassment

Where there is no physical injury, there can still be considerable emotional stress; threats may indicate a risk of actual injury. Malicious damage to an employee’s property can also cause distress and fear of future physical attack.

Statement

The College is committed to taking all reasonable precautions necessary to secure the health and safety of all employees carrying out work activities and in particular in helping to combat violence and aggression.

The College will endeavour to support those members of staff who have been assaulted or suffered verbal abuse in their working role.

Where staff may be reluctant to report such matters, the College wishes to stress that reporting incidents of violence and aggression will not be seen as an adverse reflection on the individual’s ability to perform their duties satisfactorily.

This commitment extends to the protection of those employees who work away from College premises and where possible the need for employees to work alone will be avoided wherever reasonably practicable.

Responsibilities

The Health and Safety Committee have the responsibility for approving this procedure.

The Health and Safety Manager has responsibility for updating the procedure

All staff have the responsibility for implementing the procedure and ensuring all incidents are reported.

Reporting of Incidents

To help identify and control any potential or underlying problems associated with violence at work within the college, it is necessary we have some formal system for reporting and recording incidents of this nature. A Threatening Behaviour Incident Reporting Form HS10 is available from the Health and Safety area of the Intranet for completion should an incident arise.

Should any of the following incidents occur then an incident Report form should be completed by your Line Manager and passed onto the Health and Safety Manager as soon as possible; physical violence, aggression, verbal abuse, sexual or racial abuse, intentional damage to personal property.

It is a legal requirement to report any acts of violence to employees that result in death, major injury or absence from work seven or more days, under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases, and Dangerous Occurrences Regulation's 1995 (RIDDOR) Incidents that result in physical injury to members of the public, who are then taken directly to hospital for treatment, must also be reported.

Incident Report Form

This form should be completed as soon as possible after the event, preferably by the Line Manager of the member of staff involved. The report form covers the following:

- Details of person assaulted
- Details of assailant/s if known
- Details of incident (including any injury suffered, treatment received)
- Outcome (whether the Police were called)
- Possible contributory factors/improvements

It should also be noted on the HS10 when the assailant has been involved in any previous incidents.

Use of Weapons

Where a member of staff or student has been threatened/assaulted with a weapon of any kind, then the Police must be notified as soon as possible. Members of staff are advised to take extreme caution when confronted with a weapon and not attempt any action which may result in themselves/other members of staff being injured.

Preventative Strategies

People with responsibility for staff management need to be committed to the objective of reducing risk of violence to employees. The way jobs are designed can reduce the risk of violence and aggression. Here are some examples of measures that may prove effective:

- Using cheques, credit cards or tokens instead of cash to make robbery less attractive
- Checking the credentials of clients and if possible the place and arrangements for meetings away from the College
- Making sure that staff get home safely. The threat of violence does not stop when work has ended. For example if you need staff to work late, try and arrange for them to be able to drive to work and park their cars in a safe area
- Training your staff to enable them to deal with aggression by spotting the early signs and avoiding or coping with it
- Changing the layout of waiting areas. Better seating, decor, lighting and more regular information about delays have helped stop tension building up in some waiting areas

Dealing with Aggression

When angry parents or other visitors arrive at the College premises, some procedures can help to diffuse a difficult situation and avoid violent confrontation. Examples are:

- Avoiding confrontation in front of an audience, particularly groups of students. The fewer people that are involved in an incident, the easier it is for the aggressor to back down without losing face
- Asking another preferably senior member of staff to help talk things through with the visitor
- Staying calm and speaking slowly so as not to be drawn into heated argument
- Avoiding aggressive body language such as hands on hips, wagging fingers, looking down on the aggressor

Home Visiting

Some staff will need to visit clients/students/parents in their homes. This may involve travelling to known trouble areas of a town and/or evening visits. The client may be an anxious aggressive parent who could act violently or in a threatening manner. Suggested precautions include:

- An itinerary of the employee's movements to be left with a responsible person
- Periodic reporting to base or to a responsible person
- Avoiding evening visits wherever possible
- Checking client's records beforehand to see whether the person or someone in the household is known to be potentially violent
- Carrying a personal alarm
- Visiting in pairs in some situations

Cleaning Outlying Buildings

Cleaning staff who work in buildings remote from the main occupied areas and/or who work at night may often be alone and vulnerable to attack by intruders. Such staff could work in pairs, wherever possible. If this is not feasible precautionary measures should be taken to ensure contact can be made.

Support for Staff Who Have Been Subject to Violence at Work

The College acknowledges that some victims of violence may need help in the form of counselling, time off work, and help with compensation or legal advice. The College will therefore endeavour to provide understanding and sympathetic treatment to those members of staff who may be affected by violent or aggressive acts during the course of their work. Members of staff should in the first instance contact the HR Department.

If any member of staff feels threatened or unsafe whilst carrying out any part of their normal work activities, then they should inform their Line Manager as soon as possible.

Related Documents

- Health and Safety Procedures Manual
- Lone Working Policy and Procedure

Further Information

Additional information regarding personal safety can be found in the College Health and Safety Procedures Manual, sections 26 (Personal Safety), 35 (Women - Safety), and 36 (Working alone).

A DVD is available from the Borders Campus library, it is titled *Personal Safety at Work: Planning for safety and conflict management* and it is produced by the Suzy Lamplugh Trust.

Leaflets and books are also available through the HSE and the TUC and some individual trade unions have also produced useful advice.

Preventing Workplace Harassment and Violence is a joint guidance document that has been agreed between the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and Partnership of Public Employers (PPE), representing employers and the Trades Union Congress (TUC) representing employees. It is supported by the Government, including the HSE, the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).

Violence and Aggression at Work

This document represents their commitment to ensuring that the risk of encountering harassment or violence whilst at work are properly assessed and prevented or controlled. For more information go to the website:

www.hse.gov.uk/violence/preventing-workplace-harassment.htm

Equality Impact Assessment

(Rapid impact assessment tool)

What Impacts may there be from this proposal on any group's ability to use the College services?

Policy: Violence and Aggression at Work

Positive Impacts (Groups affected)	Negative Impacts (Groups affected)
This procedure is in place for the benefit of all staff and to ensure we have a system in place to deal with incidents.	None identified
Actions taken to alleviate any negative Impacts: None identified	
Recommendations: Procedure is approved	

From the outcome of the rapid equality impact assessment, have negative impacts been identified for any protected characteristic or any other potentially disadvantaged group?

Has a full Equality Impact Assessment been recommended?

Yes

No

Reason for recommendation:

Violence and Aggression at Work

Status: Approved by H&S Committee
Procedure Dated: November 2017
Author: Health and Safety Manager
Review Date: November 2020
Equality Impact Assessed: November 2017