

## **POLICY FOR DEALING WITH VIOLENCE AT WORK**

### **Definition of violence:**

'any incident in which an employee is abused, threatened or assaulted by a student or member of the public in circumstances arising out of the course of his or her employment'. Violence includes sexual or racial harassment, physical force against an individual, rude gestures - innuendos, verbal abuse and threats (with or without a weapon).

### **Statement of intent**

1. Haven High Technology College is committed to combating violence to its staff in the same way that it is committed to combating acts of violence amongst students of the college. The Governing Body have declared their full support for staff who have been assaulted or suffered verbal abuse. The reporting of acts of violence will not be seen as an adverse reflection on the individual's ability to perform their duties satisfactorily.
2. The Governing Body are committed to reducing the risk of violence to all staff and understand the effect that perceived risk as well as real risk can have on stress levels and well being of staff.
3. All reports of violence will be investigated appropriately, including notification to the police of all assaults. In circumstances where the police will not prosecute, legal advice will be available to the college from the County Legal Services.
4. Where staff, in the normal course of their duties, are personally and directly threatened or subjected to verbal abuse by a member of the general public, the Executive Headteacher will arrange for letters to be sent formally warning them that legal action may be taken if a breach of the law takes place.
5. Where staff, in the normal course of their duties, are directly threatened or subjected to violence as defined above, then that student will be sent home immediately and parents asked to discuss the matter with the Year Head/Assistant Head (Student Services) and the Executive Headteacher. If the student cannot be sent home immediately, the student will be removed from normal lessons and placed in isolation.

### **Understanding the nature of the problem**

As well as being aware that violence can occur when dealing with students in the normal classroom situation, staff may also be at risk when carrying out certain types of work, such as:

- working alone
- visiting students at home
- visiting students off site
- looking after money
- looking after the premises before, during and after college working on the premises out of normal college hours
- working with students who have behavioural or emotional difficulties

- emptying or loading confectionery machines
- dealing with angry students, parents or relatives of students
- supervising movement of students between lessons, at breaks and lunchtimes

### **Reporting and recording incidents**

1. A formal system of recording and reporting incidents of violence exists at Haven High Technology College in order to:
  - build up an evidence base
  - devise appropriate preventative strategies
  - monitor whether these strategies are effective.
2. Staff should report and record all incidents in order to build up a true picture of the nature and frequency of violence and to provide evidence for further action that may need to be taken and to identify places and activities where violence can be a problem.
3. Staff should record all violent incidents arising from student behaviour on the normal log sheets and include such information as:
  - details of the assailant (if known)
  - time of day
  - where the incident occurred, including physical environment
  - activity at the time of the incident
  - account of what happened
  - relationship between victim and assailant
  - outcome.

Violent incidents resulting from the behaviour of a member of the public, either on college premises or affecting the normal working of the college, should be reported on forms available from the Administration Office.

4. Reports of incidents which are not in themselves violent but where the college's responsibility for the health and safety of staff and students is jeopardised should be reported in the Incident Book kept in the Administration Office.

### **Preventative strategies**

1. Signs outside the college explain clearly that visitors should use only the main entrance and should report to the reception area. Visitors are asked to sign in, giving their name and address and which staff they are expecting to see in college. Visitors are asked to wear a badge signifying their status as a visitor. These badges are handed back to reception on leaving. Governors are asked to wear their own Governor badge. Any person seen in college not wearing a badge, who is not a recognised member of the college community, should be escorted back to reception or to the Administration Office.
2. When angry parents or other visitors arrive at the college, some procedures can help to diffuse a difficult situation and avoid violent confrontation. For example:

- avoid 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
  - ask a senior member of staff to help talk things through with the visitor
  - stay calm and speak slowly so as not to be drawn into a heated argument
  - avoid aggressive body language such as hands on hips, wagging fingers or looking down on the aggressor.
3. Staff should not make home visits to see students or parents without the knowledge and agreement of the Executive Headteacher or Head of School.
  4. Violence towards staff can often stem from attempts to separate students in playground fights. In these situations staff are able to use reasonable restraint to prevent further injury.
  5. Training for staff to develop confidence and consider techniques for dealing with violence should be discussed with the member of staff responsible for Professional Development.

#### **The role of the police**

1. The college has a good relationship with the local police force. Police assistance should be requested if violence is anticipated or if violent incidents arise either on the college site or sufficiently near the college to cause a disturbance on the premises. The Administration Manager should be asked to ring the police either on the local number or using 999.
2. The police are able to give information to staff on the powers and duties of the police and guidelines on circumstances when the police should be called.

#### **Support for staff who have been subjected to violence**

Staff who experience violent incidents whilst carrying out their duties at the college will be able to receive counselling, and will be offered advice and help if legal proceedings are necessary. Compensation for damage to property or for injuries suffered will be subject to agreement by the County's Insurance Section.

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