

ESTCOTS PRIMARY SCHOOL



Violent Situations Policy

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Corporate Code of Practice on Managing Occupational Violence & Aggression at Work

Introduction

The purpose of this Corporate Code Of Practice is to set the standards for the effective management of foreseeable occupational violence and aggression and to set out those actions that line managers and employees must take in order to ensure that risks are kept as low as reasonably practicable.

Violence and aggression is a feature of our society and is the most reported incident to the Health and Safety Unit year after year. Whilst the vast majority of incidents are relatively minor, some that are significant and the underlying comments from those involved are that it came as a complete surprise. With hindsight, these significant incidents were predictable.

Overview

Health and Safety legislation imparts a duty on West Sussex County Council to manage the risk, so far as is reasonably practicable, of Occupational Violence and Aggression at work. This entails provision of:

- A safe working environment for all employees
- The necessary training, advice, guidance and support to prepare employees for situations which may give rise to violence and/or aggression and
- A support network to deal sensitively with the possible distressing aftermath of such Incidents

Violence and Aggression - Perception

What is perceived, as violent or aggressive behaviour by one person may not be seen in the same way by another? For example, one person may find swearing offensive, but another may not.

Violence could come from work colleagues, managers/supervisors and members of the public, contractors, clients, and officers from other departments, organisations or companies.

Definition

The Health and Safety Executive's definition of work related violence is:

'Any incident, in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work'.

Within this definition:

- **Abuse** is any unreasonable behaviour that involves the misuse of physical or psychological strength or power;
- **Threat** is a statement (either verbal or written) of the intent to harm a person or damage their property
- **Assault** is any attempt to cause injury to a person and includes actual physical harm.

Who is at risk?

There is a definite link between frustration and aggression. It could be just one event “the last straw” that can lead to an act of violence. It is often useful to ask yourself what makes someone aggressive.

Those people who are most at risk are:

- Staff that work in front line jobs and deal with members of the public;
- Staff that meet members of the public or contractors, especially away from the office;
- Staff that work alone;
- Staff that are charged with custody of or the keeping of money, other valuables or medicines (drugs);
- Those who are associated with one of the above criteria and are young and or inexperienced staff or;
- Female Staff

There are many possible triggers of violence, some of which are within the control of the West Sussex County Council employee. It is essential that all West Sussex County Council employees who are identified as being at risk from violence and aggression and their managers/supervisors complete a Personal Safety Awareness training course. Although rare, violence can spill over from a domestic situation. Managers should take note of any signs of domestic issues affecting employees in the workplace. The Domestic Violence/Abuse in the Workplace Policy should be consulted. West Sussex County Council’s Health and Safety Policy states that the management of Health and Safety issues is effected through the line management system; therefore, the following responsibilities have been put in place for managers, supervisors and staff who are potentially at risk from Violence at Work.

Responsibilities of the Senior Management Team

Members of the Senior Management Team must ensure that their Heads of Business Units and other direct reports have identified hazardous activities where violence and/or aggression are foreseeable, and that there are adequate arrangements to control the risks identified. Members of the Senior Management Team, through their management structures, must also monitor that the arrangements are effective.

Responsibilities of Line Managers

Where the risk of violence and/or aggression is foreseeable, e.g. the work can be placed into one of the categories above, a suitable and sufficient risk assessment must be completed on the activities of their team. Unless the risk is assessed as very low then action must be taken to minimise the risk of harm being realised from violence and/or aggression. A checklist in appendix 1 and a risk assessment form in appendix 2 have been provided to assist in this assessment.

Where risk has been identified then the manager must ensure that:

- the whereabouts of staff can be adequately monitored during their working day, even if their working day extends beyond normal office hours, and that they have all reported in to say that they have finished work for the day/night/week
- All individuals concerned are trained in awareness, assertiveness, and aggression avoidance techniques (Personal Safety Awareness)
- An appropriate emergency plan is established and all employees are made aware of the plan
- there is provision of 'user friendly' facilities for visitors to County Council premises, that encourages a calmer atmosphere and ease of access to services by members of the public the visitor facility should be set up with the potential for violence in mind and the employee must be able to place themselves between the visitor and an escape route
- Any furniture in the visitor facility should be positioned between the employee and the visitor
- Panic alarms are fitted to the visitor facility if appropriate
- Barriers and shields be fitted to reception areas if it is appropriate to the identified risk
- every incident is investigated and reported to West Sussex County Council Health and Safety Unit using the West Sussex County Council form HSW3
- Risk assessments are reviewed on a regular basis. When there has been a change in the way in which a team or individual works, a change in the threat, or when a violent incident has occurred, but at least every 12 months.
- where an incident has resulted in an employee taking time off work a compensation scale can be invoked in accordance with the instructions held under "Assaults on Staff" in the HR Guide.

Responsibilities of Employees

- Take reasonable care in their work for their own safety and that of their colleagues
- Always be alert to potential violence and avoid any action that could place them or their colleagues at risk
- Follow local procedures prescribed by their line manager
- Report all incidents of violence including threats to their line manager or grievance officer
- Take part fully in any training offered
- Communicate with management/Health & Safety Unit to raise concerns or report success of the actions taken to minimise the risk

Further guidance on techniques that can be put into place to avoid or minimise the risk can be found on the County Intranet. If you do not have access to the Intranet or you require assistance with the risk assessment, please contact your Health and Safety advisor on 01243 752025.

APPENDICES

1. Checklists to identify issues that could trigger a violent or aggressive act and what controls have been established

2. Risk assessment form – See Risk assessment

Appendix 1

Checklist - to identify what control measures are currently in place

Answers in the yes column indicate that it is a risk reducing control

	Yes	No	Comment
Have employees received training on Personal Safety Awareness			
Are workplace procedures and reporting mechanisms relating to occupational violence or aggression in place?			
Have employees received training on handling cash and other valuables?			
Have employees received training on how to deal with robbery?			
Are screens, fences or barriers fitted that keep potential aggressors at a safe distance?			
Are security devices such as CCTV cameras continuously monitored?			
Are fixed alarms installed?			
Are fixed alarms tested regularly (weekly)?			
Have personal alarms been issued to employees			
Are personal alarms checked regularly for correct function?			
Do procedures exist to deal with violence during and after an event?			
Is there a system that records the whereabouts of employees as they travel away from the office? This could be a manual record on a white board or other electronic chart or an automatic system such as a Guardian Angel system			
Are employees issued with mobile phones?			
Other (Please specify)			

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Risk assessment – Escots Primary School – Violent Situations



Organisation name: Escots Primary School

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	Do you need to do anything else to manage this risk?	Action by whom?	Action by when?	Done
Unhappy parents presenting themselves at the front office	The office team – whoever is at the front desk. The glass window is a large open space	The hatch window can be locked when there is someone there and it can be locked at any time. There is panic button that can be activated and that sounds in the Headteacher's office which can also be heard in the Deputy's office. The school have added a shutdown button on the automatic front door to prevent people coming into the school if a situation is known in advance Wherever possible the team try and avoid lone working in the office				HF – August 2013 additional safety switches were added
Random acts from the public	As above	As above				
Children unable to control their temper	Class teachers and classroom assistants MMS – lunchtime disputes	The children in the class are moved away – a member of the SEN team or SLT will be called Training arranged for staff on how to physically handle difficult children (Manual handling course)	A procedure needs to be written to ensure that all staff know what to do if a situation arises	HF	Summer term 2014	Completed Spring 14
Children on school visits who cannot control their temper	All staff and volunteers on the school trip	If there is a child with an issue or has the capability to lose control of their temper they are put with an appropriate adult to ensure that they are understood and less likely to have a problem	As above			