



Violence at Work

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Employees and volunteers in the education sector may be at risk of violence from students and their parents, and from other visitors.
- 1.2 The St Mary Magdalene Academy considers any action of violence in the workplace to be offensive and unacceptable.
- 1.3 The St Mary Magdalene Academy will take all reasonable measures to aid in the prevention of such incidents and deal with all offenders including criminal prosecution where appropriate.
- 1.4 This statement and commitment from the St Mary Magdalene Academy concerns any incident in which an employee or student is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances arising out of, or in the course of their employment or use of school services. This also includes verbal, sexual and racial abuse and threatening behaviour.

2. Requirements

- 2.1 The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 requires employers to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees.
- 2.2 The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1995 requires employers to assess the risks to employees and make arrangements for their health and safety by effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review. The risks covered should, where appropriate, include the need to protect employees from exposure to reasonably foreseeable violence.
- 2.3 The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 includes requirement of employers to notify the Health and Safety Executive of non-consensual physical violence.
- 2.4 The Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 (a) and the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996 (b) require employers to inform, and consult with employees in good time on matters relating to their health and safety. Employee representatives, either appointed by recognised trade unions

under (a) or elected under (b) may make their representations to their employee on matters affecting the health and safety of those they represent.

3. Key Responsibilities

3.1 The Principal is required to:

- undertake an assessment of the risk of violence at work
- review all risk assessments on a regular basis in consultation with staff and safety representatives to ensure that they remain current
- update all violence risk assessments following any major change to site operation and advise all individuals
- provide a full written report of any serious incident of violence
- complete an incident report form where violence results in injury

3.2 All teachers and staff must:

- report any incident of violence at work to the Principal as soon as possible following the incident
- assist the St Mary Magdalene Academy, so far as is necessary for the St Mary Magdalene Academy to comply with its legal responsibilities

4. Risk Assessment

4.1 The following questions must be considered when conducting a violence at work risk assessment:

4.2 Is violence at work a (potential) problem?

- can you identify any instances or situations in which individuals could be harmed?
- have you consulted staff and representatives, as they may be able to identify problem areas not immediately obvious to others?
- have you reviewed your accident and incident reports to aid in identifying potential areas of violence at work?

4.3 Who might be harmed, and how?

- Consider individuals who are required to work in remote locations or at night, and may be alone and vulnerable

- The risk assessment must identify whether fights between children are a potential problem. Clear guidelines on whether and how fights are to be broken up are to be prepared with all teaching staff fully aware of them.
- You must agree and formulate the procedure to be followed in the event of fights between children.
- have you considered people who may not be in the workplace all the time, such as maintenance staff?
- are new staff members likely to be at greater risk if they do not know what to do in difficult situations?
- do any staff members work alone or in a vulnerable area?
- are agency employees or pupils vulnerable?

4.4 Have all risks identified been evaluated to identify whether control measures are required?

- is the risk significant?
- do any existing control measures reduce or control the risk so that harm is unlikely?
- do control measures include changes to working practices, provision of information, instruction and training to employees and governors?

At all times, the risk must be reduced to as low a level as is reasonably practicable.

4.5 Record the findings from the risk assessment.

- include how people could come to harm and conclusions about reducing the level of risk.

4.6 As part of the risk assessment, consider the risk posed by intruders to employees, students and visitors.

5. Actions To Be Taken

5.1 Control measures for dealing with violence at work need to be based on a full analysis of the problem, and careful thought given to alternative strategies.

6. Location

6.1 Can the design of the workplace be improved to reduce the likelihood of violent incidents?

6.2 A clear reception area (allowing office staff to receive visitors, direct them to a location, answer queries, etc.) can aid in reducing

unauthorised visitors wandering around the Academy. A reception area will:

- preferably be close to the main entrance,
- have sufficient, suitably located signs providing clear, unambiguous instructions,
- have sufficient lighting, subdued colouring, robust furniture and reading material,
- allow staff to summon assistance,
- access control for visitors,
- all staff and students should know the arrangements for receiving visitors.

6.3 The creation of a secure controlled reception area at the point of entry to the Academy is an essential element of a violence control strategy.

6.4 The Academy must ensure that any landscaping does not act as a screen for potential intruders.

6.5 Potential missiles (such as pebbles, rocks, etc) must be removed where possible.

6.6 Prompt repairs are to be carried out on minor damage, and graffiti to improve the environment.

7. Security

7.1 Measures which can be taken to reduce the likelihood of intruders gaining access to the Academy include:

- restricting public access to the Academy grounds,
- external lighting,
- restricting the number of entrance and exit points (while maintaining emergency exits),
- erecting high level perimeter fencing,
- installing entry control or surveillance systems.

7.2 The introduction of any measures outlined above will depend on the specific local risks.

7.3 Consider how staff members can get help in the event of an incident, including access to telephones, panic buttons and personal alarms.

7.4 Staff should have suitable and sufficient training to operate any equipment provided to them. This may involve regular practice sessions with any such equipment.

7.5 Your local crime prevention officer will be happy to assist in the assessment of your security needs.

7.6 A full security risk assessment questionnaire is included in your property manual.

8. Training

All staff must receive training in how to recognise the dangers posed to themselves and others.

Staff training is to include:

- the causes of violent or aggressive behaviour,
- the Academy's policy on violence,
- how to manage a confrontational situation,
- how to summon assistance,
- how to use any security equipment,
- best escape routes,
- how to escape from violent individuals,
- breakaway techniques,
- physical restraints,
- advice on where the use of physical restraints is appropriate,
- acceptable methods of restraint and legal considerations.

Consideration may be given to the provision of self-defence lessons to staff members if considered appropriate.

9. Reporting of Violent Incidents

Following the guidelines outlined in the guideline 'accident and incident reporting,' any act of violence against an employee must be reported to the Health and Safety Manager (David Sands) at the St Mary Magdalene Academy.

An accident and incident report form must be completed to identify potential problem areas where additional control measures are required.

In the event of a serious violent incident, a full written report is to be submitted to the Health and Safety Manager at the St Mary Magdalene Academy. This will be investigated possibly in consultation with the Health and Safety Executive.

10. Supporting the Victim

When an employee, student or visitor is the victim of violence at work, the Principal should consider taking the following steps:

- discuss the incident, ascertain the details and decide whether the member of staff requires medical treatment,
- if the individual is unable to continue at work, ask whether they would like a colleague or friend to accompany them home,
- ascertain from the individual whether or not it is appropriate to inform the police of the incident,
- advise the Health and Safety Manager at the St Mary Magdalene Academy and prepare a full report of the incident,
- following the incident, ascertain whether the individual will require access to counselling services.

11. Action Against the Aggressor

The St Mary Magdalene Academy will always take formal action in the event of an assault on staff, volunteers or students.

Consideration may be given to making the aggressor(s) meet and discuss their actions with the victim prior to being allowed to re-enter the premises where appropriate.