

VIOLENCE AT WORK POLICY CHECKLIST

PURPOSE OF THE CHECKLIST

The NASUWT believes that all schools should have clear, transparent policies and procedures for dealing with violence at work.

School policies and procedures which accord with the provisions in this checklist will help to support employees who are subject to violence in schools and reduce the risks.

The NASUWT has also produced extensive guidance on the risk assessment of violent pupils, which is available on the NASUWT website.

The checklist below sets out the minimum requirements for an effective Violence at Work policy and procedure.

CHECKLIST

Violence at Work policies acceptable to the NASUWT should include the following provisions:

(1) An appropriate definition of violence at work

A definition of violence at work that is consistent with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) definition of work-related violence, which is 'any situation where a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work', thus not only including physical assault but also verbal abuse, threats, harassment and malicious damage to property, whether caused by a pupil, student, colleague or member of the public.

(2) A clear and unequivocal commitment by the employer that violence at work is unacceptable and will not be tolerated

A statement that encourages the school/college staff to report all violent incidents, and the school/college will take all reports seriously and deal with them sensitively.

A statement confirming that the employer recognises its responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974/Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 to protect employees from violence at work.

(3) A clear and transparent procedure to be followed when violent incidents occur in the workplace, which recognises the central importance of supporting victims of violence

The school/college should confirm that all physical attacks resulting in injury will be reported to the police, unless the victim objects.

The employer should recognise the possibility that when an act of violence at work may constitute a 'hate crime', such as being racially aggravated or a homophobic or sexual assault, it must be reported to the police, unless the victim objects.

There should be further confirmation that physical attacks not resulting in injury will be reported to the police at the request of the victim.

(4) The policy should include the following commitments by the school/college:

- ensuring a healthy and safe working environment; and
- taking a zero-tolerance approach to physical attacks against staff.

(5) Staff support

The school/college should confirm that it will:

- support staff subjected to violence, including through access to counselling, occupational health support, or other employee assistance programmes;
- provide all reasonable medical assistance necessary following an incident;
- be supportive of staff who require sick leave to recover from physical and mental injuries following an assault; and
- provide discretion to consider extending sick pay entitlements when a member of staff has been the subject of a violent assault at work.

(6) Management of risk

The policy/procedure should confirm that the school/college will:

- assess risks and devise strategies for the prevention of violence;
- provide appropriate training to staff to manage violent and aggressive behaviour;
- take appropriate action against the perpetrators, including legal action and/or disciplinary action or pupil exclusion as appropriate;
- take reasonable steps when a risk assessment identifies a potential risk; and
- ensure weapons are not brought on to school sites.

(7) Reporting, monitoring and record keeping

The policy/procedure should confirm that the school/college will:

- treat all incidents of injuries to staff, as a result of violence at work, as a work-related injury;
- investigate all reported incidents of violence and take appropriate remedial action;
- provide a clear reporting procedure for violent incidents, and report all violent incidents;
- report violent attacks to the HSE/Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland (HSENI), where required to do so under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR);
- share relevant data with trade union representatives and/or the workplace Health and Safety Committee;
- ensure individual records and information about violence at work are managed appropriately in accordance with data-privacy requirements under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR); and
- ensure violence at work is consistently and accurately recorded and annually reviewed and monitored in order to be effectively managed, and statistical data is shared on an annual basis with recognised trade unions. The review will include statistics on the impact on teachers with protected characteristics and the equality impact of the policy and procedure.