



**EVIDENCE**

**Violence in Schools Roundtable  
6 June 2023**

**NASUWT evidence to the Scottish Parliament Education,  
Children and Young People Committee**

The NASUWT's submission to the Scottish Parliament Education, Children and Young People Committee sets out the Union's views on the key issues which should be explored by the Committee in its scrutiny of violence in schools. The NASUWT's evidence is informed directly by serving teacher and headteacher members and also by the work of its representative committees and consultative structures, made up of practising teachers and school leaders working in the education system.

**For further information, parliamentarians may contact:**

Dr Patrick Roach

General Secretary

[nasuwt@mail.nasuwt.org.uk](mailto:nasuwt@mail.nasuwt.org.uk)

[www.nasuwt.org.uk](http://www.nasuwt.org.uk)

## **Introduction**

1. A key strand of the NASUWT's ongoing Better Deal for Teachers<sup>1</sup> campaign focuses on teacher wellbeing, which is often largely impacted by pupil behaviour. This issue was referenced in a number of motions passed at NASUWT Scotland Conference in May 2023 – see Appendix 1.
2. NASUWT also regularly supports members who are dealing with challenging pupil behaviour as part of Trade Union Casework – see Appendix 2 for two anonymous 'everyday' case studies, exemplifying some of the challenges teachers face trying to navigate local behaviour management policies and referral processes.

## **THE IMPACT OF PUPIL BEHAVIOUR**

3. Teachers cannot teach and pupils cannot learn in an environment where there is disruption and violence, and where such behaviour occurs it cannot be explained away simply by attributing it to a teacher's inability to plan and deliver a lesson appropriately. The NASUWT, over many years, has been campaigning to ensure that government, employers, inspectors and parents accept this self-evident truth.
4. Constant challenges to authority, persistent refusal to obey school rules and frequent, regular verbal abuse of staff are the hallmarks of disruptive behaviour. Its effects, if unchallenged, are corrosive and when sustained over a long period can have a devastating impact on the health and welfare of teachers. Hundreds of teaching hours are being lost challenging this behaviour.
5. All staff are entitled to work in an environment free from violence and disruption and to appropriate access to training and support on behaviour matters. Pupils are entitled to a safe and orderly learning environment,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nasuwt.org.uk/news/campaigns/better-deal-for-teachers/better-deal-for-scotlands-teachers.html>

together with effective teaching and support, to assist them in achieving their full potential.

## COMPARISON DATA

6. The NASUWT's Big Question Survey is our annual survey and an important opportunity for NASUWT members to share their experiences of teaching.
7. The Big Question Survey remains the only annual, national survey of teachers and headteachers and our members' responses provide a unique insight into the issues faced by the profession, including the ongoing challenges of pay, workload and wellbeing.
8. Data from NASUWT surveys show Scotland has significantly more problems with pupil behaviour than other UK nations<sup>2</sup> - see graphic below.



## THE PANDEMIC

9. While there is evidence that there has been a post-pandemic rise in pupil violence and abuse in Scotland's schools, it would be an egregious oversimplification to label the pandemic as the only cause. The Union believes the cause of changes to behaviour patterns requires in-depth examination and suggests that urgent research

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nasuwt.org.uk/news/campaigns/big-question-survey.html>

should be commissioned examining the impact of the pandemic on children and their schooling specifically.

10. Behaviour in schools is not simply a post-pandemic concern. NASUWT has been raising concerns relating to pupil behaviour for some time. Back in May 2019, NASUWT requested violence at work be placed on the agenda for discussion at the Scottish Advisory Group on Relationships and Behaviour in Schools (SAGRABIS). At the meeting in June 2019, NASUWT requested a zero tolerance message be clearly centrally articulated and further suggested that the working group look to review and assess the variety of models of Behaviour Management Policies across the country to gain some overview/consistency<sup>3</sup>.

11. While the Scottish Government committed to gather all existing resources into one place, the drafted document fell short in terms of both its clarity and ability to support and affect real change for teachers on the ground<sup>4</sup>. NASUWT continued to engage with both Scottish Government officials and Education Scotland representatives around this document during 2021<sup>5</sup>.

12. By December 2022, NASUWT remained resolute in continuing to raise behaviour concerns via SAGRABIS; in particular around an absence of political oversight and the need for classroom behaviour to be given greater emphasis within the group:

*NASUWT noted their disappointment that political representation was not available at the meeting. NASUWT also highlighted concerns around*

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-advisory-group-on-relationships-and-behaviour-in-schools-minutes-june-2019/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-advisory-group-on-relationships-and-behaviour-in-schools-minutes-november-2020/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/promoting-positive-relationships-and-behaviour-in-educational-settings/>

*classroom behaviour and the opportunity that SAGRABIS as a group has to address some of these issues<sup>6</sup>.*

## **EVIDENCE GATHERING**

13. The NASUWT has welcomed the change in rhetoric from the new Cabinet Secretary for Education & Skills but there is a need for this to be echoed by clear action - and quickly.

14. For context, the Behaviour in Scottish Schools Research (BISSR) has been fully supported by NASUWT since its inception and will continue to be supported. It is an important longitudinal study which facilitates tracking trends across Scotland over an extended period of time. Whilst beneficial for these reasons, it is important to also accept its inherent limitations, in that: while all secondary schools are invited to participate, not all do and this can result from issues of timing and/or miscommunication; not all primary schools are included due to there being a very high number of them, with around 1 in 3 invited; only randomly selected staff in each school can take part, it is not open to all staff; school-based qualitative interviews are limited and the researchers are only able to engage with a dozen or so schools. While the evidence gained through the BISSR research will be insightful, it is not necessary to wait for it to be published before looking to take decisive national action.

## **REPORTING**

15. Across each Local Authority, there exist different reporting models for violent incidents as well as different behaviour management policies and strategies. Indeed, this variation can also be seen between schools in the same local authority.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-advisory-group-on-relationships-and-behaviour-in-schools-minutes-december-2022/>

16. Anecdotal evidence from members highlights considerable inconsistencies in reporting systems and significant under-reporting of violent incidents in some Council areas. Where good practice exists, such as in Fife where the local authority have engaged with teacher trade unions to successfully improve their reporting mechanism, this remains localised and there are no means by which such systems can be rolled out nationally.

## **RESTORATIVE BEHAVIOUR**

17. It is important that we recognise that an unintended consequence of restorative behaviour policies has been a climate of 'teacher-blaming'. The Pivotal Approach to Behaviour Management is advocated by consultants from Pivotal Education Ltd. The company's executive director, Paul Dix, has written a book, *When the Adults Change, Everything Changes*, which is billed as showing "*that it's far more effective to change the behaviour of the adults in a school than it is to try to change the behaviour of the children*". NASUWT is clear that in principle there is no problem with restorative-behaviour practice: like any system, it can be used well or it can be abused, but at the moment, we are hearing too many instances of misuse.

18. Members report wholesale adoption of Paul Dix/Pivotal approaches by senior leaders without a clear understanding of these. It is inappropriate to force this approach on staff without proper consultation/buy-in. In many cases, use of Paul Dix/Pivotal approaches to behaviour in schools has led to a situation where restorative conversations are seen as the only tool in the box – teachers reporting persistent or more serious behaviour problems are trapped in a loop of being forced to have numerous restorative conversations with the same pupil and given no support in administering more serious consequences for regular or serious misbehaviour. This is ironic, given that Paul Dix himself, in his book, suggests that children who misbehave need to experience 'an immediate, proportionate consequence.'

19. The approach to behaviour is further complicated by misunderstandings of the UNCRC and how it might apply when there are clashes between the rights of different children. The Union has provided members with guidance around behaviour and the UNCRC which is accessible here: <https://www.nasuwt.org.uk/advice/in-the-classroom/children-and-young-people/united-nations-convention-rights-of-child-scotland.html>
20. The Scottish Government must also provide clear information to schools on the dangers of misunderstanding or misappropriating the UNCRC and exemplify what schools should do when the rights of different children conflict with each other.

## **NEXT STEPS**

21. Adequate risk assessments should be undertaken of pupils who persistently display high levels of aggression and violence in school, and the details of those risk assessments should be shared with relevant staff, particularly when pupils move school. Pupils and staff are being put at risk where a school fails to undertake an appropriate risk assessment, implement suitable control measures, share adequate information with staff about violent and disruptive pupils, and use the sanctions available when necessary.
22. Schools should consider the full range of sanctions available to tackle unacceptable pupil behaviour, including dealing with low-level disruption or verbal abuse. Behaviour policies which include effective risk assessment procedures will help create conditions in which teachers can teach and pupils can learn effectively.
23. Under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, employers have a legal duty 'to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees and others'. The Management of Health and Safety Regulations (1999) also place a legal duty on

employers, through the risk assessment processes, to examine workplace hazards, identify those at risk and take measures to control those risks.

24. Schools must have a simple, fit-for-purpose reporting procedure and school leaders should take appropriate steps to ensure staff report all incidents of violence and abuse. Schools leaders should not be fearful that reporting a higher level of incidents will be judged as a failure on their part.
25. Health and Safety legislation also requires that employers consult and co-operate with Health and Safety Representatives, including on the management of health and safety risks in the workplace.
26. Effective school leadership, especially working in partnership with staff and trade unions, is essential to the establishment and maintenance of acceptable standards of behaviour in schools.
27. Early identification and intervention are also essential factors in successful behaviour management. Schools need support, and appropriate resources, to enable them to respond effectively, at an early stage.
28. Schools should be able to readily access external advice, support, and specialist provision without the requirement to negotiate burdensome, bureaucratic procedures. They must also be given flexibility within the curriculum, and adequate resources, to develop appropriate educational programmes to meet the needs of individual pupils.
29. There are times when, despite every effort made by the school, it is necessary to implement the exclusion procedure. Headteachers must be empowered to exercise their professional judgement in the use of exclusion. Again, school leaders should be reassured that reporting a higher number of exclusions will not automatically be seen as a failure on their part.



30. Parents and carers, too, have an essential role to play in assisting schools in maintaining high standards of behaviour. They have a duty to take responsibility for the behaviour of their child. Consistency of expectations by schools and parents/carers is essential, as is the need for effective liaison between the home and the school.
31. All schools should establish behaviour policies and strategies and a range of rewards and sanctions in consultation with staff and school workforce unions to promote acceptable standards of behaviour. Schools should ensure that their behaviour management policies are non-discriminatory in their scope and operation, including on the grounds of ethnic or national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexuality. Schools should collect and regularly review data on behaviour to ensure that their behaviour management policy is operating fairly and equitably.
32. Schools must also recognise that cultures of misogyny and violence also make women teachers unsafe, with many experiencing persistent verbal and sometimes physical abuse at the hands of pupils. Warm words provide cold comfort to women who live daily with the reality and the threat of sexual violence in their homes, in their workplaces, in their schools and in their communities. NASUWT supports a gender-sensitive approach to ending violence in Scottish schools.
33. Equally, a recent NASUWT poll<sup>7</sup> found that more than half of LGBTI teachers (52%) experience discrimination and abuse from pupils and parents. The survey also highlighted the need for schools and colleges to take greater initiative in addressing homophobia, biphobia and transphobia:
- a. just 14% of LGBTI members say their school provides training on LGBTI equalities to senior management, falling to just seven per cent for the school governing body;

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.nasuwt.org.uk/being-involved/events/consultation-conferences/lgbti-teachers-consultation-conference.html>

b. only 33 % reported that their school has a zero-tolerance approach to homophobia, biphobia and transphobia.

34. Furthermore, Black teachers are more likely than the generality of the workforce to experience verbal abuse from a pupil, they are also three times more likely to experience discriminatory language/abuse by a parent or carer<sup>8</sup>. Schools and colleges must have in place procedures to address all forms of racism, to eradicate racist incidents and to deal with the perpetrators of such incidents.

35. Government and local authorities must also exercise their responsibility to support schools in maintaining good order and behaviour. Local authorities should not seek to dissuade schools from implementing sanctions or excluding pupils. Government should ensure that a properly resourced national system of high-quality off-site placements is in place to assist schools.

36. There must also be an appropriately-resourced system in place to identify and meet the educational and social needs of children who are excluded or who are at risk of exclusion.

## **CONCLUSION**

37. Schools have a duty to act to protect both pupils and staff where incidents of indiscipline, violence and abuse occur. However, in too many cases teachers are reporting that approaches to managing indiscipline are becoming synonymous in some schools with no punishment or sanctions for unacceptable behaviour. Where employers fail to act the Union has had to take action where teachers' safety is being compromised by a failure to address poor pupil behaviour, such as the NASUWT industrial action in Bannerman High School in Glasgow, which eventually led to acknowledgement that there was a problem and saw additional resources committed to try and address it.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.nasuwt.org.uk/static/uploaded/cf0990b8-17ba-430c-91b9caaa064d1bbf.pdf>

38. No teacher should go to work with the expectation that they will be either verbally or physically abused. All teachers are entitled to dignity at work and a safe working environment.
39. Teachers are being disempowered by the failure of government and employers to ensure that, across the country, behaviour policies are supporting teachers in maintaining high standards of discipline.
40. It's about time the Scottish Government made strong and unequivocal statements about the rights of teachers to a safe working environment, and took action to ensure that these rights are being delivered in every school
41. Too many teachers have had their careers ended prematurely and their lives ruined as a result of violent incidents at work causing significant long-term physical and psychological injuries, including stress, anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and agoraphobia.
42. Disruptive or violent pupils take up a considerable amount of staff and management time, increasing stress and workload and distracting teachers from focusing on other pupils. Violent incidents can have a detrimental impact on the school working environment for both staff and pupils, and can cause reputational damage, leading to falling pupil numbers and staff recruitment and retention difficulties. Additional costs may also be incurred as a result of increased sickness absence, higher insurance premiums and compensation payments.
43. Simply put, pupils cannot learn and teachers cannot teach in an atmosphere of violence and disruption. No teacher should be expected to put up with violence at work. All teachers are entitled to a healthy and safe working environment.

For further information, please contact:

[nasuwt@mail.nasuwt.org.uk](mailto:nasuwt@mail.nasuwt.org.uk)

[www.nasuwt.org.uk](http://www.nasuwt.org.uk)

Dr Patrick Roach

**General Secretary**

## **APPENDIX 1: NASUWT SCOTLAND CONFERENCE MOTIONS 2023**

### **Work-related Violence and Risk Assessments**

Conference believes a risk assessment should:

- (i) identify hazards;
- (ii) assess the risks;
- (iii) control the risks;
- (iv) record the findings; and
- (v) review the controls.

Conference condemns:

- (a) the culture in some schools that routinely produces risk assessments, after a work-related violence incident, that do nothing to mitigate the risk of the work-related violence occurring again;
- (b) the fact that all too frequently in the education sector the risks and effects of work-related violence are underestimated and the controls put in place inadequate to stop repetition.

Conference calls upon the Scotland Executive Council to:

1. produce and regularly publicise guidance on risk assessments for members;
2. collect evidence of inadequate controls put in place from members;
3. lobby COSLA and the Scottish Government to take work-related violence in education seriously and act accordingly

### **Behaviour**

Conference believes 'work-related violence' is a significant challenge and is concerned it has become normalised as part of teaching.

Conference is deeply concerned that the health of teachers in schools is being put at risk by pupil indiscipline; firstly by the stress induced, and

secondly by the increased risk of more serious incidents through tolerating this indiscipline.

Conference believes that the education and wellbeing of young people in schools is also being compromised through tolerating this indiscipline and violence.

Conference confirms that it is vital that action on behaviour is taken which will benefit pupils, the school and college workforce and local communities.

Conference calls on the Scotland Executive Council to:

- i. lobby government to produce clear national behaviour guidelines which ensure minimum standards are applicable across all educational establishments and providers; and, further, ensure that nurture principles are not used as a methodology to cover up abusive behaviour or indiscipline, or to reduce publicly published exclusion figures;
- ii. continue to seek 'Refusal to Teach' ballots in cases where the school or local authority is not addressing 'workplace violence' by pupils;
- iii. support schools to take effective action to ensure staff safety and wellbeing by providing training for NASUWT Representatives on drafting behaviour policies and undertaking behaviour risk assessments;
- iv. survey members on behaviour and the impact in their schools and classrooms, capturing any disparity between policy and practice;
- v. campaign to ensure sufficient resources are given to schools to meet the needs of young people;
- vi. seek to publicly debunk the blame narrative which pervades many restorative behaviour policies;
- and vii. promote to members, representatives, government and employers the Health and Safety Executive definition of work-related violence and associated guidance and comply with the requirements of health and safety of pupils and colleagues, i.e, SCRISP, CERTS and risk assessments to ensure finance or resources is never a barrier.

## **Workplace Protections for Teachers**

Conference notes:

- (i) with concern and great sadness the recent case of a fellow teacher in the Borders who, while suspended from school and awaiting trial for an alleged assault on a pupil, died by suicide;
- (ii) the ever present risk of allegations from pupils or groups of pupils which could result in suspension from work while under investigation and criminal charges for our members.

Conference recognises that any teacher in Scotland carrying out their everyday duties could be subjected to suspension and possible criminalisation while implementing school, local authority or national policies.

Conference mandates the Scotland Executive Council to:

- consult with members regarding the situation in schools to gather evidence of such cases;
- liaise with local authorities as employers to ascertain the frequency of cases where teachers are suspended from work due to allegations from pupils or have criminal charges raised against them;
- lobby the Scottish Government to produce guidance for employers around ensuring that our members are not put into potentially vulnerable positions in schools by employers;
- highlight these issues with the Scottish Government and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills;
- issue advice to members on the dangers of potentially damaging interactions with pupils which could lead to career-threatening incidents or criminal proceedings and how to avoid such situations in schools.

## **APPENDIX 2: TEACHER TESTIMONY**

### ANONYMOUS EXAMPLE 1

#### INCIDENT

Whilst outside, the teacher felt threatened by the aggressive behaviour of one pupil - witnessed by a member of staff. The incident was reported the next morning. After almost a week gone by and the class due to be taught again, the teacher had received no communication or support. No discussion took place with them as to how it was being handled. The teacher received no feedback either verbally or written and had to chase this up when they were due to teach the pupil the next day.

Having chased and sought information, it was clear that:

- A malicious and vexatious allegation had been made against the teacher by the pupil or their carer;
- The pupil clearly had taken no responsibility for their behaviour or shown any remorse or reflection.
- Despite these circumstances, and without involving the teacher in any way, the employer said they were content the matter was settled so the pupil who demonstrated aggressive behaviour in front of the whole class was simply to be returned to class.
- No concern was shown for the teacher's well-being, school procedures were not followed nor any support offered to the teacher.

Through engaging with their trade union, a request was made on behalf of the teacher that the pupil was not returned to class until a restorative meeting had taken place and the teacher was satisfied that the pupil understood the seriousness of their behaviour and that there would be no repeat. As a result, the teacher was finally invited to meet SMT and their line manager. A conclusion was eventually reached where the pupil recognised their behaviour



and apologised, the frustrating thing for the teacher being that if this had been offered at the start, it would have put the incident to rest.

### TEACHER COMMENT IN THEIR OWN WORDS

The pupil really squared up to me, invaded my space and came very close. The other teacher witnessed this as immediately inappropriate behaviour. Immediately the next morning, I completed a referral. Nearly a week passed and I hadn't heard anything, verbally or written. I then asked informally to my line manager what was happening? I also asked by email to my line manager and depute. I did not get a positive response other than there had a meeting and phone-call with the parent/carer. There was an agreement that the behaviour was extremely poor and confrontational in this situation and should not be repeated. However, there was a counter claim, with a complaint that I had shouted. I had not being kept in the loop about any of this.

With the support of my union I put together a stronger email expressing my disappointment and highlighting there had been no communication in the week and no support. I requested the pupil wasn't in class until we had had a restorative meeting. Within an hour of that email, the senior management team came to see me. Just before class I did get an apology from the pupil, I said 'that is fine and we move on'. It is frustrating because the inappropriate behaviour could have been dealt with next day. It was more involved than it should have been, going through a referral, having to then chase or seek feedback and ultimately needing to send a strong email with union support.

I speak to colleagues and they are going through similar experiences. I don't know if everyone puts in referrals but very much hope so. In conversations in the school there is a consensus that behaviour has deteriorated significantly, particularly over this year. Teachers are seeking out support and teachers across different unions have reached out to talk about what is going on.

My view is there has been a bit of slackness from employers - no doubt pupils since COVID are more unsettled and there are probably a few reasons why.

But, undeniably, the employer response needs to be more secure. We are experiencing behaviour issues from 1st year upwards – previously 1st year pupils would normally be well behaved as they are just in the school, but this isn't the case now. We are still awaiting transitional feedback from the primary schools for next year – we usually get that information in August. But there hasn't been any feedback from primaries that is more stark or problematic than anything previously received.

Communication needs to improve, if staff put an email in or a referral it needs to be acted on quickly. Staff need to get support. We also need high standards - back to basics on standards. We are rewarding positive behaviour – so pupils misbehaving all year end up going on trips away. Staff are then giving up their time for kids who have messed about all year. I really feel we need to get back to basics.

The government needs to be more vocal and the local authority, too. The government said the priority was education, but it has gone backwards.

Teaching and learning takes a dive when spending time dealing with behaviour.

## ANONYMOUS EXAMPLE 2

### INCIDENT

Whilst trying to prevent a fight, a teacher was hit two or three times by an s1 pupil – this pupil was trying to hit another pupil. The incident was clearly witnessed by 3 other teachers.

Two members of SMT attended after the event and notes were taken: the teacher was informed by text that night that the pupil would not be in the next day. The day after the incident, the teacher was informed that the pupil will not be officially excluded and will return to school the following day. The three teachers who witnessed the assault were not interviewed.

The teacher completed the appropriate Violence at Work (VAW) form but remained confused as to the school and local authority policy on assault and was concerned that a high number of VAW forms being completed in their school did not seem to raise any alarm bells centrally.

The teacher then met with SMT who, only when challenged by the teacher, said that they would get the police involved.

Subsequently the pupil in question turned up unexpectedly to the teacher's class. The teacher sent them with class materials to SMT. A member of SMT visited later while the teacher had a class and apologised for the pupil turning up to the class and asked how the teacher wanted to move this forward. Understandably the teacher wasn't in a place to respond in detail as they were still processing what had happened. The teacher said they understood the police were to be involved and that they had welcomed this.

The SMT attendee was not aware of this commitment and queried how the teacher was going to 'provide this child with an education'? The teacher offered to supply materials for the pupil but SMT put the onus on the teacher to scaffold their learning. The teacher felt under pressure and put on the spot

and suggested that a further discussion was needed within the SMT team so they could arrange provision for the pupil.

The teacher was told the school and SMT priority was getting the pupil back in to class, in case they want a career in this subject. No consideration was given to the teacher's wellbeing and they are left still trying to process what had happened. The teacher requested that the investigation be complete and time given to allow them to seek advice from their union.

The situation had a deleterious impact on the teacher, who felt harassed at work following an assault.

Indeed, this was not the first time a referral on SEEMIS for this pupil had been made: the previous referral has not been responded to. The teacher feels they are being gas-lighted with messaging from SMT that the pupil had done nothing wrong since the start of the year, which is untrue.

#### TEACHER COMMENT IN THEIR OWN WORDS

I am happy to share my recent experience as an example of poor practice that teachers are experiencing daily. This is not the only example of violence that I have experienced: during this school year a coin was also thrown at me and I was told that this did not merit an exclusion as the coin didn't hit me.

Let me start by saying the escalation in violence towards teachers in my school is NOT a result of the COVID pandemic. Teachers being abused in my school had already gotten worse before the pandemic.

Things deteriorated when new management decided to get rid of a 'Behaviour Policy'. A 'Positive Relationship Policy' which focused on restorative practice was pushed through. Senior management within my school do not like the words 'sanctions' or 'consequences' and a culture of blaming the teachers has developed. This has had a detrimental impact on staff morale and health, school ethos and pupil's ability to function in society.

Staff in my school are very concerned that we are damaging a generation of young people due to the fact that clear and consistent boundaries are not implemented by the senior management team.

By permitting young people to be verbally and physically abusive to staff and other young people with no sanctions/consequences, we are in fact promoting this behaviour. Such abusive behaviour will continue to push staff to leave the profession early or at the least move from certain schools (referred to in my school as the conveyor belt of staff).

Some have asked why do I not leave MY school? By leaving my school I am not helping solve the problem. The problem IS NOT me or my colleagues (that is a hard thing to remember when you are continually being gaslighted and told that pupil bad behaviour is our fault).

The problem firmly lies in the government/school policies and senior management teams that are not being monitored. I will try to continue to work in the career (not job) where I once felt I was helping shape young people's future for the better. Sadly I do not see a long-term future for me in teaching unless things change quickly. This is echoed by many of my friends/colleagues.

I have questioned why the pupil that physically assaulted me was not officially excluded (even for a day). Where in the sand does my school think the exclusion line lies if not for assault? I worry that the mandate that my Headteacher said had been set from the authority not to exclude is an excuse. I again ask the question "what merits an exclusion?". I am not asking the question purely for me but for the pupils that witnessed their teacher being hit, the 3 other colleagues that witnessed the assault and to support all colleagues in the teaching profession or future young people thinking about entering the profession!