

ANTRIM GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Safeguarding Employees Policy

September 2009

RATIONALE

This policy describes the procedures to be adopted by the school when there is an allegation of violent, abusive or threatening behaviour, made by or against an employee of the school as defined below. This policy is based upon the NEELB "Violence in Schools" document, posted on their website.

THE MANAGEMENT OF VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

What is Violence?

The Education Service Advisory Committee (ESAC) of the Health and Safety Commission (HSC) defines violence as:

"Any incident in which an employee is abused, threatened or assaulted by a student, pupil, or member of the public in circumstances arising out of the course of his/her employment" (ESAC 1990)

The government has made it clear that any form of violence within educational establishments, and in particular when perpetrated against teachers, is entirely unacceptable. Education and Library Boards and CCMS as Employers in the education sector within Northern Ireland, fully endorse this view.

VIOLENCE AND SCHOOL SECURITY

There is a duty of care placed upon the school's Governors and Principal, to provide a safe working and learning environment. This includes securing the school environment against uncontrolled access. The PSNI will be asked to conduct occasional security surveys and the Governors will make an annual security risk assessment, (this will be forwarded to the Board's Health and Safety Adviser, where appropriate).

SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS

There are various systems and arrangements in place, to safeguard employees and pupils. These systems and arrangements are regularly reviewed. They include:

- all exterior Fire Doors should be kept closed at all times (except during emergency use);
- visitors are required to sign in at the Front Office, and wear the identity badge issued by school staff;

- visitors without badges will be challenged;
- CCTV coverage of the school is regularly viewed;
- prefects, supervisors and teaching staff on duty are watchful for intruders, or incidents or events that give rise to concerns;
- pupils and staff on trips and visits are watchful for the safety of pupils and employees.

PERSONAL SAFETY

Personal safety in schools, as with all other aspects of school management, is maximised by examining customs and practices which may in the past have unconsciously, or otherwise, exposed staff to behaviours by either parents, pupils or visitors which have, at the very least, been distressing, or more seriously resulted in them being verbally abused, or even assaulted.

The Department of Education has posted a relevant document on its website "The Security and Personal Safety in Schools", their site address is: www.deni.gov.uk.

Part 2 gives specific advice on Personal Safety.

REPORTING VIOLENT INCIDENTS

Since 1997 violence in the workplace has become a reportable issue under **RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (NI) 1997)**.

The school should satisfy itself that all instances of violence to staff are always reported using the Incident Report Form, a copy of which is attached to this policy. This is also located at Appendix 4 of the security booklet previously referred to. Reports should also be made in respect of those instances of acts of violence which happened some time ago but which may not have been previously recorded, but about which the facts of such incidents are still available.

This form should be completed promptly after the incident and subsequently forwarded to the Board's Health and Safety Adviser, via the school's Principal.

The school should also have written arrangements which are brought to the attention of all staff (*including substitute teaching staff*) which clearly outline what is to be done whenever an instance of violence takes place.

Specific arrangements concerning appointments between teaching staff and pupils' parents/guardians should be developed to ensure that the latter do not arrive at the school unannounced insisting upon meeting with their child's teacher.

Monitoring of all these arrangements should occur on a termly basis to ensure that they are working satisfactorily as part of the **risk assessment** process

surrounding the management of violence or potential violence within the school.

HOW TO ASSESS THE RISK OF VIOLENCE IN SCHOOL?

Some basic principles should also be applied to the management of violence.

These are:

- Identify the circumstances surrounding the potential for violence in school;
- Evaluate the risk of violence actually occurring within each circumstance;
- Prioritise the risks in terms of their perceived relative magnitudes;
- Prepare a plan for eliminating or controlling them, dealing with the most serious first;
- Put the plan into effect;
- Regularly review, and if necessary revise, the assessment to ensure that the adopted plan remains effective.

It is important that any risk control measures which are decided upon are written down and that any procedures which are adopted as a consequence are communicated to staff. This in turn means that everyone is in no doubt as to how the school intends to manage violence, including minimising the potential for it happening in the first place.

HOW ANTRIM GRAMMAR SCHOOL WILL DEAL WITH VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR

The **Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978** requires that Employers protect employees from risks to their health and safety whilst at work.

Employees have a corresponding duty under the same statute not to put themselves or colleagues at risk as a consequence of their own behaviour.

As far as pupils are concerned, schools require from them behaviour and conduct which conforms to the school's Discipline Policy.

This policy and the school's Health and Safety Policy are linked in as much as the policy on discipline should be formally deployed in relation to acts of violence perpetrated by any person upon any employees, in order that the school can demonstrate that it is pro-actively discharging both its common law duty of care in protecting employees and others, as well as ensuring their future safety as required by occupational safety law.

In relation to visitors, including parents, it is the case that such persons are guests of the school and as such do not have any automatic legal right of entry thereto. In circumstances where their behaviour becomes violent, they should be requested to leave the school grounds, with the assistance of the Police if this becomes necessary.

PROMOTING EFFECTIVE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS

In recognising that the education of our children is a partnership between the home and school, the Board of Governors will seek to allow parents/guardians a right of access at all reasonable times to the Principal or a teacher delegated by him. The Principal, as the day to day manager of the school, will promote the educational interests of the pupil and allow for the safety of all children and staff.

As parental attitudes to school and the teacher can directly influence the child it is important that all exchanges between school and home should be informed by a mutual respect for each others knowledge and concern for pupil's welfare. Pupils have much to gain from the shared interest of parents/guardians and teachers. Each has an in-depth knowledge of the child in different settings and contexts and the sharing of this information in a positive way should help the pupil to feel valued and to achieve his/her full potential. It is important that pupils feel secure in the working relationship between home and school.

The means of expressing this working relationship are diverse but parents/guardians will appreciate that some guidelines are necessary as each teacher has responsibility for a large group of children. All exchanges between parents/guardians and staff should be conducted in a respectful and tolerant manner and parents/guardians are asked to adhere to the school's guidelines when seeking contact with their child's teacher.

The Board of Governors endorses the school's arrangements for effective parent teacher communication as set out below.

The contact between parent/guardian and teacher will take the form of:

- a) meetings to discuss the pupil's academic progress
- b) casual or informal exchanges of information made for routine housekeeping purposes e.g. dental appointments, illness, lost property, etc
- c) more sensitive, wider issues involving school policies that are causing concern. In such circumstances an appointment should be made and the issues clarified in advance to enable the parent/guardian and the teacher to make appropriate preparation.

In addition to the regular meetings alluded to in a) – c) above, the Year Tutor, Vice Principal, Principal (or any combination of these) will invite parents in to school to discuss serious disciplinary, academic or pastoral issues at the earliest opportunity, when the need for these arises. It is appreciated that these meetings will sometimes be emotional occasions but their conduct *inter alia* will be professional at all times.

By the same token, parents and guardians are free at all times to telephone the Front Office of the school to speak with the member of staff most relevant,

and arrange to meet them at a mutually convenient time. Unannounced visits to the school can only be accommodated when there is a genuine emergency.

On the advice of the North Eastern Education and Library Board the school has put in place arrangements for addressing the most serious situations where the approach of a parent/guardian might amount to harassment of teachers in the workplace. Thankfully such situations are rare in the school system and we trust they are unlikely ever to occur in the context of this school. The appended standard letters, recommended by the NEELB, will be employed as a last resort – to safeguard the orderly running of the school.

The Board of Governors, Principal and staff would like to thank parents/guardians for their co-operation and support in this matter and look forward to working together to further strengthen the home/school partnership.

FURTHER GUIDANCE

The Education Service Advisory Committee (ESAC) has published a document entitled “**Violence to Staff in the Education Sector**”.

The booklet is available from: HSE Books at PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 2WA. Tel: 01787 881 165, Price £6:95.

The Suzi Lamplugh Trust also has published a book entitled “**Personal Safety for Schools**” available from the Trust at: Training and Resources Dept., PO Box 17818, London SW14 8WW, Price £22:00.

The DfEE (Department for Education and Employment) – now the DfES (Department for Education and Skills), has published a document entitled “**Dealing with Troublemakers**” which provides further practical help in managing violence and reducing its incidence within schools. Depending on availability this may be obtained free of charge from the Department, Tel: 0845 602 2260, website address:- www.dfes.gov.uk.



INCIDENT REPORT FORM

VIOLENT OR AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS SCHOOL STAFF

(Includes physical violence, aggression, verbal abuse, sexual or racial abuse, intentional damage to personal property.)

Victims of violence or aggression should complete this form as fully as possible. Please use a continuation sheet if necessary.

Date of incident Day of week Time

1. Employee – personal details of victim

Name: _____

School address: _____

Position: _____ Dept/Section: _____

Age: _____ Gender: _____

What work was being done when incident occurred?

Classroom PE/Games Caretaking/Cleaning Administration

Other (please give brief details) _____

2. Details of assailant, if known

Name: _____

Address: _____

Age (approx) _____ Male/Female _____

Description: _____

Relationship between victim and assailant, if any _____

3. Witness, if any

Name: _____

Address: _____

Age approx: _____ Male/Female _____

Description: _____

Relationship between victim and assailant, if any _____

4. Details of incident

a. Physical violence Verbal abuse

Specify: _____

b. Were you injured in the incident? Yes No

Did you receive first-aid treatment? Yes No

Did you require professional medical attention? Yes No

Did you require time off work? Yes No

c. Location of incident

Classroom Assembly Canteen

Playground Corridor Sports field

Other _____

5. After the incident, who do you verbally inform

No-one

Principal Head of Department

Colleague Police

6. Other information (to be completed as appropriate)

a. Possible contributory factors: _____

b. Is assailant known to have been involved in any previous incidents?

i. in school Yes No

ii. out of school Yes No

c. Give date and brief details of b. if known _____

d. Have any measures been taken to try and prevent an incident of this type occurring? If so, what? How did they fall short? How could it be improved?

e. Even if no measures had been taken beforehand, what action in your view, may be taken now?

(Notice of intent to revoke a parent's licence)

Appendix A

Dear

Proposed withdrawal of licence to enter school premises

I refer to your recent approach to the school for the purpose of

I regret to note that your approach to this matter has seriously contravened the school's declared policy on promoting an effective working relation between parents and teachers. In the circumstances I am now writing to give you notice of the intention to revoke your licence to enter school premises.

It should be noted that you should not come onto the school premises without an appointment and that you should refrain from any behaviour which is considered by the staff of the school to be inappropriate.

Should you fail to comply with the above I will be liaising with the North Eastern Education and Library Board with the intention of seeking an injunction to restrain you from coming onto the school premises.

You have the right to comment on the school's intention to revoke your licence. Any response to this letter must be in writing and received by the school before *(date)*.

Yours sincerely

Mr S W Black
Principal

(Confirmation of the revoking of a parent's licence)

Appendix B

Dear

Withdrawal of licence to enter school premises

My letter of *(date)* refers

The above matter has now been considered in *the light of your reply which was received on (date)*
the absence of any further representations from yourself.

I am to inform you that your licence to enter the school grounds or buildings has been withdrawn with immediate effect.

Until further notice any future visits to the school should only be by prior appointment and under the conditions detailed in my previous letter. Communications with the school regarding the welfare of your child/children may henceforth be conducted in writing, through a mutually acceptable intermediary, by telephone or email. The school telephone number is 028 9446 4091, email address is info@antrimgrammar.antrim.ni.sch.uk

Abuse of these arrangements or any unauthorised approach giving rise to concern by any member of the school staff will be reported to the Police.

The situation will be reviewed only in the light of formal consultation and assurances of future good behaviour upon your part.

Yours sincerely

Mr S W Black
Principal

(Maintenance of normal parental access to school premises)

Appendix C

Dear

Proposed withdrawal of licence to enter school premises

My letter of *(date)* refers

The above matter has now been reviewed in light of your reply. Having considered your assurances of future good behaviour while on school premises it has been agreed that the interests of your child/children would be best served by the maintenance of normal access arrangements to the appropriate school staff.

In welcoming your positive assurances it should be noted that the school will continue to keep this situation under review.

Yours sincerely

Mr S W Black
Principal

(Restoration of licence to enter school premises)

Appendix D

Dear

Licence to enter school premises

I refer to previous correspondence concerning the above matter.

The situation has now been reviewed in the light of the assurances of future good behaviour given by or on behalf of yourself. It has been agreed in the interests of your child/children to restore normal access arrangements to the appropriate school staff.

In welcoming your positive assurances it should be noted that the school will continue to keep this situation under review.

Yours sincerely

Mr S W Black
Principal