

Tackling Violence

against Staff in Schools

*Guidance on the handling,
recording and reporting of violent
incidents against staff in schools*



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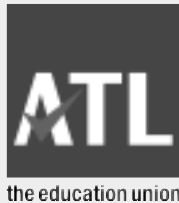
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Important Note

This document has been developed by the five recognised teaching unions, ATL, INTO, NAHT, NASUWT, and UTU. The purpose of the document is to give advice and guidance to Principals and teachers on how to deal with a violent situation in their school, or how to assist the victims of violence. The guidance has been developed using the extensive professional experience of the five teaching unions and their accredited representatives in dealing with the issue of violence and abuse of the teaching workforce. It does however not purport or should be construed as formal legal guidance on the matter of violence in schools. Principals are therefore strongly advised to speak to their Board of Governors and / or Employing Authority before acting on the advice contained in this document.

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Section 1 - the Nature of the Problem

1. Aim of Policy

This document has been prepared by the recognised Teaching Unions. The aim of the document is to give support and advice to individual teachers or Principals who are the victims of violence or abuse, or who must respond to the issue of abuse of school staff or who are required to act against the perpetrators of such abuse.

The document aims to give advice on matters such as what constitutes abuse, how it should be dealt with and recorded, and what measures a school may engage in to ensure that such abuse is lessened or eradicated.

2. Statement of Intent

The recognised teaching unions acknowledge that no person should have to work in fear of assault, threat or abuse and that an incidence of violence should not be seen as a reflection of an employee's ability.

Boards of Governors are required to faithfully discharge their statutory obligations to provide a safe working environment and safe working practices for all their staff and, particularly in this context, those whose work may have an identifiable level of risk of threatening or violent behaviour by others.

Boards of Governors must also discharge their responsibilities to provide a working environment in the schools which minimise the risk of violence occurring and to ensure that methods of work are safe.

As a consequence the\those school\ must take a serious view of any incident of violence against their employees. As an employer the Board of Governors must support any employee who is assaulted or

threatened in the course of their duties. It is the responsibility of Principals to ensure that their staff are adequately trained and competent to fulfil their duties in a manner which will strive to minimise risk and not escalate or promote the likelihood of violence occurring.

3. Responsibilities

The Employing Authority is responsible for:

- a. Advising Boards of Governors on matters of health, safety and welfare;
- b. Ensuring that Boards of Governors are aware of, and comply with, their legal obligations with regard to violence and the reporting of violent incidents;
- c. Gathering statistics on an annual basis from all schools and make them readily accessible
- d. Advising Governors on matters relating to exclusion of individuals from schools;
- e. Advising Governors on independent welfare facilities for staff;
- f. Providing training.

School Boards of Governors are responsible for:

Boards of Governors are required, on an annual basis, to report to Employing Authority on the number and nature of incidents in the school.

- a. Ensuring that all staff are aware of the benefits of reporting all incidents and encouraging them to do so.
- b. Ensuring that all staff understand the methods and timing of reporting arrangements.
- c. Ensuring staff have time to report incidents and to co-operate with investigations.

- d. Ensuring that staff are made aware of the content of this guidance.
- e. Providing systems of welfare and training support to staff who experience violence at work, especially repeat victims and those identified as particularly vulnerable.
- f. Using the data derived from risk assessments to identify vulnerable persons
- g. Introducing effective procedures or such measures to protect staff from violence in the school
- h. Monitoring the impact and evaluating the effectiveness of such measures
- i. Providing information and feedback to staff on the outcomes of risk assessments
- j. Consulting with trade union health and safety representatives.

Principals are responsible for:

- a. Ensuring that guidance on reporting is adhered to
- b. Ensuring staff have time to report incidents and to co-operate with investigations
- c. Ensuring that all staff are aware of the benefits of reporting all incidents and encouraging them to do so.

Where the Principal is the subject of, or involved in, the violent or abusive incident, the Chair of the Board of Governors (or delegated Governor) shall substitute for and undertake the role of the Principal in this procedure.

Individual staff members are responsible for:

- a. Ensuring they do not put themselves or their colleagues at risk of violence.
- b. Reporting all incidents when they occur, using the agreed method.
- c. Providing sufficient detail to support the data capture requirements.
- d. Attending and co-operating with employer training programmes.
- e. Co-operating with any subsequent investigation following an incident.

Union and safety representatives can assist in:

- a. Encouraging staff to report incidents in the manner required.
- b. Supporting victims of violence in liaison with management
- c. Working with management and staff to monitor and assess risk and identify effective countermeasures

Parents / carers and visitors must ensure that:

- a. They are courteous to all members of staff:
- b. Their behaviour is consistent with the school's policies and procedures:
- c. They do not act in a matter which would place a member of staff or themselves in danger or at risk.

Links with other procedures

Where the abuse of a member of staff is such as to constitute an act of bullying and / or harassment, the Board of Governors are also directed to the relevant procedure Promoting A Dignified Workplace, A Policy Statement And Code Of Practice On Measures To Combat Bullying And Harassment Of Teaching Staff In School, TNC 2005 / 2 and the relevant provisions of the agreed disciplinary procedures.

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Section 2 - The Nature of Abuse

1. Introduction

Teaching and support staff may face aggressive or violent behaviour. This guidance gives practical advice to help Principals and teachers to decide if violence is a problem for their staff and, if it is, how to tackle it.

- a. Guidance is provided on:
 - a. Identifying the potential risk areas for violence
 - b. Controls to reduce the risk of incidents
 - c. The reporting, recording and investigation of incidents
 - d. Support for staff who are victims of violence

2. Definition of Work Related Violence

The Health and Safety Executive of Northern Ireland's definition of work related violence is **'any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work.'**

Abuse covers many areas including:

- Physical attack by a person or an animal belonging to a person
- Threatening behaviour or abusive language directly or via another medium such as phone, text, e-mail, digital images
- Rude gestures, innuendo
- All forms of harassment or bullying
- Damage to staff property, e.g. car, home or personal effects

3. Assault

Assault is the use of unnecessary force that results, or was intended to result, in physical contact with the victim. The degree of force used is immaterial (eg touching, spitting, pushing or striking) and physical contact can be by any part of the assailant's body or bodily fluid or by the use or display

of any weapon or missile or if a weapon is produced but not used, or a missile is thrown but fails to make contact, this still constitutes an assault. It is not necessary for the victim to suffer injury of any kind or for the force used to actually make contact with the victim. Assaults of a sexual nature are included.

4. Threat

Threat is any verbal statement or physical act that does not amount to the actual use of force but causes the victim to fear that some kind of force may be used against them.

5. Abuse

Any verbal statement or physical act that is considered by the victim to be offensive, abusive or insulting but is not accompanied by the actual use or threat of force. This category relates to shouting, physical gestures or verbal abuse of any kind.

6. Why Boards of Governors should be concerned

Violence can lead to:

- stress related absences;
- poor morale;
- impaired performance;
- a poor image for the school/college, making it difficult to recruit and retain staff;
- extra cost and increased absenteeism;
- pain and distress.

7. Can schools 'exclude' parents from school premises?

Schools are by their nature private property, which means that persons who enter the school without permission or without lawful authority to be there may be treated as

trespassers. Parents do have an expectation that they should be allowed to enter school premises, for example to bring or fetch their children to and from school. However, parents — as with all visitors — should conduct themselves properly (ie not cause a nuisance or disturbance, or act in way that may give rise to civil actions or criminal prosecution).

If a parent does not conduct themselves properly the school may write to them to tell them that they are no longer allowed to enter the premises from a designated boundary, unless the school gives them permission to do so. Schools should give the parent pre-notification and time to respond. See annexes 5 – 8 for letter templates.

If the parent continues to enter the premises and causes nuisance or disturbance, then they may be liable in either a civil action or to prosecution.

8. The offence of nuisance or disturbance

Any person who is present without lawful authority on the premises (including car parks, school thoroughfares, playgrounds, playing fields and other premises for outdoor recreation) of any school and causes or permits a nuisance or disturbance to the annoyance of the persons who lawfully use those premises (whether or not any such persons are present at the time) is guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a fine. A civil action may be pursued.

9. Power to remove persons suspected to be committing or having committed an offence

The PSNI should be called in such cases.

¹ The Court of Appeal in England found that the decision taken by the head teacher to exclude the parent ('A') was flawed in the public law sense because the head teacher had not given the parent an opportunity to put forward their side of the case before the head teacher made the decision to exclude.

The Court of Appeal in England considered that it would have been sufficient in this case if the head teacher had, before excluding the parent, written to ask for their comments and given a short time to reply. If the head teacher had then not accepted the parent's reason, then absent of any other flaw in the decision making process, the decision could not be challenged. There was no evidence to show that a warning of exclusion prior to exclusion had been given. The Court considered that such a warning would have been enough to discharge the head teacher's duty in this case.

10. Discouraging trespass

Advice and guidance on this can be found in Security and Personal Safety in Schools, available on the Department of Education's website http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/13-healthsafety/79-healthandsafety-securityandpersonalsafety_pg.htm

11. Excluding parents from school premises

Where a Principal is seeking to exclude a parent from school premises, the parent should be afforded the opportunity to provide a written reason why they should not be excluded before a decision is made by the Principal. Principals should be aware that a denial of parental access without proper consideration by the Board of Governors and advice from the relevant Employing Authority may be the subject of a legal challenge. The Court of Appeal in England has clarified the right of parental access in a verdict: concerning Wandsworth Borough Council v parent 'A', in 1999.¹

12. Cyberbullying

With the increase in digital imaging technology, portable communication devices and broadband access to the internet it has become possible to exact violence or threat thereof on teachers using such technologies. This is termed cyberbullying. For further advice, see annexes 2 and 12.

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Section 3 - Assessing the Risk

1. Risk Assessment

To deal with violence issues, Boards of Governors should ensure that a competent individual is trained to carry out a violence specific risk assessment and then implement controls to remove or reduce the risk of exposure to reasonably foreseeable violence. The following paragraphs may assist in carrying out the assessment. The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work advises that a competent person can be "*an employee who has an understanding of the general approach to risk assessment, the capacity to apply this to the workplace and the ability to identify situations where they would be unable to adequately assess the risk without help and be able to advise on the need for further assistance*". The person should be able to:

Identify health and safety problems;

- Assess and prioritise the need for action;
- Suggest options available to eliminate or reduce risks and their relative merit;
- Evaluate their effectiveness;
- Promote and communicate safety and health improvements and good practices.

A checklist to facilitate the risk assessment process is available in the Security and Personal Safety in Schools document at <http://www.deni.gov.uk/security-2.pdf>

2. Who is at Risk?

Some activities carried out in schools can give rise to a reasonably foreseeable risk of violence to staff. Examples of these are set out below:

Work Activity	Staff
Working with and supervising pupils or young people with challenging behaviours	Teachers
Dealing with angry/difficult members of the public	Principal / Vice Principal / SMT members / teachers
Lone working	Principal / vice Principal / SENCO / Teacher
Evening working	Principals / Vice Principals / Teachers
Cash handling	Principals /Vice Principals / Teachers

The above table is by no means exhaustive, but illustrates the areas managers need to look at to consider risks in their particular work environment.

3. How to Assess

- a. Boards of Governors may think that violence is not a problem at the school or that incidents are rare. However, the views of staff may be quite different. It is therefore important that Boards of Governors (pro-actively) ask staff if they ever feel threatened. It is also important that staff are provided with feedback so they realise that their employer recognises the problem or indeed potential for the problem to arise
- b. It is therefore essential that an assessment of the school premises or area of responsibility is undertaken to ascertain where potential problem areas may lie. The table above will assist in identifying some of the risk activities and members of staff who may be vulnerable.
- c. Discussion with Teacher Union Safety Representatives may be of use, as will reviewing data contained in incident reports.
- d. The assessment process may highlight a number of areas of concern. The following paragraphs give details of suggested practical control measures.
- e. It is however very important not to raise groundless concern over the problem of violence or to lead staff to believe that major alterations to working areas or practices should be made.

4. Control Measures

- a. To be effective, control measures should be based on a suitable assessment of the risk. Measures will need to be specific to a particular location.
- b. Staff are likely to be more committed to the measures if they help design and agree them and put them into practice. A mix of measures often works best. Concentrating on just one aspect of the problem may make things worse in another.

- c. Areas to consider include:

- Physical aspects of the premises;
- Work practices and patterns (perceived and actual risks and hazards);
- Staff training and information.

5. Physical Aspects

Schools should consider carefully the design of the building and how it could be improved to reduce the likelihood of incidents of violence. Some suggestions are:

Reception Area

The following factors should be considered:

- Easily identifiable reception areas or entrances which allow staff to receive visitors, direct them to their destinations, answer queries etc. go a long way towards reducing the number of people gaining unauthorised access or becoming frustrated or angry due to confusion etc. You should consider the following factors:
- The location of reception areas should be close to the main entrance;
- They should be clear and unambiguous and adequate signage should be used to direct visitors;
- They should be well lit and contain appropriate furniture. Reading materials may be required if visitors have to wait to be seen;
- They should not isolate reception staff from assistance or alternate exit if required;
- If the risk of violence is perceived to be high, consideration should be given to fitting alarm systems and/or protective screens. There are some indications, however, that obvious alarm systems/protective screens can encourage violence. An alternative to screens may be to fit wider counters providing a safe distance to prevent an

attack without giving security a high profile. Concealed panic buttons may also be a suitable alternative to more obvious alarm systems.

Interview/Meeting Rooms

- Simple steps to minimise risk include altering the layout so that staff are seated between the client and the door to maintain an escape route if required. Interview rooms should not be totally isolated and vision panels should be fitted in the doors unless good reasons exist for not fitting these.

6. Security

Being able to identify people and to secure the premises as much as possible can be achieved by considering the following:

- Use of identity cards or visitor passes etc;
- Minimising the number of entrances to the premises;
- Installation of fencing at strategic places;
- Ensuring landscaping does not act as a screen for potential intruders.

The **Security Checklist** provided at Annexe 9 should be used to consider these points.

Further information and advice is available in the document Security and Personal Safety in Schools
<http://www.deni.gov.uk/security-2.pdf>

Work Practices and Patterns

- Boards of Governors must ensure that safe working practices are created and followed. The risk assessment may have identified particular jobs or activities that have potential for violence.

Home Visits and Lone Working

- An area of higher risk is where visits are undertaken away from the workplace, e.g. home visits or out of school

activities. Principals should ensure that staff record places to be visited, people to be met and the estimated timescale.

- The mechanism for keeping such records will vary depending on the normal pattern of work and general operational considerations. Principals should, therefore, determine the most appropriate means of contacting / ensuring that the whereabouts etc. of their staff is known given the nature of the work involved.
- If lone working is involved, a risk assessment must be carried out and a local lone working procedure created setting out the control measures for the group of staff concerned.

Separating Fighting Pupils or Young People

- Many of the violent incidents that do occur involving staff in schools premises stem from attempts to separate fighting pupils or young people.
- It is not reasonable to set a blanket policy on this matter as clearly there will be times when such action will be necessary. However, there will also be occasions when the risk to the personal safety of the member of staff will be perceived by them as being too great.
- It is important, therefore, that local procedures emphasise that staff are not required to perform such a function unless they consider their own safety in advance. Where a decision is made not to intervene but to seek assistance, Principals and Boards of Governors should support such decisions.
- Schools should produce a clear disciplinary/behaviour code for pupils and young people which makes it clear that violence towards and abuse of any member of staff or the wider community will not be tolerated.

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Section 4 - Training and Provision of Information

Details of Provisions are at Annex 12

1. Training

- a. Training will assist staff to spot the early signs of aggression and either avoid it or cope with it. Training should ensure staff fully understand any systems or procedures that have been set up for their protection.
- b. Local procedures for dealing with violence should be written into the school health and safety policy so that all staff are aware of it. This will help staff to co-operate, follow procedures properly and report incidents.
- c. It is recommended that schools should avail of relevant training at the earliest opportunity
- d. Training should be offered to any staff who have suffered an abusive incident (see also Section 6)

2. Provision of Information

- a. Staff should be provided with relevant information they might need to identify persons with a history of aggression or violence towards teachers. This information would assist the teacher in responding to this individual when discussing the educational needs of a child.
- b. Information that may be of use may include a past history of violence towards teaching staff, and how best to approach the person. Where necessary, relevant information should be shared between teaching staff and schools.
- c. This is crucial in order to identify the scale of the problem and to devise and monitor preventive strategies. Surveys of staff by teaching unions have demonstrated that there is significant under-reporting of violence at work.

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Section 5 - Recording and Reporting

1. Introduction

- a. All violent incidents involving staff (and governors/volunteers) must be reported to the Principal and an **Incident Report Form** completed. See annex 11.
 - b. Some staff may be reluctant to report incidents of aggressive behaviour which make them feel threatened or worried. They should not feel that accepting abuse is part of the job.
 - c. The reluctance of staff to report violent incidents may arise from:
 - A lack of confidence in the system – nothing will be done;
 - Not considered as being serious – “part of the job”;
 - The potential impact on their career;
 - An insufficient management encouragement;
 - Feelings of guilt, incompetence or failure;
 - A lack of awareness of the reporting systems;
 - Insufficient time allowed.
 - d. Staff should be encouraged to report incidents **promptly** and **fully** using the incident report form at annex 11
 - e. Schools will need a record of **all** incidents to enable the creation of a complete picture of the problem. Do not use the Incident Report Form to record acts of violence between pupils/young people.
- forwarded to the Chair of Governors and the Employing Authority
- b. The incident investigation should establish:
 - What happened and why?
 - Could it have been prevented?
 - Is there a likelihood of a recurrence in similar situations?
 - Is a change in working arrangements necessary?
 - Is any formal change in your violence risk assessment necessary?
 - Feedback on the outcomes of the investigation to the employee(s) involved is essential.
 - c. Serious violent incidents must be fully investigated, and contact made with statutory agencies such as HSENI and the PSNI. Furthermore, support and advice must be offered and provided to the staff involved. Staff should also be advised and encouraged to avail of independent welfare arrangements.
 - d. If a known person is responsible for intimidating behaviour etc. it may be appropriate for the school to send a formal warning letter (see annex 5) to the individual and consider informing the Police. If someone is persistently displaying violent or aggressive behaviour towards one or more members of staff, staff should consult with the Principal / Chair of Governors to review the access and / or service provided to that person. As a last resort withdrawal of access and /or service may be contemplated but such a decision would be made after consulting with the Employing Authority.

2. Investigation

- a. The Principal or other nominated person should investigate all incidents of violence against staff and record the results on the Incident Report Form. All completed incident reports should be

3. The Role of the Police

- a. If there is a severe disturbance, assault or threat of violence, the Police should normally be called. Following other incidents management should decide whether to involve the Police and, if appropriate, consultation should take place with the staff involved in making this decision.
- b. If the Police are involved, it may be decided by the Public Prosecution Service to prosecute an assailant. If, however, the Public Prosecution Service decides not to prosecute, the employee has the option of pursuing the matter by taking civil action against the assailant.
- c. The Employing Authorities' legal advisors and / or insurers may be able to advise or act on behalf of a member of staff taking private legal action depending on the circumstances. Trade Union members may also be able to obtain advice/help from their Union in this respect.

4. The Role of the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI)

- a. HSENI (The Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland) is an executive Non-Departmental Public Body sponsored by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI). HSENI is the lead body responsible for the promotion and enforcement of health and safety at work standards in Northern Ireland.
- b. HSENI provides a range of general health and safety information as well as sectoral specific information for differing areas of the economy. Education is serviced by a specific inspector who is located at HSENI Headquarters in Ladas Drive, Belfast.²

5. Reporting Certain Types of Work Related Accidents

- a. Certain types of work-related accidents must be reported. Fatal and major accidents must be reported immediately (e.g. by telephone), and a completed accident report form (NI2508) should be sent to the relevant enforcing authority (**HSENI**) within ten days for all reportable accidents. If something happens which does not result in a reportable injury, but which clearly could have done, then it may be a dangerous occurrence which must be reported immediately (e.g. by telephone) and also followed with a completed NI2508. This form is available from HSENI at <http://www.hseni.gov.uk/>. Copies of correspondence should also be forwarded to the Board of Governors and the employing authority. Individuals should also retain a copy of such correspondence for their own records.

6. RIDDOR (NI) '97

- a. This means the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1997, which came into operation on 1 April 1998.
- b. RIDDOR (NI) '97 requires the reporting of work-related accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences. It applies to all work activities, but not to all incidents.
- c. Reporting accidents and ill health at work is a legal requirement. The information enables the enforcing authorities to identify where and how risks arise and to investigate serious accidents. They can then help and advise you on preventive action to reduce injury, ill health and accidental loss.

² HSENI – Freephone 0800 0320 121, HSENI Headquarters, 83 Ladas Drive, Belfast, BT6 9FR

7. When to Report Death or major injury

a. If there is an accident connected with work and: an employee, or a self employed person working on your premises is killed or suffers a major injury (including as a result of physical violence); or a member of the public is killed or taken to hospital; you must notify the enforcing authority (HSENI) without delay (eg telephone).

b. Over-three-day injury

If there is an accident connected with work (including an act of physical violence) and your employee, or a self-employed person working on your premises, suffers an over-three-day injury **you must send a completed accident report form to the enforcing authority within ten days.**

An “over-the-three-day” injury is one which is not major but results in the injured person being away from work or unable to do their normal work for more than three days (including non work days).

c. Dangerous occurrence

If something happens which does not result in a reportable injury, but which clearly could have done, then it may be a dangerous occurrence which must be reported immediately (ie by telephone) to HSENI.

Within ten days you must follow this up with a completed accident report form (NI2508 to HSENI).

d. Keeping records

A school must keep a record of any reportable injury, disease or dangerous occurrence. This must include the date and method of reporting; the date, time and place of the event, personal details of those involved and a brief description of the nature of the event or disease. The school can keep the record in any form, for example by keeping copies of completed report forms in a file or recording the details on a computer under RIDDOR (NI) 1997, these records must be kept for a period of 3 years. Records other than financially related ones are normally retained for 5 years then reviewed when there is an option to retain for a further 5 years or destroy.

The model retention and disposal records schedule for schools is shortly to be revised and will involve input from employers and the Department. Retention periods for categories of information held by schools in respect of child protection for example, and other sensitive types of information will be looked at and agreement reached on appropriate retention periods.

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Section 6 - Support for Staff (See also annex 1)

1. Introduction

- a. If an employee is injured in, or otherwise suffers physically or mentally as a result of, a violent incident in the course of their work, the Employing Authority should provide support as summarised below.
- b. If the employee is physically or mentally injured or in shock, assistance should be given with arranging medical / counselling treatment. Support must be given to the employee, however, over and above medical attention. There should be no presumption of fault by the employee because violence has occurred. Senior management should talk through the incident as soon as possible and ascertain the level of support required.
- c. Staff should be advised of the options open to them and in some circumstances it may be appropriate to refer the individual to their trade union for legal advice.
- d. Any member of staff who has suffered an abusive incident should be offered appropriate training.

2. Counselling

- a. Counselling should always be offered.
- b. The victim concerned may wish to make their own counselling arrangements either through their trade union or independently. If this is the case the employee should be supported and leave allowed accordingly.
- c. If independent counselling is arranged, the Employing Authority will meet reasonable costs for up to five

counselling sessions. This may be extended when necessary.

- d. Staff may wish to avail of the 24 hour confidential telephone helpline provided through Staffcare

3. Sources of Compensation for Staff who Suffer Violence/Attacks against Property

- a. Individuals who are injured or suffer damage to their property through no fault of their own and because of their work should not be financially disadvantaged.
- b. In such circumstances, where injuries are sustained which result in absence from work, the absence will be considered as arising out of work and will not, therefore, count against the normal sick pay entitlement. If full and half pay allowances become exhausted, sympathetic consideration may be given to extending these depending on the circumstances of each case.
- c. Teachers Terms and Conditions of Service prescribe various payments to compensate for permanent disablement or death.
- d. If the injuries are the result of an assault it may also be able to claim compensation from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority, <http://www.compensationni.gov.uk/>

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Section 7 - Monitoring and Review

1. Principals should ensure that all incidents are reported in accordance with guidance, that reports are made available on at least an annual basis to the Board of Governors and a copy sent to the Employing Authority. Board of Governors are required on an annual basis to report to the Employing Authority on the number and nature of incidents in the school.

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ANNEX 1

WHAT DOES THE TEACHER DO IF THEY ARE HARASSED BY A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC?

1. If a teacher feels able to tell the member of the public that their behaviour is unacceptable and unwelcome, without inflaming the situation, they may do so. This course of action is **only** advisable where they are sure this is the right response. If the teacher is unsure, the best course of action is to exit from the situation. Teachers are advised to contact their trade union as early as possible after any incident or altercation.
2. It may feel natural for a teacher to try to defend themselves actively in such situations, but this course of action may make the situation worse, rather than better. The teacher should try to remain calm and clear-headed while they remain with the member of the public. They must remember that losing their temper (however much they are provoked) will lessen their defence against the harassment and reduce the chance of withdrawing the service, where this is possible.
3. Teachers should make a record of the details of the incident, along with any others of which they are aware involving the same aggressor, using the incident report form at annex 11.
4. After the incident the teacher must report the matter to the Principal. No action can be taken until the matter is reported and if incidents go unreported, they are more likely to be repeated.
5. The Principal must discuss the situation with the teacher and agree on a course of action. This will usually mean

informing the member of the public that their behaviour, in harassing a teacher, was unacceptable and trying to re-build the relationship

6. Reaching a solution in meetings with the member of the public may be very difficult. In some situations, it may be advisable to use a trained mediator or representative of the Employing Authority.
7. Schools can withdraw consent for parents/pupils coming onto the school site provided that they have caused a nuisance and disturbance. This power is obtained under the Education Act 1996. Principals / Chairs of Governors should contact the Employing Authorities' legal services and / or insurers services for advice in these circumstances.

Where a parent harasses a teacher:

8. Where a parent has harassed a teacher further action should normally take the form of a letter from the Board of Governors to the aggressor. The letter should underline the fact that it is not acceptable behaviour to harass a member of staff and that if the parent wishes to discuss the matter further an arrangement for this can be made. The subsequent meeting should take place in the presence of the Principal and a governor.
9. Where there are repeated cases of harassment by the same aggressor, the Principal should immediately undertake a risk assessment using guidance above.
10. A teacher should discuss the situation with their Principal and will be advised of the course of action that the Principal

and / or Board of Governors will take following the incident.

11. The situation should continue to be monitored and recorded.
12. If the teacher wishes to talk to the member of public, in the presence of a third party, about the behaviour the Principal should make arrangements with the teacher to facilitate this.

Exclusion

1. Where a discussion between the parent / carer, teacher and Principal does not end the harassment, the Principal should write to the parent / carer to warn them that their behaviour is unacceptable and that exclusion of the parent / carer will be considered.
2. At all points under "Refusal of Service" it is necessary to consider the context in which the harassment is taking place. For example, a parent may have a condition that leads to inappropriate behaviour, or may be under stress or in despair. Consideration should be given to the effect of withdrawal of service, based on the individual circumstances of the child.
3. A decision to exclude should only be made by the Chairperson of the Board of governors in conjunction with the Employing Authority and after taking legal advice. Such action should be documented.

Where Exclusion is Not an Option

4. There may be situations where withdrawal of service is not an option, for example, where there is a court order to provide service regarding child protection and "looked after" children. In such situations, it is the responsibility of the Principal to put safe alternative arrangements into place, based on risk assessment. In these circumstances, the Employing Authority should be contacted.

Tackling Violence against staff in Schools

Cyber Bullying ANNEX 2

No type of bullying is harmless. In some cases, it can constitute criminal behaviour. In extreme incidents, cyberbullying has led to suicide. Many victims of cyberbullying suffer shame, embarrassment, anger, depression and withdrawal. Cyberbullying is often seen as anonymous and the nature of the Internet allows it to be spread to hundreds and thousands of people. As such, exercising control over this problem can be extremely difficult, for example persuading ISP providers to remove threatening material etc.

Cyberbullying is a fast growing trend. Nearly all individuals can be contacted 24/7 via the Internet or mobile phone. Victims can be reached anytime and anyplace. For many individuals, home is no longer a refuge from the bullies. Individuals can escape threats and abuse in the classroom, only to find text message and emails, or comments on social networking or teacher specific websites from the same tormentors when they arrive home.

- Where the cyberbullying is enacted by a member of teaching staff they may be subject to the provisions of Promoting A Dignified Workplace, A Policy Statement And Code Of Practice On Measures To Combat Bullying And Harassment Of Teaching Staff In School, **TNC 2005 / 2** and the relevant provisions of the agreed disciplinary procedure for teachers. (Circular **TNC 2007/5**, with further guidance in **TNC 2008/4**). Where the perpetrator is a pupil they may be subject to the provisions of the school's disciplinary procedure.

I'm being bullied online, how can I make it stop?

Cyber bullying is a form of emotional abuse. It may appear initially that there is no way to make the cyberbullying stop. However there are steps an individual and an organisation can take to prevent it happening and to deal with it when it occurs.

Individuals may wish to:

- Talk to someone.
- Advise the Principal and /or Chair of Governors. If the perpetrator is a **pupil** or associated with the school the Governors may be able to act in accordance with the disciplinary procedure or exclude the individual from the school.
- Not respond to any abusive messages
- Keep a copy of the abusive emails, texts or messages web-pages, abusive comments on teacher rating sites etc that they receive and note when they were sent to you.
- Not give out any personal details on the internet such as their real name, address, age or phone number. Telling someone the school you work in can help them find out information about you.
- Change your passwords regularly.
- Block email addresses and/ or complain to host website / ISP.

What can I do if someone is bullying me through my mobile?

- Mobile phone companies are able to trace the identity of anyone who is sending nasty or abusive text messages. If you are the recipient of such messages on your mobile, advise your Principal or Chair of Governors. If the perpetrator is a pupil or associated with school the Governors may be able to act in

accordance with the disciplinary procedure or exclude the individual from the school.

- If the abuse does not stop inform the police.

All UK mobile companies are used to dealing with nuisance calls and have staff who will enable you to deal with this.

Generally

- Do not reply to any abusive messages you receive.
- Keep the abusive messages that you have been sent and advise your Principal of these.
- Don't answer any calls that are from a withheld number.
- Change your mobile number and only give your new number out to close friends.
- If the problem is serious, contact the Police and / or your Employing Authority or trade union.
- Mobile phone operators are unable to block a particular number from contacting another phone, but individuals may be able to do so with their individual phone. Check your phone user guide. Mobile phone operators can only take action about the bully's account, such as blocking it, if the police are involved.

Tackling Violence against staff in Schools

Schools' Duties and Powers in relation to bullying ANNEX 3

Bullying and the law

Civil and criminal law: Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence in UK law, there is legislation that may apply in terms of harassing or threatening behaviour.

These include:

- Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978 (as amended)
- Equality legislation including:
- Equal Pay Act (NI) 1970 (as amended)
- Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Orders 1976 (as amended)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended)
- Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 (as amended)
- Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (as amended)
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 (as amended)
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Protection from Harassment (NI) Order 1997

In addition, some cyberbullying activities could be considered as criminal offences under a range of different legislations, including the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986.

Tackling Violence against staff in Schools

Suggested Procedure for Excluding a Third Party from the School Premises Following a Serious and/or Violent Incident

ANNEX 4

Where the victim of the violent incident is the Principal the matter should be dealt with by the Chair of Governors. Meetings with the alleged perpetrator should in this instance be handled by two members of the governors and a representative of the Employing Authority.

Where the victim is a teacher:

- The Principal should ensure that the immediate safety and welfare of staff is protected before proceeding further.
- The Principal should ascertain whether or not the staff member wishes to involve the police.
- The Principal should allow the staff member the flexibility to consult with their trade union
- The Principal should speak to the victim(s) of the alleged incident aim to establish the sequence of events that occurred and the name(s) of any witness (es) etc who may assist in the investigation of the matter.
- The Principal should obtain from the member(s) of staff a written account of the incident within 24 hours of the matter occurring, using the incident report form at annex 11.
- Following receipt of an incident report the Principal should arrange to meet with the Chair of Governors within 24 to 48 hours of the incident occurring.
- The Chair of Governors should write to the individual and invite them to a meeting to discuss the incident and their behaviour. The individual should be informed that until the meeting has occurred and the matter discussed they are not permitted to enter the school premises.
- The aim of the meeting should be to address the matters leading up to and arising from the incident and to stress to the individual that their behaviour is not acceptable and may create an unacceptable risk for the school if it is repeated. The meeting should then seek to get an assurance from the individual that there will not be a further repeat of the behaviour which caused concern.
- A written record of the meeting should be created and a copy provided to the individual.
- Following the meeting the report should be considered by the Board of Governors within 5 days.
- The individual should, within 5 days of the Governors meeting, receive a written response from the Board of Governors including one of the following options:
 - The Governors are satisfied that the incident was a "one off" and will not be repeated.
 - The individual's right to enter the school is reinstated.
 - The Governors are not satisfied that the individual will modify their behaviour sufficiently to give the necessary guarantees that a re-offence will not occur. The right to enter the school remains suspended but will be reviewed in 6 months.

- The Governors remain concerned that no guarantees have been given that there will not be a further reoccurrence of the behaviour. The right to enter school premises remains revoked.

Templates for such letters are provided at Annexs 5-8

A copy of this letter should be provided to the staff member involved and a copy forwarded to the Employing Authority. The Principal should also retain a copy of the letter within the school.

A representative of the Employing Authority should receive copies of all correspondence and be present at all meetings. Legal representation is not permitted at such meetings.

Tackling Violence against staff in Schools

Letter following an Incident ANNEX 5

Dear

The Principal has advised me of an incident that occurred on in which your conduct towards a member of staff raised serious concerns. As a result of this I am writing to invite you to a meeting with the Principal and myself to discuss this incident and to seek assurances of your future conduct while on school premises.

The meeting has been scheduled for am/pm at in A representative of the Employing Authority will be present at this meeting.

I must also advise you that until this meeting has taken place and the Governors have considered a report of the meeting, you are not permitted to enter the school premises, except in a medical emergency. You should in the interim therefore make alternative arrangements in relation to collection of your child from school and the reporting of matters pertaining to your child's education.

I would ask that you advise the Principal of the alternative arrangements that will apply.

Yours

Chair of Governors

Cc Principal
Employing Authority

Tackling Violence against staff in Schools

Letter following a Meeting ANNEX 6

Dear

I write following our meeting in relation to your conduct while on school premises. The Board of Governors has now considered a report of that meeting. Its decision is set out below:

a. We welcome the fact that you have now given a written assurances that there will not be a repeat of the inappropriate conduct that occurred on As a result of this the Governors have now reinstated your permission to enter the school. A copy of the record of this meeting will be held on file until your child has left this school.

OR

b We are disappointed that you were unwilling to give the Principal and Chair of Governors the necessary guarantees that your future conduct will improve. As a result of this the Governors, after discussing the matter with the Employing Authority, have decided that you permission to enter the school remains suspended until The current arrangements for collection of your child and reporting on educational matters remain in force. Should you attempt to enter the school premises unless invited by or on behalf of the Governors while permission is suspended or revoked, the Governors may refer the matter to our legal representatives and the PSNI.

Should you wish to appeal this decision, please set out your reasons in writing to the Chair of the Board of Governors and I will arrange for a further committee of Governors to consider the matter.

OR

c We are disappointed that you were unwilling to give the Principal and Chair of Governors the necessary guarantees that your future conduct will improve. As a result of this the Governors, after discussing the matter with the Employing Authority, have decided that you are not to be permitted to enter the school. The current arrangements for collection of your child and reporting on educational matters will remain in force. Should you attempt to enter the school premises unless invited by or on behalf of the Governors while permission is suspended or revoked, the Governors may refer the matter to our legal representatives and the PSNI. Should you wish to appeal this decision, please set out your reasons in writing to the Chair of the Board of Governors and I will arrange for a further committee of Governors to consider the matter.

Yours

Chair of Governors

Cc Employing Authority
cc Principal

Tackling Violence against staff in Schools

Letter following receipt of notice of appeal ANNEX 7

Dear

Thank you for your letter of..... advising that you wish to appeal the decision of the Governors in relation to the incident which occurred on.....

I am writing to invite you to a meeting to discuss this appeal.

The meeting has been scheduled forat in
..... A representative of the Employing Authority will be present at this meeting.

I must also advise you that until this meeting has taken place and the Governors have considered a report of the meeting, you are not permitted to enter the school premises, except in a medical emergency. You should in the interim therefore continue with alternative arrangements in relation to collection of your child from school and the reporting of matters pertaining to your child's education.

Yours

Chair of Governors

Cc Principal
Employing Authority

Tackling Violence against staff in Schools

Letter following appeal Meeting ANNEX 8

Dear

I write following our meeting to consider your appeal against the decision of the Governors in relation to the incident which occurred on.....The Board of Governors has now considered a report of that meeting. Its decision and the reasons for it is set out below:

XX

XX

XX

Yours

Chair of Governors

Cc Principal
Employing Authority

Tackling Violence against staff in Schools

Security Checklist ANNEX 9

Security Checklist

Perimeter

- Are the perimeter/ barriers secure?
- Gates – vehicle and pedestrian?
- Fencing?
- Hedging?
- Shared boundaries?
- Is the site overseen by neighbours?

Grounds

- Are outbuildings secure?
- Is refuse secured away from buildings?
- Are other combustibles accessible?
- Is rubbish and other debris cleared up regularly?
- Any climbing aids unsecured, such as ladders, benches, tables, goalposts?
- Are there areas of the site, or features on it, that encourage unwanted trespassers and intruders?

Shell of the building

- Are there places where someone could hide around the outside?
- Are doors and windows secure and locked against the outside?
- Do you know who has keys to the premises?
- Are flat roofs accessible?
- Is there sufficient security lighting?
- Does it deter an intruder or help them see what they are doing?
- In the daytime, are visitor controls adequate?
- Good direction signs? Welcoming but secure front entrance?
- Other entry points kept to a minimum?
- Badging and signing-in system?
- Visitors escorted when on site?

Contents

- Are valuables protected against theft?
- Are they all security marked in an obvious and permanent way?
- Is there an alarm system covering the valuables?
- Does the alarm signal go offsite and does anyone respond?
- Are there secure storage areas?
- Is cash protected?
- Is there an inventory of property?
- Are valuables kept away from windows?
- Can valuables be physically removed easily from the premises?
- Can valuables be seen from outside?
- Do areas of high value need extra physical protection, such as window bars and strong doors for IT rooms?
- At night, are all internal doors closed?
- Are they locked if in alarmed areas?

Other

- Are regular backups taken of important computer information?
- Are backups taken off site at night?
- Are there copies of any vital paper documents that you need to run the establishment?
- Is confidential information kept safe?

PSNI Crime Prevention

Call 0845 600 8000 to contact your local Crime Prevention Officer

Good site management includes a regular review of the security risks of the site. Specialist advice is available, but often a self-review is all that is needed to identify areas where measures need to be taken. Good practice for Principal to involve staff in site security risk assessment through recognised trade unions. The checklist below can be used to help you. The basic crime prevention principle behind it is to view the location as a series of layers, peeling back each level of security that surround the valuable target. Start at the outside and work your way in. If a risk cannot be dealt with at one layer, go down to the next to work out if protection there will solve the problem.

Tackling Violence against staff in Schools

Zero Tolerance Policy ANNEX 10

Policy to be displayed in a prominent place in the school's reception area and sent out with general information going to parents of new pupils.

Zero Tolerance Policy

[School Name]

The Board of Governors considers aggressive behaviour to be any personal, abusive or threatening comments, bad language, physical contact and aggressive gestures.

In keeping with our duty of care to our staff, we the Board of Governors have agreed that, effective from the date of this policy, we will proactively protect the health, safety, and welfare of our staff.

This means that any perceived or actual abuse, whether verbal or physical, of any member of staff is unacceptable, and any individual behaving in this manner will be removed immediately from the school premises and not permitted to return until the Board of Governors have considered the matter. In some cases the police will be informed

Signed

Chair of Governors

DATE

Tackling Violence against staff in Schools

Incident Report Form ANNEX 11

VIOLENT INCIDENT REPORT FORM

The Health and Safety Executive of Northern Ireland's definition of work related violence is **'any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work.'**

To be completed by both teacher and principal within 24 hours.

Employee details are to remain strictly confidential.

Time _____ Day _____ Date _____

Employee _____ Job Title _____

Principal _____

Address of School _____

Was the assault: Verbal Physical Other (please specify)

Details of perpetrator: (if details known)

Name _____

Address _____

Other details _____

Any previous incidents with this perpetrator? Yes No Any witnesses? Yes No

If "Yes" give date and brief details _____

Name(s) of any staff involved previously _____

If perpetrator unknown: physical description incl. age, sex, race, height, clothing, etc.

Give an account of the incident and the circumstances leading to it (use extra sheets if necessary)

Please give any details of witnesses to the incident

Police involved? Yes No

Police response _____

Signed _____ (Principal) _____ Date _____

Signed _____ (Teacher) _____ Date _____

Copy to be given to Teacher

Further information.

You may wish to refer to the following sources of further information:

www.deni.gov.uk/useofreasonableforce2004-2.pdf

Circular 1995/09 Suspension and Expulsion Regulations PDF 8.75 KB

www.neelb.org.uk/teachers/cass/ddgp-elearning/emotional-intelligence/

http://www.rtuni.com/bbcc/page.php?page_id=22

<http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/cyberbullying-staff.pdf>

<http://www.digizen.org/cyberbullying/fullguidance/>

http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/_doc/9232/SchoolSecurity.doc

http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/_doc/1607/safe_school_leaflet.pdf

<http://www.suzylamplugh.org/index.asp>

<http://www.hseni.gov.uk/>

<http://www.compensationni.gov.uk/>

Staffcare telephone number: 0500 127 079

Your employing authority and your trade union are also sources of advice and support.