Violence Towards Staff Policy

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and government guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)
- **DfE (2026) 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (KCSIE)** *(Updated to reflect latest statutory guidance regarding safeguarding and staff welfare)*.
- **DfE (2024) 'Behaviour in Schools'** *(Updated guidance on managing pupil behaviour and staff safety)*.
- **Online Safety Act 2023** *(New statutory framework for managing harmful online content)*.
- DfE (2018) 'Controlling access to school premises'
- DfE (2019) 'School and college security'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- CCTV Policy
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy.

Definition of Violence

The school follows the HSE definition of work-related violence: 'Any incident, in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work.'. This encompasses:

- Physical attacks and violence towards property.
- Verbal abuse or threats.
- Online/Cyber abuse, including harassment and defamation via social media.
- Unwanted, unplanned events with the potential to cause harm/injury.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Board will:

- Ensure the school is a safe environment for staff and pupils.
- Maintain a programme of risk assessments in consultation with the Principal.
- Oversee the effectiveness of training, particularly regarding de-escalation and reasonable force.

The Principal will:

- Undertake a work-related violence risk assessment, in liaison with the SLT, and review this annually.
- Communicate the contents of any work-related violence risk assessments to all staff.

- Ensure separate risk assessments are undertaken where there is a known risk of violence or aggression towards staff, e.g. a pupil with severe behavioural issues.
- Monitor incidences of violence and abuse and initiate appropriate action if further measures are needed.
- Ensure that all staff have read and understood this policy.

The SLT will:

- Treat any reports of work-related violence, threats or abuse seriously and respond to them promptly.
- Record details of any incidents and provide support to any affected members of staff and pupils.
- Establish an environment where staff members are encouraged to support each other and look out for each other.

All members of staff will:

- Undertake all duties in line with our school values.
- Follow our code of conduct as outlined in the home-school agreement.
- Follow the procedures for preventing incidents, dealing with incidents, and recording and reporting incidents.
- Report every instance of probable violence and/or aggression, and any hazards, risks or problems, to the Principal or a member of the SLT.
- Undertake any relevant training as directed by the Principal.
- Assess the risk to themselves in each situation and do their utmost to ensure their own safety.
- Understand that they should not accept or ignore any instances of work-related violence directed towards themselves or others.
- Work with the police and any other relevant agencies where needed, e.g. due to an investigation.

Preventing work-related violence

The security arrangements in the School CCTV Policy will be implemented and followed. The school uses CCTV, in line with the CCTV Policy, to monitor and survey the premises. The system will be used to focus on a potentially violent individual and identify perpetrators, with police involvement sought where appropriate.

Where a pupil is suspected of carrying a prohibited item or an item banned under the school's Behaviour Policy, a search will be considered by an authorised member of staff in line with the Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy.

Where there is a risk of violence and aggression, or challenging behaviour, the school will conduct a dynamic risk assessment to identify hazards and implement mitigating measures. All staff likely to be exposed to a pupil known to be at risk of being violent will be made aware of potential trigger situations and prevention measures.

Staff will be strongly encouraged to raise any incidents of violence or abuse, including threats, they experience (in person, verbally or electronically) or witness with their line manager or the Principal.
All staff will receive awareness training on work-related violence and parental violence and aggression, and be informed of relevant school's policies and procedures at induction.

Responding to incidents

Where a member of staff is being abused, threatened or attacked (by a pupil or adult), they will approach or alert a colleague for support and consider de-escalation strategies. Where available, a member of the SLT will respond and attempt to de-escalate the situation.
School security and/or the emergency services will be contacted where necessary. Medical assistance will be provided immediately where required.
Staff will use reasonable force where necessary to restrain a pupil being violent towards a member of staff. Pupils will be sanctioned afterwards in line with the Behaviour Policy, with a suspension or exclusion considered if appropriate.
Where the behaviour of a member of staff contributed to or escalated the incident, the incident will be investigated and responded to. CCTV recordings of an incident will be retained where they may be required for a police investigation.
The following support will be provided for a member of staff subjected to work-related violence:

- Debriefing – A discussion will take place with the staff member's line manager or the Principal as soon as possible to understand their experience and how they may be affected
- Time off work – Where necessary, the member of staff will be provided time to recover from the experience. An assessment will be made to see if specialist counselling may be required.
- Legal help – In serious cases, legal assistance will be considered.
- Guidance and training – Additional guidance and/or training will be considered for the staff member to help them feel more confident in responding to a further work-related violence incident.

Any pupils who were also affected by an incidence of violence, including as witnesses, will be spoken to by an appropriate member of staff to identify where support may be required to help them deal with their experience.

Record keeping and reporting incidents

All staff will be made aware of the importance of reporting all incidences of work-related violence, including threats and verbal abuse, to their line manager or the Principal. Information recorded will include:

- When and where the incident occurred.
- An account of what took place.
- Details of the victim(s), the assailant(s) and any witnesses.
- An assessment of the severity of the incident and its outcome.
- Any relevant circumstances that may have contributed to the incident.

See Appendix 1 for the Incident Reporting Form.
Following an incident of violence towards staff, the Principal will review, in liaison with the SLT, any relevant school procedures to consider if lessons can be learnt to reduce the likelihood of future incidents and understand where increased vigilance may be appropriate.
In line with RIDDOR, the HSE will be notified in the event of an act of physical violence resulting in the death, specified injury, or incapacity for normal work for seven or more days of a member of staff.

Abusive Visitors

The Local Governing Body of Samuel Whitbread Academy encourages close links with families and the community. It believes that pupils benefit when the relationship between home and school is a positive one. The vast majority of parents, carers and others visiting our school are keen to work with us and are supportive of the school. However, on the rare occasions when a negative attitude towards the school is

expressed, this can result in aggression, verbal and/or physical abuse towards members of school staff or the wider school community.
The Governing Body expects and requires its members of staff to behave professionally in these difficult situations and attempt to defuse the situation where possible, seeking the involvement as appropriate of other colleagues. 5 However, all members of staff have the right to work without fear of violence and abuse, and the right, in an extreme case, of appropriate self-defence.
We expect parents and other visitors to behave in a reasonable way towards members of school staff. This policy outlines the steps that will be taken where behaviour is unacceptable.
At all times the common purpose remains clear: to achieve a zero-tolerance approach to violence, threatening behaviour or abuse in schools, and to ensure all members of the school community, and all visitors to the school, can be confident that they are operating within a safe environment.
Types of behaviour that are considered serious and unacceptable and will not be tolerated:

- Shouting at members of the school staff, either in person or over the telephone
- Physically intimidating a member of staff, e.g. standing very close to her/him
- The use of aggressive hand gestures
- Shaking or holding a fist or finger towards another person
- Threatening behaviour, e.g. swearing, spitting, pushing
- Hitting, e.g. slapping, punching and kicking an individual or the school premises
- Racist, homophobic or sexist comments
- Breaching the school's security procedures
- Aggressive and threatening phone calls, including threats to turn up on site, call Ofsted, local press or use social media
- Aggressive and threatening emails, including the use of bold font, underlining, excessive punctuation and/or capital letters
- Aggressive or threatening behaviour towards staff or their families via social media

This is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour. Unacceptable behaviour may result in the local authority and the police being informed of the incident.

Barring individuals from the premises

Where an individual's aggressive, abusive or insulting behaviour or language poses a risk to staff or pupils, or makes them feel threatened, the school will consider barring the individual from the premises.
The school takes a zero-tolerance approach to violence towards its staff and will always take the decision to bar an individual where this is necessary to assure the safety of its staff and pupils.
The school may take the following steps to ensure its staff feel safe:
1. Reduce the communications an individual can have with the school by identifying a single member of staff with whom communications can take place.
2. Bar electronic and/or telephone communications with the school resulting in in-person meetings, with 2 members of staff, only.
Should the school need to bar an individual we will inform the individual that they've been barred, or of the school's intent to bar them, in writing – the letter will be signed by the Principal. The individual will be allowed to present their side. The school will determine, considering the specific circumstances of the case and the risk posed, whether it is appropriate to bar the individual temporarily, until they have had the opportunity to formally present their side, or if they will first invite them to present their side by a set deadline.
See Appendix 2 for the Parental behaviour letter template.
After the individual's side has been heard, or if no response is received, the school will decide whether to continue with barring them. The decision will be reviewed within a reasonable time to be determined by the governing board considering the specific circumstances of the case.

If an individual who is barred from the premises ignores the ban and causes a nuisance or disturbance, the school will contact the police to have them removed.

Abuse/bullying using cyber technology

Staff in schools may become targets of cyber abuse/bullying and, like other forms of bullying, it can have a significant impact on their health, well-being and self-confidence. Protecting staff from abuse is best done within a prevention framework, including whole school policies and appropriate practices.
Cyber abuse/bullying may consist of threats, harassment, embarrassment, humiliation, defamation or impersonation. It may take the form of general insults, or prejudice-based abuse, e.g. homophobic, sexist, racist or other forms of discrimination. It may involve email, virtual learning environments, chat rooms, websites, social networking sites, mobile and fixed-point phones, digital cameras, games and virtual world sites.
Abuse using cyber technology can occur at any time and incidents can intrude into the victim's private life. The audience for such messages can be very large and can be reached rapidly. The content of electronically forwarded messages is hard to control and the worry of content resurfacing can make it difficult for the victim to move on.
We operate a zero-tolerance approach towards direct or indirect harassment or assault against any member of staff, volunteers and governors. This includes the use of social media and other forms of electronic communications to facilitate the act.

Generative AI & Digitally Manipulated Abuse:
KCSIE 2026 explicitly incorporates AI-generated content (e.g., deepfakes, digitally manipulated imagery, and harmful interactions via AI chatbots) under online conduct and harassment risks.
Harassment, defamation, or image-based abuse using generative AI and digital manipulation is strictly prohibited.

Cyberbullying and the law
While there is not a specific criminal offence called cyberbullying, activities can be criminal offences under a range of different laws, including:

- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003
- Public Order Act 1986
- The Defamation Acts 1952 and 1996

It is the duty of every employer to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees. Incidents that are related to employment, even those taking place outside the hours or place of work may fall under the responsibility of the employer.

Responding to incidents

- Staff should never retaliate i.e. personally engage with cyberbullying incidents.
- Keep any records of abuse – texts, emails, voice mails, or instant messages. Take screen prints of messages or web pages. Record the time, date and address of the site.
- Inform the appropriate person e.g. head of year or member of SLT at the earliest opportunity.
- Where the perpetrator is known to be a current pupil or co-worker, this should be dealt with through the school's own behaviour management / disciplinary procedures.
- Monitoring and confiscation must be appropriate and proportionate – parents/carers, employees and learners should be made aware in advance of any monitoring (for example, of email or internet use) or the circumstances under which confiscation might take place.
- A designated member of the leadership team should contact the police where it appears that a law has been broken – for example, where death threats, assault, or racially motivated criminal

offences are involved. Where a potential criminal offence has been identified, the school should ensure that any internal investigation does not interfere with police inquiries. School staff are of course able to report incidents directly to the police.

- If a potential criminal offence has been committed and the school is not able to identify the perpetrator, the police may issue a Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) request to a service provider, enabling them to disclose the data about a message or the person sending it.

Getting offensive content taken down

1. Documenting Online Abuse

- **Capture Immediate Evidence:** Do not reply to or immediately delete abusive content. Take clear screenshots showing the full post, message, or profile, alongside the date, time, and account handle/username.
- **Record Direct URLs:** Copy and save the exact URL (web address) linking directly to the post, image, channel, or user profile. Direct URLs are mandatory for platform removal requests.
- **Maintain an Incident Log:** Keep a detailed, time-stamped log recording when the abuse occurred, who witnessed or received it, and any initial actions taken.

2. Filing Takedown Requests with Platforms

- **Use In-App Reporting Tools:** Submit a report directly to the host platform (e.g. Meta, TikTok, X, YouTube) using their built-in reporting mechanisms for harassment, hate speech, impersonation, or privacy violations.
- **Log Case Reference Numbers:** Save all confirmation emails, ticket numbers, and automated responses provided by the platform.
- **Allow Response Time:** Give the platform up to 48 hours to act on the initial report before escalating to external helplines.

3. Escalating via Report Harmful Content (RHC)

- **Service Overview:** Operated by SWGfL / UK Safer Internet Centre, RHC provides independent mediation for removing legal-but-harmful content (e.g., threats, impersonation, bullying, or harassment) if a social media platform fails to act.
- **Submitting a Request:** If content remains online after 48 hours, submit an escalation report via reportharmfulcontent.com.
- **Submission Requirements:** Provide RHC with the direct content URLs, screenshots, and evidence of your initial attempt to report the issue to the platform.

4. Escalating via the Professionals Online Safety Helpline (POSH)

- **Service Overview:** POSH is a UK helpline dedicated specifically to the children's workforce, providing confidential advice and direct platform escalation for school staff experiencing online harassment, defamation, or fake accounts.
- **Direct Industry Escalation:** POSH maintains direct contact channels with major tech platforms to expedite the removal of content that targets school personnel or damages professional reputations.
- **Contacting POSH:**
    - **Email:** helpline@saferinternet.org.uk
    - **Telephone:** 0344 381 4772 (Monday to Friday, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM)
    - **Required Details:** Supply POSH with the content URLs, platform case/ticket numbers, screenshot evidence, and a brief summary of the impact on staff or school operations.

Summary of Updates based on National Guidance (Post-March 2024)

- **KCSIE 2026 Integration:** Enhanced focus on the link between staff safety and pupil safeguarding.
- **Online Safety Act 2023:** Strengthened language regarding the school's role in addressing harmful online content and protecting staff from digital harassment.
- **Behaviour in Schools (May 2024):** Reaffirmed the right of staff to work in a safe environment and the use of "reasonable force" as a last resort to maintain safety.
- **Serious Violence Duty:** While not explicitly named in the 2024 policy draft, the "Dynamic Risk Assessment" section now implicitly covers the school's duty to collaborate with local authorities on serious violence prevention.

Appendix 1

Incident Reporting Form

Relevant incidents include trespass, nuisance or disturbance on school premises, verbal abuse, sexual or racial abuse, threats, aggression, physical violence and intentional damage to property. Where possible, the form should be completed before any discussion between witnesses is possible, as this might lead to allegations of collusion. This form should be completed as fully as possible, using a continuation sheet, if necessary. For any incident involving or witnessed by a pupil or parent/carer/visitor, a member of staff should complete the form on their behalf. The completed form should be passed to the Principal, for appropriate action and recording.

Date of incident	
Time of incident	
Name of person reporting incident	
Date incident reported	
Member of staff recording incident	
Date incident recorded	
Name(s) of person(s) causing incident (where name(s) is/are unknown, provide other details of which may allow their identification)	
Status(es) (parents/carers/visitors/trespassers)	
Full description of incident (e.g. names of persons involved; location; nature of any injuries; attendance of emergency services)	
Witnesses to the incident:	

Appendix 2

Parental behaviour letter template

Address line one
Address line two
Town
County
Postcode
Date

Dear **name of parent**,

RE: Parental behaviour whilst on school premises

I am writing to you with regard to your actions toward a member of staff on **date** at **time**. The incident involved you **e.g.: using abusive language towards name of teacher**.

We appreciate that your first intention may not have been to be disrespectful; however, the school takes issues of disrespect from parents/carers seriously and a repeat offence may lead to you being banned from the school premises.

I must emphasise that, if this behaviour is repeated, you will be prevented from entering the school premises in the future. Please refer to our Violence Towards Staff policy which is available on our website.

We are confident this is a one-off incident and will not happen again; however, if your behaviour escalates to the point where staff or pupils feel threatened, or they are placed in danger due to your actions, then we will escort you off the premises immediately. If you resist, we will call the police to assist us in escorting you off the premises.

If you are no longer permitted to enter the school, we will send you information on your next steps with regards to parental engagement, e.g. receiving feedback on your child's attainment.

I hope this issue can be resolved quickly. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me via my PA at PA@bestacademies.org.uk or via telephone, on 01462 629900.

Yours sincerely,

Nick Martin

Principal

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Principal and governing board, or sooner if deemed necessary, e.g. following concerns about the effectiveness of the school's procedures or a rise in work-related violence incidences.

Staff members and any relevant stakeholders will be notified of any changes made to this policy or to the school's wider procedures intended to keep staff safe.

Author and Date

Mr Andrew O'Rourke, Assistant Principal
Reviewed AOR – July 2026
Date ratified by Governors – July 2026
Next review date – July 2027