Trinity CE Primary School

Who is my neighbour?

ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY

Violent, Abusive or Threatening Behaviour towards Trinity staff

Signed	Date	Review Date
Iliffe Kenyon, Chair of Governors	November 2026	November 2028
Charlotte Whittle, Headteacher	November 2026	November 2028

1. PURPOSE

Trinity CE Primary school employees, and anyone undertaking work for the school, have the right to work in a safe environment.

This policy outlines the school's policy and procedures to prevent, manage and respond to work-related violence from members of the public. This approach gives a clear message to the public that any violent, abusive or threatening behaviour towards any school employee is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

A separate policy applies to bullying, harassment and discrimination (including violence) that occurs from employees. See Anti-Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination policy.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to everyone working for the school. For the purposes of this document the term 'employee' should be used to refer to all school employees or anyone undertaking work for the school.

It is recognised that some employees may be at increased risk of unacceptable behaviour during their normal work. The school will therefore undertake to reduce to the lowest level reasonably practical, the risk to health and safety of its employees where they are verbally or physically abused, threatened or attacked. This may be by a client, pupil, family member, person we support or member of the public in circumstances relating to their work related to the school.

All employees are obliged to take reasonable care of themselves and others who may be affected by their actions, and to co-operate with the school on matters relating to their health, safety and welfare at work.

All managers are required to implement this policy.

3. THE LAW AND DEFINITIONS OF VIOLENT, ABUSIVE OR THREATENING BEHAVIOUR

Health and safety law applies to risks from violence, just as it does to other risks from work. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines work-related violence as: '*Any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work. This can include verbal abuse or threats as well as physical attacks*'

4. BEHAVIOURS THAT COULD BE REGARDED AS VIOLENT, ABUSIVE OR THREATENING BEHAVIOUR

Violence and aggression at work is defined as any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work.

Physical abuse is defined as the intentional application of force from one person to another, without lawful justification, resulting in physical injury, personal discomfort or damage to property.

Verbal abuse is defined as the use of inappropriate words (including, but not exclusively, verbal/written/social media) or behaviour causing alarm, distress and/or constituting harassment.

Persistent unacceptable behaviour is defined as referring to behaviour both within one contact and/or a number of separate contacts over an undefined period (this includes email, telephone contact).

5. MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Risk Assessment

Managers are responsible for carrying out risk assessments and identifying employees who are at a higher risk of violence in the course of their work. Those most at risk are likely to be:

- Employees who are dealing with service users or members of the public e.g. reception staff, school staff and others who interact with members of the public.
- Employees who are working with service users and families who display challenging behaviours or present a known increased risk e.g. social workers, teaching staff etc.
- Lone workers - e.g. visiting service users, working out of hours, travelling to and from work sites, working in the countryside, working alone in a building.
- Employees who are deemed at higher risk due to ethnicity, age, gender etc.
- In some circumstances it may be necessary to conduct a specific risk assessment for a particular visit or person that someone may be meeting due to previous incidents.
- Emergency responders e.g. Fire Service
- Employees who handle/collect money or valuables;
- Employees carrying out enforcement e.g. Environmental Health, Trading Standards

Once managers have identified those at risk of unacceptable behaviour, the following steps should be taken prior to the event:

- Evaluate the risks with the employee, considering how likely the risk is to occur and how severe the outcome might be, and then decide what precautions could be taken.
- Where it is a specific risk assessment for an individual or a meeting the Manager should evaluate the significant risks with the persons concerned.
- Record the significant findings and communicate and implement them.
- Regularly review the measures put in place as a result of the risk assessment to ensure they are adequate and update as necessary.
- Ensure the employee has a copy of the risk assessment

When evaluating the risk, check existing arrangements and whether the precautions already in place are adequate. Factors which managers can influence include:

5.2 Provide training

Train employees to spot the early signs of aggression and have the skills and confidence to de-escalate the situation and build resilience when working in these circumstances. Make sure they fully understand any system that is in place for their protection.

For OCC, courses that can be found on the Learning Portal are:

- **Dealing with Challenging Situations**
  To enable employees to develop the skills they need to stay safe when they come into direct contact with customers and service-users and face challenging behaviour and enable them to improve communication and support their colleagues and managers in the aftermath of an incident.

- **Personal safety**
  This module is about raising awareness of personal safety, including travelling to work.

- **Lone working**
  Lone working comes with its own set of challenges and professionals working in health and social care should guard against undue risk.

5.3 Provide Information

- Employees are provided with any information they might need to identify individuals with a history of violence, verbally abusive/abusive behaviour or to anticipate factors/triggers which might make violence more likely.

- Employees to be provided with a safe system of work for lone working as a matter of course and advised to make use of it for their own health and safety. Employees are provided with adequate instruction on how to follow any lone worker procedure including any technology or system.

5.4 The Environment

- Physical security measures include security locks on doors to keep the public out of staff areas. The security of reception area includes a higher desk and the use of a screen.

  The location and layout of any meeting rooms e.g.

  - the room located off a secure area whereby visitors cannot gain entry to employee areas
  - the employee can exit the room quickly
  - there minimal furniture objects to be used as weapons or for vandalism

For employees who are going out into the Community or meeting service users in their own homes, ensure they are provided with personal safety information and follow health and safety procedures for Lone Working and Home Visiting. Where there is a known increased risk i.e. someone known to be aggressive/history of violence or undertaking a work activity that may lead to an adverse response, then arrange for employees to be accompanied by a colleague and have check-in system with a line manager/buddy.

Employees have greater understanding and commitment to the measures as they help to design them and put them into practice. An attempt to balance the needs of the employees with those of the general public (families) and pupils.

Further guidance about the risk assessment process can be found on the Schools H&S A-Z. There is also additional guidance on assessing risks for lone workers.

6. REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS OF VIOLENT, ABUSIVE OR THREATENING BEHAVIOUR

6.1 Reporting Incidents

Employees must report immediately any incident to their line manager or another senior manager, however minor.

All incidents should also be recorded on the Health and Safety Reporting System under category type 'Physical and Verbal Abuse'.

In some cases, incidents may constitute a criminal offence and should be referred to the police. https://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/report-a-crime

6.2 Investigate

The Manager must investigate the incident and inform the employee of the outcome of the investigation. It is only from identifying the root causes of each incident that preventative measures can be determined.

The Schools' Health and Safety Team will monitor all reports made on the online Health and Safety Reporting System and may follow up any that are serious or require intervention. Report data can be made available to managers on request and overall trends are reported to Leadership Teams.

6.3 Taking Action

All incidents should be examined, and remedial action taken where appropriate. There are no ready-made solutions, by reviewing the risk assessment to identify whether further mitigations can be put in place.

Where the abuse is caused by a service user or member of the public other than when there is a statutory requirement, the school can put additional safety measures in place or in serious cases withdraw access to the school premises.

6.4 Statutory services including social care

Where there is a statutory requirement to provide a service, a thorough investigation and a risk assessment must be reviewed following an incident. Managers and employees/professional should be involved in the review to ensure the continued safety of all concerned.

Where appropriate, risks should be recorded on LAS/LCS but this will need to be considered on a case by case basis. Refer to LAS/LCS system guides and procedures.

6.5 Legal proceedings

In some circumstances the council may consider initiating criminal proceedings or taking some other appropriate action depending on factors such as the age and mental capacity of the assailant. In cases where legal proceedings may be involved the person assaulted should be referred to Legal Services. (The person assaulted has the right to refuse counselling or legal services if they so wish). Where employees have been subjected to unacceptable behaviour in the course of their work, the Council will give support but will not subsidise or conduct an employee's own legal proceedings.

6.6 Insurance

The Council maintains personal injury and employer liability insurance cover for the benefit of employees who are assaulted in the course of their duties. To obtain further advice or to make a claim contact: insurance@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

6.7 Support for employees

In all cases it is important to take reports seriously and to respond quickly to avoid any long-term distress to employees. It is essential to plan how you are going to provide them with support before any incidents occur.

Support may also include a referral to the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) for counselling or post incident support and debriefing:

Some schools subscribe to Vita Wellbeing, Tel: 0800 111 6387
Or visit Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) (my-eap.com)
You'll need to enter your organisation code, **vitawellbeing**

Victim Support is an independent national charity which helps people to cope with the effects of crime. They provide free and confidential support and information to help you to deal with your experience, visit www.victimsupport.org.uk

Employees who are a member of a trade union may wish to contact their representative for support.

6.8 External links

- HSE - Violence at Work: A guide for employers
- HSE Violence in Health and Social Care
- www.victimsupport.org.uk

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPACT MEASURE

This policy has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment in accordance with the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion framework and is not considered to unduly impact upon any protected group. The Council will regularly monitor and review the impact of this procedure.