

Abuse, threats and violence towards staff

College Policy

Committee	Premises, Health & Safety
Approved by Governors	September 2011
Review Date	September 2012

General Statement

Westbourne Sports College believes that any act of violence, threatening behaviour or abuse against College staff is totally unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Whenever any such behaviour occurs, the college will take reasonable and appropriate action in conjunction with Suffolk County Council and the Police.

Introduction

All College staff have a right to work in a safe place and any abuse, threats or violence towards staff on college premises by parents or any other members of the community will be met by prompt and appropriate action.

Abusive and aggressive language, the most common form of unreasonable behaviour, will lead to a warning that such behaviour will not be tolerated and further similar behaviour will lead to the withdrawal of permission to be on College premises and a letter will be sent as notification of this decision (see attached template letters). Subsequent incidents of nuisance or disturbance will be referred to the Local Authority's Head of Legal Services who will write a warning letter. **Further breaches may lead to prosecution by either the Police or the County Council.**

When a person recklessly or intentionally applies unlawful force on another or puts another in fear of immediate attack this constitutes an assault.

To ensure parents and visitors are aware of this policy, the following information is displayed prominently in the reception area:

- We welcome visitors to our college
- We aim to make sure that it is a safe place for students, staff and all other members of the college community
- Please remember that if you are angry with someone, it is not the person who is at this window trying to help you.
- If you feel you are angry about something, please ask to see a senior member of staff.
- If visitors threaten or assault anyone in the college, or persist in abusive behaviour, they will be asked to leave.

Abusive, Threatening and Violent Behaviour

There are three categories of assault based on the severity of the injury to the victim:

- Common Assault – involves the threat of immediate violence or causing minor injury (such as a graze, minor bruise or the reddening of the skin)
- Actual Bodily Harm – causing an injury which interferes with the health or comfort of the victim (such as multiple bruising, broken tooth or temporary sensory loss)
- Grievous Bodily Harm – causing serious injury (such as a broken bone or an injury requiring lengthy treatment)

There is also a racially aggravated form of assault which carries higher maximum penalties.

All incidents of assault on staff by pupils/parents or members of the community must be reported in writing to the Headteacher who will in discussion with the member of staff report it to the police for action if deemed necessary.

Incidents of abuse, threatening behaviour and common assault on staff **by a pupil** will be dealt with by the Headteacher in accordance with the relevant College policies.

Staff should be aware that no physical attack or injury needs to have occurred for a common assault to have taken place. It is sufficient for a person to have been threatened with immediate violence and put in fear of a physical attack for an offence to have been committed.

The Police expect to be involved where there is clear evidence of an injury (whether physical or emotional) and will take account of previous behaviour of the offender and the likelihood of a repetition if action is not taken.

Staff training

Training in personal safety and conflict management can play a key part in assisting college staff:

- to improve their confidence and skills in dealing with aggression and with the resulting stress
- to defuse potentially difficult and dangerous situations
- to avoid, reduce and prevent violent attacks
- to minimise the risk of personal injury

The college utilises the SchoolSafe Programme for staff, which aims to provide quality training, by accredited trainers, which emphasises personal safety.

Measures to prevent and minimise incidents

Staff are advised of the following measures, which can help to prevent such incidents occurring, and to minimise their effect if they do occur:

- Do not meet with parents/members of the community alone if you are concerned for your safety (e.g. a threat to come to college following a heated telephone conversation). Report your suspicions to your Subject Leader, Head of Year or a member of the Senior Leadership Team so that an appropriate response can be made.
- Seek assistance
- If a parent or member of the community behaves in an aggressive manner in Reception, a member of the Senior Leadership Team **must** be contacted.
- In the event of an incident remember your SchoolSafe training – speak calmly and without raising your voice, be assertive but not aggressive, be polite but firm, seek assistance, think about an escape route should the need arise, walk away if needed, do not become involved in a heated exchange of views, etc

Procedures to be followed in response to an incident

If such an incident does occur, all college staff are advised:

- Always report the incident no-matter how minor to the Headteacher or, in his absence, a Deputy Head.
- As the victim, your feelings, needs, views and wishes will be taken into consideration. The College will attempt to provide the necessary support, counselling and practical help both at the time and subsequently.
- Support is available from a number of sources including:
 - The College
 - Your Trade Union
 - Suffolk County Council's Employee Assistance Programme
 - "Teacher Line" (tel. 0800 552 561)
 - Victim Support
- All 999 calls receive an immediate response, and should always be used in cases where:
 - There is a danger to life
 - There is a likelihood of violence
 - An assault is, or is believed to be, in progress
 - The offender is on the premises
 - The offence has just occurred and an early arrest is likely
- In non-urgent cases the Suffolk Police Operations Room (01473 613500) should be contacted so that an incident log can be created. Police attendance will normally be within 8 hours (and 24 hours at the latest)
- The Police will take statements relating to the incident including a "Victim Personal Statement" from the victim. They will also take into account the College's views. The Headteacher/ Senior Leadership Team member should speak to the victim to be aware of their wishes as to how they would like the incident dealt with and to provide support. Discussions should also take place with the Trade Union representative(s). Victims should be assured that support will be available especially if the matter goes to court.
- In the event of an assault on a member of staff by someone under 18, a relevant adult will be contacted to ensure proper representation.
- A decision to prosecute is made by the Police or the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) based on the evidence, the seriousness of the incident, public interest factors and the Victim Personal Statement.

Recording and reporting of incidents

All incidents must be reported to the Headteacher as soon as possible, and an Incident Record Form (IRF) must be completed (these are obtained from the Infrastructure Manager).

A Supplementary Record (Form ATV) must also be completed (Appendix A). This form is supplementary to the Incident Record Form and is also available from the Infrastructure Manager. It allows the recording of certain additional information which will assist any follow-up action taken by the school, LEA and Police.

Harassment

Situations can arise where staff find themselves subjected to a pattern of persistent and unreasonable behaviour from individual parents which is not abusive or overtly aggressive but which can be perceived as intimidating and oppressive. In these circumstances staff may be faced with a barrage of constant demands or criticisms (on an almost daily basis) which, whilst not particularly taxing or serious when viewed in isolation, can have the cumulative effect over time of undermining their confidence, well-being and health. In extreme cases this can be an offence under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 and the Police can take action.

In less serious situations the parent(s) will be informed by the Headteacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team that their behaviour is unacceptable and that action may well be taken if it continues.

Outcome

E.g. were the police called? Was the trespasser/assailant removed from the premises under section 206? What happened after the incident – was any legal action taken?

Other information (to be completed as appropriate)

Possible contributory factors

Is the trespasser/assailant known to have been involved in any previous incidents?

Yes No (circle appropriate response)

If relevant, list Incident Report Form numbers of previous incidents

Was a review of any risk assessment undertaken after previous incidents? If so, could any measures taken to prevent a recurrence of earlier incidents be improved?

How ?

Who has responsibility for revising the risk assessment after this incident and when is this to be completed?

Name and contact details of police officer involved

Police incident number or Crime reference number

Template letters withdrawing or reinstating permission to be on school premises

Letter 1(a): Initial letter to a parent.

To be sent by the Headteacher

RECORDED DELIVERY

Dear

I am writing about your conduct on (enter date and time).

[Add summary of the incident and of its effect on staff, pupils, and other parents].

I must inform you that the College will not tolerate conduct of this nature on its premises and will act to defend its staff and pupils. On behalf of the governing body I am therefore instructing that (for a temporary period) you are not to reappear on the premises of the college. If you do not comply with this instruction I shall arrange for you to be removed from the premises and prosecuted under Section 206 of the Education Act 2002. If convicted under this section, you are liable to a fine of up to £500.

The withdrawal of permission for you to enter the school premises takes effect straightaway. However I still need to decide whether it is appropriate to confirm this decision. Before I do so, I wish to give you an opportunity to give me in writing any comments or observations of your own in relation to this letter. These comments may include any expressions of regret on your part and any assurances you are prepared to give about your future good conduct. To enable me to take a decision on this matter at an early point, you are asked to send me any written comments you wish to make by (state date ten working days from the date of letter).

If on receipt of your comments I consider that my decision should be confirmed, you will be supplied with details of how to pursue a review of the circumstances of your case.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

Letter 1(b): Initial letter to non-parent/member of the public.

To be sent by the Headteacher

RECORDED DELIVERY

Dear

I am writing about your conduct on (enter date and time).

[Add summary of the incident and of its effect on staff, pupils, and other parents].

I must inform you that the college will not tolerate conduct of this nature on its premises and will act to defend its staff and pupils. On behalf of the Governing Body I am therefore instructing that you are not to reappear on the premises of the college. If you do not comply with this instruction I shall arrange for you to be removed from the premises and prosecuted under Section 206 of the Education Act 2002. If convicted, you are liable to a fine of up to £500.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

Letter 2: Follow up letter to a parent

To be sent by the Headteacher

RECORDED DELIVERY

Dear

On (give date) I wrote to you informing you that on behalf of the governing body I had withdrawn permission for you to come onto the premises of Westbourne Sports College. To enable the college to determine whether to confirm this decision for a longer period, I gave you the opportunity to give your written comments on the incident concerned by (give date).

I have not received a written response from you / I have now received a letter from you dated (insert date), the contents of which I have noted. (Delete either sentence as appropriate).

In the circumstances, and after further consideration, I have determined that the decision to withdraw permission for you to come onto school premises should be confirmed. I am therefore instructing that until further notice you are not to come onto the premises of the college without my prior knowledge and approval. If you do not comply with this instruction I shall arrange for you to be removed from the premises and prosecuted under section 206 of the Education Act 2002. If convicted, you are liable to a fine of up to £500.

If you are dissatisfied with this decision, you have a right to complain to the local education authority.

Notwithstanding this decision the school remains committed to the education of your child/children (delete as appropriate), who must continue to attend school as normal.

I will take steps to review the continuance of this decision on (give date).

When deciding whether it is necessary to extend the withdrawal of permission to come onto the college's premises, I will take into account the extent of your compliance with the decision, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct received from you and any evidence of your co-operation with the college in other respects.

Finally I would advise you that I have arranged for your complaint to be considered under the School's General Complaints Procedure (details of which are included). You will be contacted about this in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

Letter 3 (a): Confirming a Temporary Ban.

To be sent by the Headteacher

RECORDED DELIVERY

Dear

I wrote to you on (give date) withdrawing permission for you to come onto the premises of Westbourne Sports College until further notice. In that letter I also advised you that I would take steps to review this decision on (give date).

I have now completed the review and have determined that it is not yet appropriate for me to withdraw my decision. (Give a brief summary of reasons).

I therefore advise that the instruction that you are not to come onto the premises of the college without my prior knowledge and approval remains in place until further notice.

I shall undertake a further review of this decision on (give date).

If you are dissatisfied with this decision, you have a right to complain to the local education authority.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

Letter 3 (b): Lifting a Temporary Ban

To be sent by the Headteacher

RECORDED DELIVERY

Dear

On (insert date) I wrote to you informing you that I had temporarily withdrawn permission for you to come onto the premises of Westbourne Sports College. To enable me to determine whether to confirm this decision for a longer period, I gave you the opportunity to let me have your written comments on this incident by (insert date).

I have not received a written response from you / I have now received a letter from you dated (insert date), the contents of which I have noted. (Delete either sentence as appropriate).

In the circumstances, I have decided that it is not necessary to confirm the decision, and I am therefore restoring to you the permission to come onto the school premises, with immediate effect.

Nevertheless I remain very concerned at the incident which occurred on (insert date), and I must warn you that if there is any repetition of your behaviour on that occasion, I shall not hesitate to withdraw permission for you to come onto the premises again.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

Letter 4: Terminating the Ban after Review

To be sent by the Headteacher

RECORDED DELIVERY

Dear

I wrote to you on (give date) informing you that I had withdrawn permission for you to come onto the premises of Westbourne Sports College until further notice. In that letter I also advised you that I would take steps to review this decision on (give date).

I have now completed the review and have decided that it is now appropriate to change that decision. I am therefore restoring to you the permission to come onto the school premises, with immediate effect.

I trust that you can now be relied upon to act in full co-operation with the school and that there will be no further difficulties of the kind which made it necessary for me to prevent you entering the premises. I should point out that if there is any repetition of your behaviour, I shall not hesitate to withdraw permission for you to come onto the premises again.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher