



St Mary & St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Primary School

Violence Against Staff Policy

2022/23



Statement of intent

St. Mary & St. Thomas Aquinas Primary School is committed to preventing intimidation/aggressive/violent behaviour directed towards our staff by parents/carers and pupils. No member of staff will be expected to accept exposure to intimidation/aggression/violence as part of their job role.

Our school employs a zero-tolerance policy towards members of staff; under no circumstances is intimidation/aggression/violence towards any member of staff considered acceptable.

In this policy, the term 'staff' refers to all temporary and permanent, full-time and part-time, teaching and support staff, as well as casual employees, governors and any volunteers working in school.

- 1.1. St. Mary & St. Thomas Aquinas School accepts the Health and Safety Executive's definition of aggression/violence at work as:

"Any incident in which an employee is abused, threatened or assaulted by a member of the public in circumstances arising out of the course of his or her employment."

In terms of this policy, 'public' could be taken to mean parents, pupils, visitors, or other staff members.

- 1.2. Types of violence, threatening behaviour and abuse understood in this policy include:

- Verbal abuse – abusive and aggressive language, oral, written and including those on social media such as 'Facebook' etc.
- Physical assault – assault causing minor injury, such as a graze, minor bruising, reddening of the skin, minor cuts/lacerations, or a more serious injury.
- Physical abuse – attempted assault which did not result in physical harm.
- Sexual assault – sexual assault resulting in physical harm such as bruising, cuts/lacerations, or more serious injury.
- Sexual abuse – inappropriate sexual behaviour not resulting in physical harm.
- Property damage or theft – damage to, or theft of, the employee's personal property.
- Other – any form of physical assault or psychological abuse not defined above, which the employee considers sufficient to warrant concern.

- 1.3. Harassment is defined as:

"a pattern of persistent and unreasonable behaviour which is not abusive or overtly aggressive, but which can be perceived as intimidating and oppressive."

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1. The governing body will:

- Acknowledge their legal duty of care towards school staff and pupils and their responsibility to ensure the school is a place where both staff and pupils are safe from violence or aggression.
- Oversee the implementation of this policy.
- Advise all members of staff of this policy.
- Ensure all staff likely to be affected are informed, through the head teacher of any circumstances which are likely to carry a risk of violent or aggressive behaviour.
- Authorise the head teacher to exclude persons behaving inappropriately from the school premises, under Section 40 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982.
- Maintain a continuing programme of risk assessments of violence towards staff, in close consultation with the head teacher.

2.2. The head teacher will:

- Report the outcome of the risk assessment of violence towards staff to the full governing body annually.
- Ensure that all staff have read and understood this policy.
- Consider all reported incidents against the definitions outlined in Section 1.

2.3. All members of staff should:

- 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 head teacher.
- Assess the risk to themselves in each situation and do their utmost to ensure their own safety.

3. Preventing incidents

3.1. St. Mary & St. Thomas Aquinas Primary School will carry out an annual risk assessment of violence towards staff.

3.2. Staff will receive appropriate training as part of their induction and follow-up training as required.

3.3. St. Mary & St. Thomas Aquinas School may carry out risk assessments on individual pupils, whose behaviour constitutes cause for concern.

4. Dealing with incidents

- 4.1. When dealing with an incident, staff are advised to employ the following strategies:
- Be assertive but not aggressive
 - Speak calmly without raising their voice
 - Be polite but firm
 - Seek assistance
 - Maintain a safe distance from the aggressor
 - Think of an escape route, should the need arise
 - Be mindful of body language and stances to physically defend themselves
 - Walk away, where possible
- 4.2. All incidents will be logged and recorded on an incident report form which is kept in the school office. Evidence collected may be used later if court proceedings are brought against an alleged assailant.
- 4.3. The head teacher should be immediately informed of any incidents, and should liaise with the Local Authority and the police where necessary.
- 4.4. The police should be called via **999**, in cases of emergency, where:
- There is danger to life.
 - There is a likelihood of violence.
 - An assault is in progress.
 - The offender is on the school premises.
 - An offence has just occurred and an early arrest is likely.
- 4.5. In the event of an emergency, staff should also acquire assistance from a member of the senior leadership team if available, or the nearest member of staff.
- 4.6. Where police involvement is required, but the incident is not considered to be an emergency, the local police/ community liaison officer should be contacted on **101 ext. 69191**
- 4.7. St. Mary & St. Thomas Aquinas Primary School will ensure that help, support and counselling are made available to victims of violence after the incident and in the long-term.
- 4.8. Any member of staff or pupil who engages in an act of violence towards a member of staff will be subject to the appropriate disciplinary procedures.

5. Harassment

- 5.1. If a staff member becomes subject to harassment from individual parents/carers or pupils, this may constitute an offence under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997.

- 5.2. In cases of harassment, either within the school or offsite, staff should make records of all incidents in writing, taking note of the date, location, and means of communication.
- 5.3. Staff should inform the head teacher, who will contact the Local Authority for advice and support.

6. Banning from the school premises

- 6.1. St. Mary & St. Thomas Aquinas School has procedures in place for withdrawing permission for any parent/carer, who behaves unreasonably, to be on school premises.
- 6.2. Throughout the process, full records should be made of each incident, including witness details, should evidence need to be provided in court.
- 6.3. Any incident which could warrant banning from the school premises should be reported to the head teacher.
- 6.4. If a person who has been banned subsequently trespasses on the premises and causes nuisance or disturbance, this may be considered a criminal offence under Section 206 of the Education Act 2002. They will be asked to leave the premises immediately however if this request is ignored then the police will be contacted.

7. Recording and reporting incidents

- 7.1. St. Mary & St. Thomas Aquinas Primary School may carry out risk assessments on individual pupils, whose behaviour constitutes cause for concern.