

Guide to Managing Incidents of Distressed Behaviour in Educational Establishments

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INTRODUCTION

All children and adults have the right to feel safe and free from all forms of violence.¹ Central to promoting effective learning and teaching is an environment which fosters excellent relationships and promotes positive behaviour. To develop effective, positive whole school approaches to support a culture of positive behaviour, children and young people, their families and education staff work together in partnership.

Dumfries and Galloway Council is committed to the delivery of inclusive education as set out in Presumption of Mainstream² education. In providing such education it is recognised that certain pupils, at certain times, may exhibit incidences of distressed behaviour which can be challenging, disruptive and/or very difficult to manage. Such behaviour will impact on the pupil, fellow pupils and those employees working in educational establishments.

SCOPE

Employees have the right to work in a safe and secure environment. In meeting its duties, as set out in the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Council Health and Safety (H&S) Standard Managing the Potential for Violence sets out what is required under health and safety law, to ensure so far as reasonably practicable, the health and safety of all their employees.

The purpose and scope of the H&S Standardⁱ is –

- To ensure that Dumfries & Galloway Council complies with its legal duties so far as is reasonably practicable to protect its employees from harm caused by potentially violent situations arising in the workplace.
- This extends from what may seem to be minor incidents to the most severe incidents including serious assaults and threats against the employee's family. If it is work related, it doesn't matter whether it was within or out-with working hours.
- This standard applies to all employees who may be involved in potentially violent situations. It also applies to contractors and service providers who are employed by the council.

WELLBEING OF PUPILS & STAFF

The H&S Standard applies to all Council employees and must be applied to school-based incidents. All managers in the Skills, Education and Learning Directorate must ensure they are aware of the requirements set out in the Standard.

Certain roles face heightened risks of exposure to distressed behaviour and its associated challenges. In these situations, risk assessments (environmental and

¹ United Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 19

² Guidance on the presumption to provide education in a mainstream setting March 2019

individual) and positive behaviour plans should be standard practice. Key groups of staff include:

- Lone working
- Resourced Provision (Learning Centres and Inclusion Bases) Additional Support Needs establishments.
- Working with children and young people with social, emotional, behavioural needs.

Schools should be nurturing and inclusive and foster a climate of mutual respect. Instances of distressed behaviour that is aggressive and or violent must be considered in the same way as any other area of the curriculum where staff would assess, plan, teach, differentiate and evaluate in order to ensure that pupils understand and develop the skills required.

This work sits at the heart of the Health and Wellbeing curriculum, particularly the aspects that are 'The Responsibility of All.' There are a range of strategies and programmes which schools can and do use to improve relationships and behaviour and in doing so minimise the risk of violence. These include the use of whole school approaches, restorative approaches, nurture approaches, solution focussed approaches and programmes to help develop social, emotional and behavioural skills.

Curriculum for Excellence has health and wellbeing as a curricular area to ensure that pupils develop the knowledge and understanding, skills, capabilities and attributes they need for mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing now and in the future. Health and Wellbeing is also seen as a responsibility of all adults who work with children and young people.

'Curriculum for Excellence cannot be delivered without good relationships and positive behaviour. Children and young people should feel happy, safe, respected and included in the learning environment and all staff should be proactive in promoting positive behaviour in the classroom, playground, and wider learning community. Underpinning this is the emotional health and wellbeing of staff.' Curriculum for Excellence

This can only be achieved when pupils' needs are appropriately assessed and met. Dumfries and Galloway Council's Wellbeing Framework should be fully implemented to promote a safe working environment for all pupils and employees.

Teachers are required to provide an appropriate differentiated curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils. For some learners, alternative tasks, activities and resources are required, including learning through play, learning outdoors and activities which develop skills for learning, life and work.

From time to time pupils exhibit challenging behaviour which can occur on a continuum. The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009 lists four inter-related factors which may individually or jointly impact on a child or young person's ability to learn:

- Learning environment
- Family circumstances
- Disability or health
- Social or emotional factors.

REPORTING AND RECORDING OF INCIDENTS

The Council policy Health and Safety (H&S) Standard Managing the Potential for Violence, sets out the requirement and process for reporting and recording all incidents related to health and safety.

MONITORING OF INCIDENTS

Headteachers and their management teams must monitor incidents and near misses to ensure the wellbeing and welfare of pupils and staff and the safe operation of the school.

The Supporting Learners Service will review monthly incidents and report to the Head of Service quarterly.

The Aggression and Violence Working Group will be provided with reports every quarter and will use these to quality assure processes and offer support/challenge to schools where patterns of concern emerge.

The LNCT will be provided with an annual report of statistics relating to instances of distressed behaviour leading to severe or violent incidents.

HEALTH & SAFETY STANDARD MANAGING THE POTENTIAL FOR VIOLENCE

SCHEDULE			
Title	Managing the Potential for Violence		
Issued By	Corporate Health & Safety Team		
Approved By	Sue White, Corporate Health & Safety Adviser		
Date of Issue	May 2017	Review Date	May 2020
Issue Number	5.1		
Retention Period	01/01/2023		

Note: This document is available on the Corporate Health and Safety Manual (CHASM) in SharePoint. It should be noted that any printed copy will be classed as uncontrolled and cannot be guaranteed to reflect the current version of the standard.

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