

**POLICY ON AVOIDANCE OF AGGRESSION  
&  
VIOLENCE TO STAFF**

## Policy Statement

Great Heights Academy Trust recognises the difficulties posed by violent and aggressive behaviour both to members of the public and our staff. It is the policy of the Trust that staff should not physically intervene in such situations unless: -

(a) All other means of defusing the situation have been considered.

And/Or

(b) There is a real danger of physical injury to members of the public or staff.

And/Or

(c) Sufficient members of staff are on hand to provide support as necessary and act as a witness to the incident.

And/Or

(d) The Police have been requested to assist and the Police have asked for assistance from staff.

This policy is a supplement to The Trust's general Management of Health and Safety Policy Statement and Safety Policies.

Great Heights Academy Trust has a legal duty under Section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health safety and welfare of their employees whilst at work.

**Note:** Under Section 7 of the Health and Safety at work Act 1974, all employees also have a legal duty to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions. **Staff are therefore required to comply with the policy and any procedures provided by the service for their protection.**

## **1. Statement of Intent**

Great Heights Academy Trust will endeavour to ensure that the requirements of this Policy Statement are implemented by Managers/Supervisors. In particular these include:-

**1.1** Supporting staff who are assaulted at work by a member of the public, community, academy user, pupil, parent, or a colleague, providing the victim has acted in an appropriate manner and has followed the procedures in accordance with this policy.

**1.2** The academy premises will be assessed by managers annually in accordance with The Trust's Security Policy. Assessments will be considered in conjunction with any incident report to eliminate high risk areas regarding violence and aggression.

**1.3** Specific risk reduction measures outlined in The Trust's Security Policy will be considered where employees have to work alone. For further advice consult The Trust's Chief Operations Officer.

**1.4** Premises/activities highlighted by Incident Report Forms as having a problem will be investigated by the Line Manager and appropriate action taken to reduce the problem.

**1.5** Evaluation of existing procedures by managers who will assess the need for counselling or other support for victims of violence and aggression.

**1.6** In all academy areas the standard academy notice on violence and aggression will be displayed

## **2. Great Heights Academy Trust**

**2.1** Will endeavour to minimise the risks to employees by providing a safe and healthy working environment. Particular attention will be paid to reception, entrances, classrooms and collection points in the playgrounds. Line Managers will investigate violence to staff incidents.

**2.2** Will provide training for employees on employment related violence.

**2.3** Will not tolerate racial, verbal or physical harassment of, or by its employees, assaults upon employees or attacks on their property by clients or other members of the public, either during or outside working hours, which are a result of their employment with The Trust.

**2.4** Will not tolerate racial, verbal or physical harassment, or assault upon the person or attacks on property of the family or associates of its employees by clients or other members of the public in cases where those incidents relate to the employee's relationship with The Trust.

**2.5** Will record and investigate all incidents, threats of or actual violence at work, and take any remedial action that may be necessary.

## **3. Training**

Staff who may be exposed to violence and aggression need to be made aware of the potential risks they face and be capable of recognising danger either to themselves or to others and have received suitable training in handling aggression.

Staff training programmes will include, as appropriate, the following:-

**3.1** The causes of violence and aggressive behaviour.

**3.2** The policy and procedures for dealing with violence.

**3.3** Safe working practices.

**3.4** What to do when feeling threatened with violence;

(a) Managing confrontation by using positive interpersonal skills;

(b) Attracting the attention of colleagues;

(c) Usage of security equipment (alarms etc);

**3.5** Ensuring an escape route.

**3.6** Staff identified by risk assessment as being at high risk with respect to violence and aggression should where practicable receive further training.

#### **4. Counselling**

Counselling will be sort for staff who has been the victim of violence and abuse.

#### **5. Panic Alarms**

Reception areas are fitted with panic alarms which are positioned so that staff can easily reach them.

Reception areas rooms must not have any loose objects which could be used as weapons.

#### **6. Dealing With and Reporting Incidents of Assault/Violence**

Any incident must be reported promptly to the line manager or any other senior officer on site who will proceed utilising available staff to: -

**6.1** Ensure that the assailant has been calmed down, left the site/building or has been restrained when safe to do so.

**6.2** Arrange emergency medical assistance where appropriate.

**6.3** Arrange for the area to be cordoned off if necessary.

**6.4** The Line Manager or Senior Officer will also:- complete the Incident Form VA04 with the victim's assistance. The views and the wishes of the member of the staff must be taken into account before the line manager considers making a report to the Police, the advantages of this course of action should be pointed out to the member of staff i.e. claims to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Agency require a crime number in order to proceed.

**6.5** Ensure that **all** logged incidents and incident/accident report forms VA04 which relate to verbal abuse, violent incidents, theft and other incidents which may lead to violence and aggression are sent to the Health and Safety Section, Insurance and an academy copy retained. The Police Community Safety Liaison Officer must be informed if there is a pattern of violent incidents related to employment.

**6.6** Arrangements for a member of staff to be accompanied or transported to and from work to avoid subsequent attacks if required.

**Note:** It is not expected that such arrangements would be for any period in excess of 10 working days. After this period line managers should evaluate the situation in discussion with the victim and the Police

**6.7** If it is known that a particular client or member of the public is violent or aggressive give consideration to a member of staff who may have to deal with such a person to have a chaperone i.e. another member of staff.

**6.8** If members of the public/academy community are persistently violent or aggressive give consideration to informing those persons, access will be denied until contact can be conducted amicably.

## **7. General Advice**

Staff are advised that when dealing with aggressive situations attempts should be made to have other members of staff close at hand if assistance is required. Staff should conduct themselves in a **firm, fair, even handed, considerate and helpful manner**. The adoption of such an attitude may reduce the risk of violence. In an effort to minimise the risk of violence, staff should bear in mind the following principles: -

**8.1** Staff should try to offer an angry person a range of options from which to choose, in doing so making it more difficult for the aggressor to sustain the anger.

**8.2** Staff should not show aggressive behaviour to the aggressor, this is how anger can escalate into violence.

**8.3** Staff must ask themselves if they are the person with the authority to deal with/answer this particular situation/problem. However if the situation/problem can be resolved quickly the person's anger may subside.

**8.4** If staff are being subjected to verbal abuse they should calmly and politely withdraw where possible from the situation, informing the abuser that they are doing so.

**8.5** Staff must ensure their own safety by abandoning or foregoing any attempt to restrain the aggressor if they believe themselves to be at risk. If the incident involves fighting between members of the public, first ensure that the Police are called, do **not get physically involved unless you feel that it falls within this Policy Statement and you are confident that you can handle the situation**.

**8.6** Staff should only touch an angry person when having to resort to self defence/physical restraint, which must only be used, as a last resort in situations where other considerations have failed or are inappropriate.

**8.7** Staff safety and wellbeing are of paramount importance and accordingly, staff should be clear that, if they are confronted by someone in a threatening demanding manner for The Trust's monies or property, **and they fear that they are physically threatened or otherwise feel in danger**, then they should hand it over to the assailant and not compromise their own safety.

**8.8** It is important that staff provide a signed and dated comprehensive report which details the behaviour of the aggressor before, during and after any self defence/restraint. The report should note how the aggressor was restrained, e.g. where held and for how long. It is also

important that any staff or others who assisted in the restraint, or who witnessed it should also provide a comprehensive written report signed and dated. The details must be recorded as soon after the incident as possible.

### **Preventative Measures**

**9.2** When dealing with the parents/ academy community members remember to be :-

**Friendly** - Smile, show confidence, make frequent eye contact where appropriate. Your pleasant attitude can make a difference.

**Accurate** - Give reliable information. Admit any uncertainties or delays when they exist. Never hesitate to apologise if you have made a mistake.

**Consistent** - Uniform treatment of all as people are less likely to be abusive or violent when treated fairly.

## **10. Definitions**

The following definitions are considered to constitute acts of violence and aggression.

**10.1 Violence Against Staff:** An incident in which an employee is abused (verbally through no provocation), intimidated, threatened or assaulted by a member of the public or a member of staff, this includes the use of animals to carry out the assault or harassment, in circumstances arising out of or in the course of their employment.

**10.2 Assault:** An act which intentionally or recklessly causes another person to apprehend (conceive or imagine) immediate and unlawful personal violence (Criminal Law Act 1967).

**10.3 Actual Bodily Harm:** An assault causing any person any harm which interferes with the health or comfort of the victim (Offences Against the Persons Act 1861)

**10.4 In Defence of Self, Another or Property:** A person may use force to defend themselves, as is reasonable in the circumstances, in the prevention of crime, effecting or assisting the arrest of offenders or suspected offenders or persons unlawfully at large (Criminal Law Act 1967)

**10.5 Physical Restraint:** Is only permissible if the aggressor is in immediate danger of harming himself or others. Physical restraint cannot be used purely to force compliance with staff instructions.

**10.6 Reasonable Force:** A person using self defence may only use reasonable force; it must not be more force than is reasonable to defend oneself. It is ultimately a question for the jury (Criminal Law Act 1967)

**10.7 Threatening, Abusive, Insulting or Disorderly Behaviour:** It is an offence to use threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour, or disorderly behaviour within the hearing or sight of a person to whom it is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress. To commit this offence, the person must know or intend that his words or behaviour are threatening (etc). No element of fear about his own safety is necessary on the part of the person harassed, alarmed or distressed (Public Order Act 1986). (Harassment Act 1997)

**10.8 Racism:** a racist incident is any incident that is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person (Macpherson Report 1999)

### **10.9 Improper use of public electronic communications network**

The Communications Act 2003, section 127, states a person is guilty of an offence if he/she:-

- Sends by means of a public electronic communications network, a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character; or
- Causes any such message or matter to be sent

Anyone found guilty of an offence under this section can be fined or imprisoned for up to six months.

**Please also see our Violence and Aggression towards staff poster**

**Date policy reviewed 22.04.22**