



VIOLENT INCIDENTS



The following represents our general advice in the matter of school security and violent incidents. It should be noted that the SEED definition of "violence" includes verbal abuse. If there are particular matters relating to your own school, these will be given separately.

1. The matter of general school security (access, fencing etc) can be dealt with by the SSTA Health and Safety rep who is entitled to ask that the school security arrangements are examined with a view to establishing whether the guidelines of the Cullen report are met. The blue report form (form A) can be used for this. Copies are available from this office.
2. Where a teacher is subjected to violent incident, the appropriate Violent Incident Report Form should be filled in and given to the head teacher (or nominated person) to be forwarded to the authority to permit the incident to be included in the annual return. The head teacher has no discretion in this: the VIRF must be forwarded. The teacher should keep a copy of the form. Any act of violence should result in detailed feedback to the teacher as to any sanction applied to the person committing the act. If this person was a pupil and the pupil was excluded from school, the teacher should be made aware of any agreement reached prior to the re-admission of the pupil. Where the incident took place in the classroom, it is totally unacceptable that the pupil is returned to the teacher's class without prior discussion with the teacher.
3. It is clear from the Circular (paragraph 6) that "violence" is not limited to physical assault. This point is widely misunderstood. The Circular gives the definition of violence. The head teacher or authority has no right to vary this definition.
4. No teacher should ever feel in a situation of physical danger. If this happens (it is stressed, the teacher no more than fears an incident), the head teacher should be informed and the matter addressed to remove the fears.
5. Where staff patrol school areas during breaks, it is useful that this is carried out by staff in pairs and not alone. If a member of staff might be alone in such circumstances, a method of communicating with assistance (e.g. short-range radio) should be provided.
6. The SSTA expects that incidents of physical violence by pupils (and at least certain cases of threatened violence) towards any other party will result in immediate exclusion of the pupil(s) concerned and we would expect to be informed where this has not happened.

7. In cases of actual or threatened physical assault, the Association always advises that the police are informed and asked to investigate. It is not necessary for permission to be sought before the police are informed. Any attempt to prevent a member from approaching the police should be noted and referred to the Association.
8. For the avoidance of doubt, the Association expects that any incident in which a pupil swears at a teacher results in the exclusion of the pupil and for the matter to be treated as a violent incident.
9. Any incident of violence (including verbal abuse) must result either in the pupil being permanently excluded or the drawing up of a return to school agreement with the pupil's parent(s) or guardian(s).
10. Any teacher involved should be made aware of the contents of this agreement. If the teacher is dissatisfied, the Association should be contacted.
11. Where a teacher complains or reports any violent incident, it is never a prerequisite that there are witnesses identified to the event before an investigation is set in place. The matter must be investigated forthwith.
12. The Association regards it as being totally unacceptable that there is any suggestion or implication (prior to full investigation) that the teacher might have been in any way culpable.
13. An absence of more than three days or any serious injury arising from a violent incident should be recorded and reported to the authority under the terms of the RIDDOR arrangements.
15. Absence from duty as a result of a violent incident should not count against a teacher's personal sickness allowance.

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