

Violence at Work Policy

This Policy sets out our procedures for preventing, managing and responding to work-related violence. Work-related violence, including verbal abuse of staff, should not be ignored or taken lightly. No member of staff should be blamed for an instance of work-related violence carried out towards them. All staff have the right to be treated with consideration, dignity and respect.

Definition of work-related violence

Any incident in which a staff member, volunteer or student is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances arising out of the course of his/her time with the Company.

Responsibilities of staff and managers

Managers

All managers have a responsibility to implement this policy and to make sure their staff are aware of it and understand it. Managers should also:

Treat any reports of work-related violence, threats or abuse seriously and respond to them promptly.

Record details of the incident where appropriate, and give victims of violence full support during the whole process. They should also respond to, and consider seriously any suggestions made by staff about how to improve violence prevention and management, and give feedback to staff about their suggestions, including whether it will be taken forward, and if not, why not.

Set a positive example by reporting all incidents of violence and not tolerating abusive behaviour.

Respond to and where possible resolve incidents, ideally before they escalate.

Monitor incidents of violence and abuse and initiate appropriate action if more measures are needed. Review and amend this policy and the risk assessment as necessary.

Where possible, direct staff to appropriate support and advice after an incident has occurred. Encourage other staff members to support their colleagues, including those that might have witnessed the incident. If victims are particularly traumatised by the event, provide support where possible, such as time off work or changes to their tasks.

If an investigation is needed, work with the police and offer any assistance needed to help in their enquiries.

Any manager found to be encouraging or inciting violence or not resolving potentially violent or abusive situations may be subject to disciplinary action.

Staff

All staff have personal responsibility for their own behaviour and for ensuring that they comply with this policy. There are a number of things that staff can do to help prevent work-related violence:

Be aware of the needs of the Company's students, especially those with learning disabilities who may need to be treated with patience or removed from a potentially dangerous situation.

Recognise the potential for work-related violence and take action to resolve it early on. For example, contacting a manager if they think a student or member of the public might cause problems.

Don't accept instances of work-related violence directed towards you or others. Staff should report any instances of violence, threats or abuse, including minor incidents. Be supportive of colleagues who are victims of, or have witnessed work-related violence.

Suggest additional measures to managers which might help to prevent and manage work-related violence.

Any staff member found to be encouraging or inciting violence may be subject to disciplinary action.

Risk assessments

The Company assesses the risk of work-related violence by:

Ensuring all staff and volunteers are DBS checked, alerting us to any history of violence.

Asking all new students and/or their carers what they need in order to feel happy and safe at Freewheelers, thus helping us to reduce the risk of students becoming violent, and alerting us to any student who may pose a particular threat.

Risk-assessing all public events and being alert to anything which may increase the likelihood of violence occurring,

If staff believe a risk factor has not been covered by the assessment or have ideas on further prevention measures, they should discuss these with their manager. The contents of the above risk assessments will be communicated to all staff and appropriate training will be given.

Prevention and management measures

There are a number of measures in place following the risk assessments that staff should be aware of.

Work environment: Our workshop spaces all have separate 'quiet' areas where staff can take a student who needs to be separated from the group in order to prevent violence from occurring.

Working practices: All workshops are attended by at least two members of staff, in line with The Working Alone section of the Health and Safety Risk Assessment. This allows for one staff member to supervise the group while another deals with any incident of violence or direct prevention of this.

Cash is kept in a locked cash box and removed from view whenever possible. It must be kept in the safe when not in use.

New students (or their carers), staff and volunteers are asked during their registration to tell us about any condition which may make it difficult for them to work in a busy, noisy or stressful environment.

Associates are informed of any information divulged during an individual's registration which may help them to treat the individual in a way that prevents them from becoming violent.

If a disciplinary situation arises, this will always be dealt with by TWO staff members, and never be carried out by a lone staff member, no matter how trivial it may appear to be.

Any argument or confrontation between members, associates and volunteers will be addressed face-to-face on the same day and not left to 'fester' overnight. Staff will facilitate this where possible, ensuring that sufficient supervision is available.

Any complaint against an individual that cannot be kept anonymous will be followed up with the complainant to ensure s/he knows what is being done about it, and a meeting will be set up with all parties present to acknowledge this, clear the air and prevent a build-up of tension between individuals which may lead to confrontation.

Training

All staff and volunteers will be made aware of the Violence at Work Policy as part of their induction.

Actions following an incident

If somebody is being abused, threatened or attacked, they should approach a manager or a member of staff for help. Managers should respond to the situation by talking to the perpetrator, explaining that their behaviour is not acceptable. They should try to resolve the problem and, if that is not possible, call the individual's parent/carer (if applicable), or, in extreme circumstances, the police (see below).

Medical assistance should be provided immediately when required.

The police should be informed (999) of a serious incident involving physical attack or serious cases of threatening or verbal abuse. Police should also be informed of persistent cases of violence, threats and abuse.

Records of incidents should be kept for future reference, and in case the police need them. The following details will be recorded for all violent incidents:

Who was involved,

Descriptions of the perpetrator and any relevant circumstances that may have contributed to the incident.

Any incidents resulting in serious injury to staff or that cause staff to be off work for three days or more must be reported under the RIDDOR Regulations 2013. Any incident which results in a member of the public being taken directly to hospital from the premises must also be reported. Managers should contact the HSE Incident Contact Centre on 0345 300 9923 to report the incident.

Less serious incidents should still be reported to managers whenever they occur and managers should make a note of these. If managers notice an increase in reports, several reports within a short period or reports about the same perpetrator, managers should record the details, ask staff for more information and take action. The action may include excluding individual(s) from workshops, contacting the police about a persistent offender, reviewing risk assessments and considering further prevention measures, or increased vigilance by managers or staff to prevent a more serious incident occurring.

Review dates

This policy should be reviewed every three years, or if regular or serious incidents arise that suggest it needs to be revisited.

END OF POLICY

Next review Jul 2020
