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East Dunbartonshire Council

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People Matter

Education, People & Business

Education Procedure Manual 2/21

MANAGEMENT OF INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST EMPLOYEES IN EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS

For

**Teachers and Employees on Scottish Negotiating Committee
for Teachers (SNCT) Conditions of Service**

Effective from: 01 July 2026

Education, People & Business



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Management of Incidents of Violence against Employees in Educational Establishments

Version Control History

Version No.	Effective Date	Details of change from previous version	Date Approved	New version no.
-	Oct 2019	Transfer to new template; updated job title terminology; content reviewed.	19/06/26	1.0

GDPR Statement

East Dunbartonshire Council holds, uses and processes information in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations and all other relevant national data protection laws. Further information detailing how East Dunbartonshire holds and uses personal information and copies of privacy notices used throughout the Council are available on our [website](#).

Policy Review Statement

This policy will be reviewed in line with:

- Legislative Change
- Changes to SNCT National Conditions of Service
- Other external factors
- Feedback on the effectiveness of the policy
- Requests for review by Elected Members, Trade Unions and/or Management

1.0 Purpose / Introduction

- 1.1 In accordance with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (HASAWA) 1999, East Dunbartonshire Council assesses risks to employees and makes arrangements for their health and safety by effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review, which includes protecting employees from the risk of violence. We have a duty to assess reasonably foreseeable risks of violence.

The aim is to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of employees at all times by:

- reducing the risk of violence against employees,
- making sure that arrangements are in place to assess the risk of violence against employees,
- providing appropriate training and information for employees,
- making sure management standards are applied consistently,
- providing appropriate support to employees following a violent incident,
- maintaining robust recording and management systems for all violent incidents including those that fall within Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013, and
- making sure that employees who have experienced or witnessed incidents are confident to report them, have them taken seriously and dealt with effectively.

- 1.2 The United Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is enshrined in Scot's Law (2024).

Articles 12 and 19 are key within this manual. Article 12 states that the voice of the child or young person is held central in all plans and investigations involving them, this would also include any restorative processes following Incident.

Article 19 states that all children and young people have the right to feel safe and free from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect, and maltreatment.

Equally, employees have the right to work in a safe and secure environment. East Dunbartonshire Council has a duty of care under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees at work and is fully committed to providing safe and inclusive education across all educational establishments (hereafter referred to as schools).

- 1.3 East Dunbartonshire Council aims to ensure equity and upholds 'The Presumption to provide education in a mainstream setting' (2019) as set out by the Scottish Government unless a pupil's needs deem otherwise. In providing such education it is recognised that certain pupils, at certain times, may exhibit behaviour which is challenging, disruptive and/or very difficult to manage. Such behaviour will impact on the pupil, fellow pupils and those employees working in educational establishments. Employees therefore must be highly skilled and provided with appropriate processes, training and support to carry out their roles.

1.4 The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines violence at work as:

"Any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work. This can include verbal abuse or threats as well as physical attacks."

This includes physical assault, physical and verbal abuse, serious or persistent harassment, victimisation, bullying and/or threats with or without a weapon. Physical assault is the intentional application of force by one person on another, without lawful justification, resulting in injury or personal discomfort. Non-physical assault is the use of inappropriate language or behaviour causing distress and/or constituting harassment. Persistent unacceptable behaviour includes loud or intrusive conversations or shouting, offensive sexualised behaviour or gestures and unwanted email, telephone or other electronic communication. This list is not exhaustive. The term 'incident' will be used throughout the remainder of this Procedure Manual to encompass either physical and non- physical assault, abuse or harassment.

1.5 East Dunbartonshire Council considers any harassment, violent or aggressive behaviour against employees as unacceptable. Management and employees in schools should be cognisant of the need for monitoring and implementation of safety measures.

1.6 This Procedure Manual provides clear structures to ensure that employees are protected from violence and relates to the prevention, management and reporting of violent incidents in schools. In conjunction with this policy, school's own policies around supporting relationships, behaviours, including mechanisms of support should also be used.

2.0 Scope

2.1 The procedures within East Dunbartonshire Council's, 'Violence in the Workplace', should be followed where acts of violence against employees are carried out by other employees. Where employees have acts of violence carried out towards them by parents/carers and those visiting our schools the police should be contacted alongside adhering to this policy. This Procedure Manual refers to incidents of violence by pupils against any employees operating in a school or educational establishment.

2.2 Certain employees can be identified as being particularly vulnerable to risks that are associated with violence from pupils. These could include, for example:

- Employees working in Additional Support Needs establishments
- Employees working on a one-to-one basis with pupils
- Employees working alone
- Employees working with pupils who have social, emotional, behavioural problems and
- Where an individual pupil has been identified as being predisposed to violence (employees should be fully informed of this matter in advance).

3.0 References & Related Documentation

- 3.1 This Procedure Manual should be read in conjunction with other related East Dunbartonshire Council policy documents
- Violence in the Workplace
 - Health and Safety Procedure Manual (19/01)
 - Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013
 - Policy and Procedures for Managing Critical Incidents and Trauma
 - Dignity at Work
 - Protocol for Weapons in Schools
 - Promoting Positive Relationships, Behaviour and Learning Framework
 - [Health and Safety Forms - East Dunbartonshire Council](#)
 - [Unacceptable Behaviour Policy 2024 – 2028 - East Dunbartonshire Council](#)

4.0 Strategies to Minimise Risk of Violence Against Employees

4.1 Relationships, Behaviour and Learning

EDC's, 'Promoting Positive Relationships, Behaviour and Learning Framework (2024)', is a pivotal document in support of relationship-based approaches, and trauma informed practice, whilst providing useful frameworks and strategies for schools in developing their own Relationships Policies. EDC policy around attendance, relationship-based practice, trauma informed approaches, and respecting the rights of staff, children and young people, with clear guidance around escalation action that can be taken in schools which is proportionate and appropriate in supporting the given situation.

New Vision on Relationships (NVR) programme reflects the Council's focus on the importance of relationships as central to our work with children, young people and families. NVR provides a toolkit which can be used in a variety of ways to rebuild disrupted relationships, and develop resilience in families, within schools and other settings.

Schools and Early Learning and Childcare settings have an essential role in ensuring a trauma-informed environment for children, young people and families. There is evidence that trauma-informed systems and practice, where the impact of trauma on those affected is understood by staff, can result in better outcomes for people affected by trauma who are accessing education services.

Many of our education workforce will have been affected by trauma. Staff need to feel safe and supported when they are supporting others, particularly as those directly supporting people affected by trauma, face an increased risk of experiencing vicarious or secondary trauma. By improving our understanding and knowledge as to how trauma can affect people, we will be better equipped to recognise and support the wellbeing of staff within their working environment.

4.2 The Curriculum

CIRCLE was launched in East Dunbartonshire schools and early years centres (EYCs) in May 2024 with a clear objective of supporting inclusive practice for all children and young people.

With a clear focus on developing inclusive classroom environments for all learners, the intention is that this then extends to the wider school. The CIRCLE resource also provides staff with suggested supports and strategies which they can utilise to enable children and young people's skill development and their positive engagement within school.

All children benefit from a play-based approach and opportunities to learn outdoors, including those with additional support needs (ASN). Children who have ASN have shown improved social skills, improved fine and gross motor skills as well as increased opportunities for communication within a play-based school setting (White, 2006). Within the play pedagogy environment, there are significant opportunities to differentiate for all children, promote inclusion and meet individual needs. Providing a developmentally appropriate curriculum ensures that behavioural responses through children's frustration (e.g. at having to sit at desks for a large part of the day) are reduced.

East Dunbartonshire's Nurture programmes for Early Years Centres, and Primary and Secondary Schools are based on the principles of high nurture and high boundaries, modelling and supporting positive relationships and behaviour with the involvement of families being a key feature of the this.

Teachers have a duty in providing a differentiated curriculum for children and young people, which will vary according to individual need. Where alternative approaches to learning are required employees are encouraged to follow our 'Including every Learner, Policy and Provision for children and young people with additional support needs in East Dunbartonshire Council', whilst consulting with their Head or Depute Head Teacher who may seek central officer support.

4.3 Staff Relationships

In the Council, nurture underpins the wider curriculum in schools and early years establishments. At the centre of nurture are relationships, and these are critical in providing a context within which mental health can flourish. The culture and ethos of an organisation is fundamental to the development of nurture with children and young people. Relationships among the adults within educational establishments underpin nurturing approaches with children and young people. If there are nurturing relationships within staff teams, then nurture in relation to children and young people is strengthened.

4.4 Training and Support

From time-to-time pupils can present with challenging behaviour in classes and

playrooms. This behaviour can occur on a continuum and be exacerbated by certain factors. It is therefore essential that the Head Teacher or Depute Head ensures that employees are appropriately trained and supported to carry out their duties. This may also include working with specialist employees to construct appropriate risk assessments.

4.5 Risk Assessment

Employers have a duty, under the Management of The Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, to assess risks of injury and ill health to which employees and others are exposed. The duties cover the reasonably foreseeable risks of violence. The assessment of risk should be ongoing for pupils as they access all areas of education. For most pupils this will consist of dynamic discussions and decisions between employees and pupils and may not require any formal recording. For pupils who demonstrate challenging and concerning behaviour which may continue to be repeated, formal risk assessment procedures, safe systems of work, and consideration of additional supports or resources raised centrally should be considered from the earliest realisation that problematic behaviour is occurring, likely to occur, or reoccurring in accordance with Health and Safety Executive Recommendations.

Headteachers should take cognisance of an individual's circumstances, and consider central officer supports whereby there are repetitions of distressed or challenging behaviour that may occur over an academic session.

4.6 Pupil Action Plans and Risk Assessments

Where a child or young person in school requires support in the form of an Action Plan or Risk Assessment this must be constructed with the Team around the Child (TAC) and clearly reflect their views and that of their family. As members of the TAC, teachers must also be fully involved in the rationale behind decisions and understand their role to support. Other employees who come into contact with the pupil must also be advised about risk management strategies.

4.7 Professional Learning

Where specialist staff, in conjunction with the Head Teacher or Depute Head, establish the need for professional learning, this shall be arranged as a matter of urgency from amongst the specialist and/or central teams, including Educational Psychology, to ensure that employees are fully equipped to fulfil their responsibilities. Where learning and development from external agencies is identified, this too shall be provided without delay. It is the responsibility of senior leaders to disseminate specialist information, new policy and/or guidance in support of all pupils; and it is the responsibility of employees to become familiar with these or ask for support where they identify a gap in their skills or knowledge.

4.8 Training in De-escalation and Restraint

Our "Promoting Positive Relationships, Behaviour and Learning in Education,

Relationships, Behaviour and Learning Strategic Framework (2024)", provides information pertaining to research, national and local policy, and a detailed expectation of approach towards relationships within our schools.

Within our "Including Every Learner: Policy and Provision for Children and Young People with Additional Support Needs in East Dunbartonshire Council", contains a clear expectation of training requirements in our Tier 2 and 3 settings.

Employees in our mainstream settings can at times be trained in CALM (our physical intervention and training programme) module 1 which focuses on de-escalation, safety awareness and the legislative framework. Mainstream employees would not be required to intervene physically with a child or young person. Employees in mainstream will not be trained to module 2 levels in CALM, these practices should and only used as a last resort in our Tier 2 and 3 provisions by trained employees.

Employees should be aware that in certain circumstances, even in the face of physical assault, the use of force to protect oneself could result in criminal charges being made.

In ensuring all employees are supported during situations that can cause distress actions within section 4.5 should be referred to.

5.0 Management of Incidents

- 5.1 Schools should have a process in place to ensure that employees can access support in the event of an incident, such as a Relationships and Behaviour Policy. Suitable arrangements should be put in place in the event of senior management being out of the building so that there is a clear and consistent approach which all employees are made aware of.
- 5.2 Following an incident, Senior Managers must decide on appropriate action, ensuring that the employee is reassured, supported and confident that their needs will be met. Restorative practice and trauma informed approaches should be enacted upon in support of all involved in the incident. Risk assessments should also be considered and created where required.
- 5.3 If there is an emergency situation that requires immediate police attendance, the police should be contacted without delay and the Chief Education Officer informed. Thereafter the Head Teacher should involve the Community Police.
- 5.4 Employees, as individuals, are entitled to involved the police but as a courtesy should inform their Head Teacher, who should inform the Chief Education Officer.

Where an incident of violence involving an employee occurs, the Head Teacher or representative will conduct an investigation. The investigation must be passed onto the Health and Safety Team through the HS1a form and any other supporting documentation for appropriate recording within 48 hours of the incident. The actions must be stated in the HS1a or H&S Investigation report and recorded appropriately as other actions such as establishing industrial injury or personal injury claims might arise

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later and the information will be required.

Where more time is required for a full investigation, this should be noted within the HS1a form, as the Health and Safety Team must investigate alongside the Head Teacher or other delegated person responsible for supporting the investigation as per EDC's SP01 Reporting Procedures. The extent of the investigation will depend on the severity of the incident. This may include gathering witness statements from those involved.

- 5.5 Following the investigation, the Head Teacher or representative will agree appropriate actions which may include, for example, a restorative meeting, an amended timetable, alternative supports for all involved and ultimately this could involve exclusion in accordance with national and local policy. The Team Around the Child should convene in all circumstances.
- 5.6 In the case of extreme behaviour, the Team Around the Child (TAC) should be reconvened to discuss any planning for the child or young person; such as Action Plans or Risk Assessments and make any appropriate adjustments. Health and Safety employees and representatives of Professional Associations can be involved in these procedures, as appropriate.
- 5.7 The Councils '*Unacceptable Customer Behaviour Policy (2024)*' continues to provide support for those in educational settings, whereby a zero tolerance is taken towards violence towards staff. The Chief Education Officer continues to be notified of unacceptable behaviour towards staff in schools and centres by senior management, where required central education teams are assigned to offer guidance and advice in support of all staff.

6.0 Wellbeing of the Employee

- 6.1 Following an incident of violence, the overriding concern should be the wellbeing of the employee and any others involved.
- 6.2 East Dunbartonshire Council will offer a range of support to employees who have been subject to violence arising from their workplace. A Wellbeing meeting and debrief should be held as soon as possible after the incident to determine how best to support the employee, this may also include an individual risk assessment for the employee or any safe systems of work to be implemented, including reference and signposting to the Wellbeing section within the Employee Zone.
[Wellbeing - East Dunbartonshire Council](#)
- 6.3 Those who suffer violence will require sympathetic support to rebuild their professional and/or personal confidence. Where required, employees should seek medical advice who can offer signposted support. Managers and employees should also consult "*Responding to a Critical Incident in School: Framework for Support and Intervention for Management and Staff*" and the Wellbeing section within the Employee Zone, where counselling support can be referred into.

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Staff should be fully supported during such times and consideration of the incident with regards to supports the employee may require should be discussed with their line manager. Ensuring reasonable adjustments have been made with regards to the wellbeing and safety for all involved.

- 6.4 An employee can also access guidance and support through their trade union representative.
- 6.5 As soon as possible afterwards, the Head Teacher or representative should arrange a meeting to consider the incident and any matters arising from it; the employee has the right to be accompanied at any such meeting. A companion may be a fellow worker or a trade union official. A representative acting in a legal capacity will not be considered an appropriate companion.

7.0 Reporting and Recording Incidents

Recording incidents helps to build up a true picture of the risks and triggers for work related violent incidents, as defined in paragraph 1.4, and therefore helps in the monitoring and development of appropriate prevention strategies. It can contribute towards evidence which may be required should legal proceedings be initiated. Employees will be encouraged to report and record incidents of violence and be aware of the process for doing so. Employees should report all incidents and should not accept that violence is part of the job or that reporting violence will be considered as incompetence.

- 7.1 The employee experiencing violence should be encouraged to contact their appropriate trade union representative for further advice and support if required.
- 7.2 It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher or designated senior manager to work with the employee to record the incident using the '[Accident and Incident Reporting](#)' Form (HS1(a)) and provide a copy of the paperwork to the employee concerned on the day of the incident or as soon as possible thereafter within 48 hours of the incident.
- 7.3 All incidents should be recorded on the form as detailed above in paragraph 7.2 and emailed by the Head Teacher or designated senior manager, copying in the employee and link Quality Improvement Officer, to the Health and Safety inbox at Health.Safety@eastdunbarton.gov.uk.
- 7.4 The Health & Safety team will record the accident/incident and depending on the nature of the incident, may investigate it further.
- 7.5 If an employee is hospitalised or has to go home following an incident of violence, Health & Safety should be notified immediately with involvement of other teams as appropriate such as HR and senior managers. It is recognised that this approach may become impractical if there is a high recurrence rate. In these circumstances, it is recommended to contact the Health and Safety Team and agree arrangements for recurrence reporting, e.g. send regular updates stating how many times the incident has recurred.

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7.6 Where an employee is absent for more than seven consecutive days as the result of a violent incident (this seven day period does not include the day of the incident, but does include weekends and rest days) East Dunbartonshire Council's reporting procedures should be followed in line with the [Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations \(RIDDOR\) 2013](#). These reports are completed by the Health & Safety Team after the school has reported the incident through [HS1a form](#). The Health and Safety Team will follow up the HS1a/Violence form if the employee has been absent since the violence incident. RIDDOR reports to the HSE are carried out by the Health and Safety Team only. The RIDDOR report must be made within 15 days of the incident.

8.0 Monitoring of Incidents

- 8.1 Central Officers are provided with information pertaining to incidents identified and recorded using appropriate Health and Safety processes and documentation for educational settings.
- 8.2 Discussion by Health and Safety representatives at Tier 3 levels with regards to occurring incidents, reporting into Tier 2.
- 8.3 Statistics will be reported to the appropriate Health & Safety Committee for consideration at Tier 1. The Chief Education Officer attends the Tier 2 Health and Safety Committee; this will include the presentation of the volume of accidents/incidents reported along with an analysis of trends and hot spots to inform future actions.
- 8.4 A statistical analysis of incidents is reported annually to the Education Committee including any immediate actions and next steps.