



Rationale

All staff require a safe working environment, free from physical or verbal abuse. This will allow staff to do their jobs to the best of their abilities without the threat of mental or physical harm.

Purposes

The purpose of this protocol is to set out the acceptable standards of behaviour and the appropriate action that should be taken if there is a real or perceived threat to the safety of any member of staff.

Guidelines

The Firs Lower is a school in which everyone should be accorded the respect due to them as a member of the school community.

Adult communications (verbally or in writing) should be conducted by both parties

- politely
- without aggression in voice, action or word

In the event of a member of staff receiving an abusive written communication they should:

1. Inform the headteacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team and ensure they give them a copy of the letter / email / note in question.

In the event of a member of staff being or feeling threatened and/or verbally abused they should:

1. Take reasonable steps to get support from another adult preferably a member of the SLT
2. Feel able to terminate the conversation, reporting the events immediately to the most senior member of staff available, who will investigate what has happened and speak to the person / people concerned to reinforce the terms of this school policy.
3. If/when they feel safe to do so, ask the person causing the threat to leave the school property (or get support from colleagues to do so).

All parties should recognise that different individuals will likely have different tolerances to threatening behaviour and their feelings and actions should be respected. Nevertheless where matters are investigated further by the SLT, they will apply the standard of the “reasonable person” to consider whether or not the behaviour is unacceptable and if appropriate, seek to mediate between the parties to resolve differences.

In the event of a member of staff being physically assaulted they should:

1. Immediately leave the meeting and seek a place of safety
2. Make contact with the headteacher or a member of the SLT.

If an incident is reported to the headteacher or member of the SLT, s/he will:

1. Ensure that the member of staff is safe and that their well being has been protected;

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2. Investigate the events leading to the incident being reported to establish the facts and to decide on an appropriate reaction;
3. If appropriate, take steps to ensure that there is no repetition, by contacting the person who is allegedly responsible for the incident and arranging to meet them to discuss what happened;
4. Decide if an order restricting that person's access to the school's site is an appropriate course of action, ensuring that guidance is sought from the school's legal services adviser if this is necessary;
5. Report the incident to the police in the case of a physical assault.
6. Report the incident to the Chair of Governors.
7. Contact the sender, in the case of an abusive written communication, to discuss the note/letter/email, reminding the sender about these protocols and the unacceptable nature of such a communication. (If further abusive communications are received, it may be necessary to insist that all further communications are via the headteacher.)

The headteacher will regularly remind the school community of these protocols by means of signs around the school site and through making it available on the school website / in staff updates.

Conclusion

It is reasonable for school staff to expect to be able to work in a safe environment free from the fear of threat, verbal or physical abuse. The school will robustly uphold the terms of this policy to ensure that it meets its duty of care to the staff.