



WORK RELATED VIOLENCE SENDAT POLICY

This policy is reviewed biennially by the
SENDAT Provision Standards and Attainment (PSA) Committee.

To be read in conjunction with but not limited to:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection policy
- Staff Mental Health & Wellbeing policy
- Code of Conduct for Employees & Volunteers
- Lone working policy
- Student Behaviour Management & related student policies
- Students' individual Risk Benefit Assessments (RBAs)

and other relevant policies and procedures

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WORK-RELATED VIOLENCE - SENDAT Policy

1. STATEMENT OF INTENT

- 1.1. SENDAT is a Multi Academy Trust specialising in the care and education of young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. This policy should be considered in the light of this context and the complexity of need that is accommodated within the Trust and its constituent Schools / Alternative Provisions (APs).
- 1.2. This policy shows how SENDAT and all its constituent Schools/APs exercises its duty of care to keep its staff safe from work-related violence and risks of being harmed by students or third parties in the course of their work.
- 1.3. Work-related violence is defined as any incident in which an employee or volunteer is abused, threatened or assaulted, either physically or verbally, in the course of their employment.
- 1.4. "Third parties" includes relatives, carers and friends of students, visiting professionals, suppliers and contractors. There are separate policies and procedures for addressing abuse to and from colleagues in the workplace, which is usually treated as misconduct and addressed through SENDAT Disciplinary, Grievance and Bullying & Harassment policies.
- 1.5. All policies referred to in this document may be access at:
<https://priorysuffolksch.sharepoint.com/:f/s/SENDATEMPLOYEEINFORMATIONHUB/ElbmW8qGPEZDjDVWjgxGJ4ABvrG5W7-dCHNWuhNiPol2PA?e=LRTT8T>

Paper copies of all SENDAT policies, procedures and guidance documents may be requested from the SENDAT HR team: email hr@sendat.academy

- 1.4 The SENDAT Board of Directors recognises the entitlement of a work/life balance for all staff colleagues as established in their terms and conditions of working. Consequently,



this policy has been workload impact assessed (see Appendix 1) and SENDAT Schools/APs will organise all activities relating to this policy within normal working hours.

- 1.5 The SENDAT Board of Directors is committed to ensuring that this policy is applied in a way that is fair and non-discriminatory.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1. This policy applies to all SENDAT staff and volunteers in the course of their work, whether they are on a SENDAT site or in another location e.g. accompanying students on trips, visits or work experience placements.

2.2. The SENDAT default position is that its staff should always be treated courteously and with respect for the work they are doing. They should not be subject to abusive behaviour in any form, which includes:

- rude, disrespectful and offensive behaviour, including derogatory remarks and disruptive acts amounting to verbal and emotional abuse,
- sexually inappropriate comments and behaviour
- racist and discriminatory abuse
- threats of physical violence
- aggressive and violent behaviour

3. Context

It is important that we try to embed a Trauma Informed approach to all our work.

To this end it is important to acknowledge the wider stress and difficulties many families will be facing and this can exacerbate their responses and aggression to staff.

Most families with SEND student will have had a very fractured education experience. They may feel that they have had to fight for everything. They may feel worn out by it all.

Many families may be struggling financially

The family may be dealing with bereavement or other relationship issues

The thresholds for social and health services is now so high that families may be struggling to access help and support.

Whilst these cannot be excuses for aggressive behaviour it is important to understand the context as this will affect the way we respond.

A solution focused approach to finding out the key issues and ways to address these would be best.



4. RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1. SENDAT Board of Directors and Local Academy Boards (LABs)

SENDAT Directors and LAB members will:

- 4.1.1. Ensure the TLG implements and monitors this policy and that procedures are in place that recognise and address the issues of work-related violence, in the light of changing needs and legislative frameworks.
- 4.1.2. Ensure that all SENDAT policies are assessed for workload impact.
- 4.1.3. Take into account and monitor the equality implications of any policies introduced.

4.2. SENDAT Trust Leadership Group (TLG) will:

- a. Regularly review, update and implement this policy across the Trust and ensure that their staff and local leadership teams are aware of it and understand it. The TLG will also respond and give serious consideration to 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.
- b. Put in place and monitor systems to assess, record, audit and control all risks to its staff from any form of behaviour that breaches acceptable standards of conduct amounting to abuse by students and/or third parties. This means that all risks of workplace abuse are comprehensively assessed and any identified risks are systematically managed.

3.3 SENDAT local Leadership Teams will:

- a. Investigate any reports of work-related violence, threats or abuse and respond to them promptly, normally within one working day.
- b. Record details of the incident and give all employees involved in the incident full support during the whole process.
- c. Respond to and, where possible, resolve incidents before they escalate. This includes ensuring that any local 'on call' systems and procedures are clearly communicated and working effectively so that support and back-up is provided to staff when needed.
- d. Ensure that all staff colleagues receive the necessary and appropriate training in:
 - Behaviour management
 - De-escalation techniques and mediation
 - Trauma-informed practices
 - a. Brief Solution focused therapy
 - Restraint techniques (normally applicable to senior roles)
- e. Provide support and guidance to staff colleagues who are victims or witness to work-related violence, including:



- 'Time out' i.e. a period of non-contact time with the student or group of students involved;
 - Temporary transfer to another KS or area of working (where possible and appropriate);
 - De-briefing within 24 hours of the incident;
 - Further and/or refresher training where necessary and appropriate;
 - Suggestions of any additional measures which might help to prevent and manage work-related violence;
 - Referrals / signposting to specialist support, such as:
 - In-house staff mentors and/or specialist therapists
 - SimplyHealth confidential helpline
 - Occupational Health
- f. Discuss the harm caused by an incident or series of incidents and risks or further harm to those subject to such behaviour and decide the actions to be taken. This will depend upon the form and seriousness of the disrespectful or abusive behaviour and take into account the Risk Benefit Assessment (RBA), Educational Healthcare Plan (EHCP) and any other information known about the individual student and/or third party. Where it is indicated from the available information that there are risks of abuse from students, particularly concerning potential aggression and violence, this should be included in the RBA so that they can be appropriately managed with, if necessary, contingency protocols put in place to control the risks. Individual RBAs will continue to be reviewed and revised with continuing risks and incidents of abuse.
- g. Avoid the need for lone working whenever there are identified threats to employees' personal safety from the abusive behaviour of students. RBAs should identify any student whose care and support needs should not be met by a lone worker or where support is not immediately available.
- h. Seek information from other agencies about prospective students and their families about any risks to their staff from abusive and violent behaviour, including racial abuse etc.
- i. Inform visitors to any SENDAT School/AP or the Trust Central offices who act in an abusive or threatening manner towards staff that they will be asked to leave prevented from entering any SENDAT site if their behaviour and attitude persists.

3.4 SENDAT employees will:

- a. Always work to minimise the risk of and prevent abusive, aggressive and violent behaviour, using trauma informed practices and techniques wherever possible. They are encouraged to adopt a confident, calm, professional, dignified approach in response to any disrespectful, impolite or overtly abusive behaviour.



- b. Remain consistent in their approach to dealing with individuals and groups of students, in accordance with any agreed behaviour management strategies.
- c. Maintain appropriate professional boundaries in their dealings with students and their families / carers.
- d. Record and regularly update RBAs and any other relevant documentation using the SENDAT Arbor, CPOMS and any other online and/or paper-based systems as required.
- e. Share any concerns or observations of unusual or uncharacteristic behaviour with staff colleagues and local leadership teams without delay.
- f. Reflect on their own skills, competence and knowledge and identify any additional training needs and support which they feel may be necessary to enable them to manage behaviour effectively and avoid potential incidents of work-related violence. Talk to local leadership teams about any needs identified as soon as possible, as well as including in Appraisal review meetings.
- g. Avoid retaliating to others' abusive behaviour in kind other than to protect their own safety, for example, where being physically attacked. This is important to allow for constructive solutions to be found, to avoid escalation and counter charges, which could make them subject to safeguarding or other allegations.

4. PROCEDURES

- 4.1 The issues concerning students who are persistently disrespectful and/or abusive to staff colleagues will be addressed through their RBAs, EHCPs and Individual Learning Plans (ILPs). Although SENDAT accepts that any abuse and/or aggression should not be tolerated, it is also recognised that there are often underlying factors behind an individual's behaviour and will always seek to manage the situation in a constructive way.
- 4.2 If staff are subject to abuse by a third party, they should state that they will report it and indicate that the matter will be followed up. They might also direct the person to the SENDAT Complaints policy where appropriate.
- 4.3 Responding to violent situations
In the event of a violent or aggressive incident, staff should adhere to the following procedure.
 - I. The priority of staff must be for their own safety and for the safety of other students and staff colleagues.
 - II. Staff should immediately try to summon help, preferably from a senior staff colleague nearby, or the person on call; in most cases by using the local 'on-call' system.



- III. Staff should try to calm the situation wherever possible, talking to the potential aggressor calmly, if possible using trauma informed techniques and/or agreed behaviour management strategies. Staff should try not to get angry and should never shout back.
- IV. Where the level of threat continues to increase and staff feel that they are in imminent danger then they should:
 - Remove other students from the vicinity;
 - Try to ensure that the student displaying violent behaviour cannot harm themselves;
 - Call for help.
- V. Staff who are being assaulted may defend themselves, but they must use only the “minimum reasonable force” to do this.

4.4 Physical Intervention

- a. Staff must always deal with behaviour that challenges them calmly and professionally. Physical and verbal aggression by a student or third party should be understood by staff (who will refer to the RBA and other available documentation) and dealt with appropriately.
- b. In the event of an aggressive incident staff should summon help immediately. They should try to de-escalate incidents, wherever possible, and their priority should be for their own safety and the safety of other students and staff colleagues who are present. Physical interventions should be used only as a last resort by trained staff, and in line with best practice guidance to protect the rights and best interests of the student, and which are the minimum consistent with safety of all concerned.
- c. If a member of staff is attacked they are permitted to use “minimum reasonable force” to defend themselves. Care should therefore be taken to ensure that minimum force is indeed used and that students who are acting in an aggressive or threatening manner are not subject to undue restraint.
- d. The law gives protection to people from being abused or attacked and, if a member of staff is attacked, they can use “minimum reasonable force” to defend themselves. However, staff should remember that if they restrain a violent person and injure them because of the force they use, they could be charged for assault. Because of this risk, staff should always follow the established procedure.

4.5 Reporting and Support

- a. Any verbally abusive or violent behaviour towards staff (or volunteers), no matter how minor, must be reported at once to their KS Lead / Team Leader who should make a record in the incident book.
- b. Staff involved should complete and submit an incident report, via Arbor, CPOMS or other school/AP system as appropriate.



- c. Appropriate support will be offered by the local Leadership Team to employees who are subject to abuse and who are emotionally distressed as a result and to any staff member involved in violent or aggressive incidents.
 - d. Violent or aggressive incidents, even if they just amount to being shouted at, can be very upsetting for a member of staff and, in extreme cases, can lead to them suffering psychological trauma or illness — staff should therefore be given the opportunity to discuss their experiences.
 - e. In extreme cases, the TLG and local Leadership Teams understand that there may be a need for ongoing support and referral to occupational health services or professional counselling.
 - f. Where absence from work arises from a violent or aggressive incident, any such absence will be treated as special leave rather than sickness absence.
 - g. The School/AP might need to notify the Health and Safety Executive under RIDDOR reporting procedures if the injuries meet their criteria.
 - h. If a student or students have been harmed, the local Leadership team should refer the matter in accordance with the SENDAT Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.
- 4.6 The TLG and/or local Leadership Team will always seek the approval and consent of the member of staff attacked before making any decision about reporting the incident to the police or other authorities. However, it will report the matter without the victim's consent where it deems this to be the correct and necessary action to take in order to protect the best interests of those involved.

5. MONITORING

- 5.1 The TLG and local Leadership Teams will review all reports of aggression and violence or potential aggression and violence and look for any trends or patterns or lessons to be learned. This is done with reference to relevant SENDAT policies, procedures and guidance and might require a review of these and other policies, systems and practices.
- 5.2 The TLG and local Leadership Teams will carefully monitor all incident reports relating to violence or the use of restraint to ensure that both staff and students are being appropriately protected. Any suspicion of abuse by staff or by others, or any whistleblowing by other staff, will be investigated and acted upon in accordance with the SENDAT Safeguarding & Child Protection and Whistleblowing policies.
- 5.3 This policy, and all other associated policies are regularly reviewed. If all policies and procedures are working adequately and are being properly applied, SENDAT would expect abusive behaviour and violent incidents to be rare and the appropriate use of restraint to be a last resort used only in exceptional circumstances. SENDAT always requires the regular and proactive review of care and support plans to ensure that the most appropriate level of care and support is being provided to students and the use of restraint avoided.



6. TRAINING

- 6.1 SENDAT ensures that all staff are trained to show respect for others and to expect the same respect from others as described in this policy.
- 6.2 The appropriate response to verbal abuse, aggressive or potentially violent behaviour is included in the induction training for all new staff.
- 6.3 All staff are trained to recognise the early warning signs of potential aggression and how and where to seek support if needed, including in high risk situations the use of local on-call systems and procedures.
- 6.4 In-house training sessions are conducted at least annually and all relevant staff will attend, usually as part of the SENDAT PD days programme.
- 6.5 Staff training includes guidance in the use of trauma-informed practices and skills, de-escalation techniques, physical interventions and restraint in the care and support of students. Where required, staff are trained in a range of intervention strategies that have developed in respect of socially inappropriate behaviour. This training includes:
 - de-escalation techniques
 - the concept and use of “minimum force”
 - approved and acceptable breakaway techniques
 - inappropriate or unacceptable techniques.
- 6.6 The TLG and local Leadership teams are trained in the management of abusive behaviour, violent or emergency situations and in appropriate post-incident follow-up.



ANNEXE 1

WORKLOAD IMPACT ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

CHECKLIST	YES/NO
This policy complies with and is consistent with the contractual entitlements of all staff colleagues affected by this policy, either directly or indirectly.	Yes
This policy and any related procedures was introduced following full consultation with staff and recognised TU representatives.	Yes
This policy and any related procedures include a specific statement regarding workload impact.	Yes
The impact of this policy and related procedures is that they have not added additional hours of working.	Yes
This policy does not duplicate any other existing SENDAT policy.	No
All policies are regularly reviewed in order to assess whether they are outdated and/or unnecessary.	Yes
All SENDAT Schools / APs have identified the resources necessary to support the policy, including staff time, any additional staffing and appropriate equipment.	Yes
All staff colleagues affected by this policy will be trained where necessary to ensure the policy and any related procedures will not increase workload to an unacceptable level.	Yes
This policy and related procedures are reviewed regularly to ensure that additional workload burdens have not been added over time.	Yes