



## London Borough of Enfield

<b>Report Title</b>	Violence and Aggression against school staff
<b>Report to</b>	Children and Young Person's Scrutiny Panel
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> March 2024
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	<b>Cllr Abdullahi</b>
<b>Executive Director / Director</b>	<b>Tony Theodoulou/Peter Nathan</b>
<b>Report Author</b>	Sarah Fryer sarah.fryer@enfield.gov.uk
<b>Ward(s) affected</b>	
<b>Classification</b>	Part 1 Public
<b>Reason for exemption</b>	

### Purpose of Report

1. To update the Panel in response to an item proposed by Cllr Thorp on incidents of violence against staff in school.

### Main Considerations for the Panel

2. The Schools Health and Safety Team collates violent, abuse and incidents which have caused harm data via the CLASSI reporting system for community schools as we are the dutyholder for those schools. It also records information provided to us by Voluntary Aided, Foundation and Academies who buy back into the Health and Safety Service Level Agreement (SLA). There is no requirement for schools other than community schools to use the system or report incidents of any description to the Local Authority.
3. There are the following designations of schools which buy back into Schools Health and Safety (including asbestos):

- a. Community (included) 33
- b. Academy (buy in) 27
- c. Foundation (buy in) 3
- d. Voluntary Aided (buy in) 22
- e. **Asbestos only** – Academies 15

4. The CLASSI reporting system is used to record violence and abuse incidents in schools. The accident reporting policy for schools provides examples of what schools should be reporting, see below:

- a. All incidents of violence and abuse against staff should be reported:
  - i. Member of the public abusing a member of staff over the phone.
  - ii. Member of public threatening a member of staff at work.
  - iii. Other types of violence/aggression incidents e.g. service users/members of the public having an altercation in a School building

should be recorded on the CLASSI system.

**Note:** *If the incident involves an assault or physical damage an Accident report must also be completed.*

5. It is to be noted that data is not specifically held with regards to violence or physical harm against staff by children or other members of staff. These would be held internally to the school and where an accident has occurred should be on the accident report.

6. If the accident is covered by RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) then a report would be submitted to the Health and Safety Executive. Over the last 5 years, there have been a total of 11 incidents (approx two a year) where all bar one incident involved SEN children have injured a member of staff such that a RIDDOR report was required, 8 of these have been within Special Schools, three in a mainstream primary settings.

7. Separately, it is to be noted that there have been an increasing number incidents which are not reportable as RIDDOR, the vast majority of which are Special Educational Needs (SEN) behaviour incidents. The classification of 'SEN' could be children with an Education, Care and Health Plan (EHCP) or children who are recognised as having additional needs within the school, including those who the school are collecting evidence for an EHCP assessment.

- a. 2018: 46 incidents
- b. 2019: 189 incidents
- c. 2020: 18 incidents
- d. 2021/22: 100 incidents
- e. 2022/23: 368 incidents (142 incidents in the period Sept to Dec)
- f. Sept 2023 to end Dec 23: 199 incidents

8. Two points of note: a) 2020 was the year that there was Covid Lockdown for much of the year, and this would explain the low numbers of incidents

in that year and b) The figures now show two consecutive years Sept to Dec figures for comparison which are analysed in more detail below.

9. Previously it has been noted that there was a substantial rise in incidents in the last academic year. There could be many reasons why there has been a rise including the trauma felt by some children following lockdown, and the lack of social interaction during that time, the increasing needs of some of our children, as well as a great number of children that we are retaining within the Borough in our Additional Resource Provisions (ARPs). Whilst we are now further from the Covid Lockdowns, children are still feeling the impact, as are schools.
10. However, this rise in incidents must be, and is being, taken seriously as a concern for schools and staff.
11. Looking at these figures in greater depth, and remembering that there has been some additional training on the CLASSI reporting system, the understanding of what to report and an increased awareness of the need to report the incidents since September 2022 (which is when these figures started to be analysed in greater depth) of the 567 incidents reported
  - a. 263 were in Special Schools
  - b. 33 was in a Secondary School
  - c. 271 were in Primary Schools
12. The figures can be again split by the type of injury and as such are, in academic year 2022/23:

a.	Bite	72
b.	Bruise/Abrasion/Bump	179
c.	Concussion	1
d.	Crushing (head/chest/abdomen)	2
e.	Cut or puncture (but not needlestick injuries)	22
f.	Eye Injury / reduction/loss	5
g.	Fracture (other than finger, thumb or toe)	1
h.	Fracture to finger, thumb or toe	1
i.	Needlestick Injury	0
j.	None Visible	52
k.	Not Physical - Threatened, Verbal Abuse	8
l.	Skin Irritation	0
m.	Scalping	1
n.	Sprain or Strain	23
o.	Sting	1
		368

For September 23 to Dec 23:

a.	Bite	38
b.	Bruise/Abrasion/Bump	79
c.	Concussion	1
d.	Crushing (head/chest/abdomen)	0
e.	Cut or puncture (but not needlestick injuries)	5
f.	Eye Injury / reduction/loss	1
g.	Fracture (other than finger, thumb or toe)	1
h.	Fracture to finger, thumb or toe	1
i.	Needlestick Injury	2
j.	None Visible	56
k.	Not Physical - Threatened, Verbal Abuse	8
l.	Skin Irritation	1
m.	Scalping	0
n.	Sprain or Strain	6
o.	Sting	0
		199

Comparing Sept to Dec in this Academic Year and previous gives the following:

		Sept to Dec 22	Sept to Dec 23
a.	Bite	28	38
b.	Bruise/Abrasion/Bump	76	79
c.	Concussion	0	1
d.	Crushing (head/chest/abdomen)	1	0
e.	Cut or puncture (but not needlestick injuries)	6	5
f.	Eye Injury / reduction/loss	4	1
g.	Fracture (other than finger, thumb or toe)	0	1
h.	Fracture to finger, thumb or toe	0	1
i.	Needlestick Injury	0	2
j.	None Visible	15	56
k.	Not Physical - Threatened, Verbal Abuse	0	8
l.	Skin Irritation	0	1
m.	Scalping	0	0
n.	Sprain or Strain	12	6
o.	Sting	0	0
		142	199

13. It can be seen that the largest rise is in those issues that were reported but resulted in no visible injury (41), but clearly there has been an incident warranting reporting. Other than that, the other incidents have remained approximately the same as the previous year. The rise could be due to increased awareness and increased reporting but this cannot be assumed to be the only reason.
14. Children with SEND or those with additional needs may have more challenging behaviours at times and these incidents can be taken that they are acting within the parameters of their own expected behaviours. Although they could be considered as a form of violence, it could be seen as unintentional physical harm as it is expected behaviour for children with

those diagnosis which schools and staff are aware of, schools should have risk assessments and appropriate strategies in place for, and other relevant professionals will be involved.

15. With regard to these incidents there are a number of areas of support for schools which are continuing and have been previously outlined:
  - a. The Health and Safety Team have worked with the schools putting additional risk assessments in place and training for staff in working with these children to reduce the likelihood of them becoming agitated and/violent.
  - b. The Health and Safety Team provides schools with templates for a Visitor Behaviour Policy, a Visitor risk assessment, and a Pupil risk assessment.
  - c. Enfield has Responding to Critical Incidents Protocol For Schools and Educational Settings which follows the Enfield Trauma Informed Practice approach.
  - d. The support for Special schools includes the funding model taking into account things such as class size, ratios, etc and gives flexibility for Heads to organise classes as they see best. Two of the Special Schools are PRICE trainers. PRICE equips staff with the knowledge, skills and confidence to safely respond to situations where the behaviour of individuals or groups is impeding learning.
  - e. With regards to support for mainstream settings, especially primary schools, there is an outreach offer organised by SEND using the Special Schools and this includes Primary Behaviour Support Service. There are services such as Enfield Advisory Service for Autism (EASA) and ECASS that offer support and advice to schools. There is a Senior School Improvement Advisor for Safeguarding & Inclusion that offers support and advice for schools.
16. In addition to these measures, in September 2023 a task and finish group was formed consisting of the following stakeholders:
  - a. Headteachers from all school phases
  - b. Unions (NEU, NASUWT, Unison, GMB)
  - c. Governors
  - d. School Improvement Service
  - e. Schools Personnel Service
  - f. Health and Safety
17. Two meetings of the group have been held and the following actions have been taken forward to date:
  - a. A Violence and Aggression against school staff policy has been formulated and consulted on. It is being revised following feedback. Schools and Unions were pleased with the document, and it provides guidance for schools on their approaches.

- b. A survey for staff has been produced, and is being circulated to schools to gain an understanding of how staff feel about the situation and their knowledge of procedures for reporting and support. Responses are currently being collated to inform future meetings
- c. Data is being collated about the numbers of incidents of violent or aggressive behaviour as recorded by schools to be looked at over time since Sept 23. Schools who do not use the LA Health and Safety Service have been requested to provide data so that there is a fuller picture across the Borough
- d. Posters have been produced and circulated to schools to remind staff that violence or abuse is not acceptable, what they should do if they feel they have encountered it and where to report it,

## **Conclusions**

18. Incidents of violence and aggression, whether physical or verbal, are taken seriously. Whilst there remain a small number considering the population of Enfield school children being over 56,000, they are still unacceptable. We understand that each incident impacts staff and pupils and would want to keep any incidents to minimum, and learn lessons to reduce the risk of it reoccurring.
19. Once agreed, the implementation of the Violence and Aggression against school staff policy is an initiative that aims to prevent or minimise the risk of, and to manage and respond to, work-related violence and aggression. The policy is seen as a key tool that is designed to be part of processes and initiatives that relate either directly or indirectly to other policies, arrangements and procedures. The intention following implementation of the policy is to review it initially after 2 school terms to allow it to begin embedding.
20. Schools have a range of support that they can access. Each school has an SEND Case Officer assigned to them and they can contact these for advice and support as needed. There is a Professional Learning training offer, some free to schools and some traded.
21. We are also considering what additional support or training we can provide for schools and staff following further evidence gathering. Our aim is to support schools to support their staff and pupils so that incidents reduce. There is an acknowledgement that no one-size-fits-all, or that schools are not already working hard in this area.

## **Background and Options**

22. Cllr Thorp requested that the panel see data, patterns, intervention, and safeguarding for staff one year after the previous report.

## **Relevance to Council Plans and Strategies**

23. Thriving Children and Young people with the outcome of Residents live happy, healthy and safe lives

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## **Appendices**

None

## **Background Papers**

None

**Departmental reference number, if relevant:**