

London Borough of Enfield

[Meeting title and Date]

Subject: Violence against School Staff

Cabinet Member: Cllr Abdullahi

Executive Director: Tony Theodoulou

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.

Relevance to the Council Plan

- 2.

Background

3. Cllr Thorp requested that the panel see data, patterns, intervention, and safeguarding for staff

Main Considerations for the Panel

4. 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.
5. There are the following designations of schools which buy back into Schools Health and Safety:
 - a. Community (included) 34
 - b. Academy (buy in) 27
 - c. Foundation (buy in) 6
 - d. Voluntary Aided (buy in) 22
6. 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.*

7. 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.
8. 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 7 incidents (one or two a year) where SEN children have injured a member of staff such that a RIDDOR report was required, 6 of these have been within Special Schools, one this year in a mainstream setting. No other similar violence, physical harm or abuse against a member of staff has been reported from children without Special Educational or Additional Needs.
9. Appendix 1 show the details of incidents of violence and abuse that the Local Authority have been informed of. These can be summarised as
 - a. 2018: 6 incidents
 - b. 2019: 0 incidents
 - c. 2020: 0 incidents
 - d. 2021/22: 2 incidents
 - e. 2022 to date: 1 incident
10. It can be seen that there are very few incidents reported of violence against staff, either in the pre-CLASSI system or in the more recent times where the reporting system was improved.
11. Separately, it is to be noted that there have been a number of incidents of Special Educational Needs (SEN) behaviour incidents. The classification of 'SEN' is one provided by the school so these 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 to date: 182 incidents

12. 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) that there seems to be a substantial rise in this academic year, as the figures are only for 5 months and yet nearly double the full academic year for 2021/22.
13. 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)
14. Looking at these figures in greater depth, and whilst there has recently been some additional training on the CLASSI reporting system and the understanding of what to report, of the 182 incidents reported
- a. 61 were in Special Schools
 - b. 1 was in a Secondary School
 - c. 120 were in Primary Schools

15. The figures can be again split by the type of injury and as such are:

a.	Bite	38
b.	Bruise/abrasion/bump	95
c.	Crushing (head/chest/abdomen)	1
d.	Cut or puncture (but not needlestick injuries)	9
e.	Eye injury/reduction/loss	4
f.	None visible	23
g.	Sprain or Strain	12

16. 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.
17. With regard to these incidents there are a number of areas of support for schools:
- a. The Health and Safety Team have over time looked at these incidents and worked with the schools and their subject matter experts to minimise harms and follow good practice, 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. To reduce the risk of violence or physical harm against staff, the Health and Safety Team provides schools with templates for a

Visitor Behaviour Policy (Appendix 2), a Visitor risk assessment (Appendix 3) and a Pupil risk assessment (Appendix 4)

- c. Enfield has Responding to Critical Incidents Protocol For Schools and Educational Settings for meeting the emotional needs following a sad or traumatic event. This is accessible for all schools and 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. The Special Schools follow Positive Behaviour Support (PBS).
- 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.

Conclusions

- 18. Whilst there are some incidents of physical harm that have been reported, and all are taken seriously, there remain a small number considering the population of Enfield school children being over 56,000. However, 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. 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. The borough is currently in the process of starting a trail of a Virtual Complex Needs School to support mainstream schools with more challenging situations and if successful this is something that will be rolled out to all schools.
- 20. Officers are working with schools, governors and staff representatives to develop guidance to support schools and staff where incidents which cause harm to staff may occur and the responses to them.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: School Violence on staff 17.01.23

Appendix 2: Visitor Behaviour Policy

Appendix 3: Visitor Example Risk Assessment Nov 15

Appendix 4: Pupil risk assessment template

Background Papers

The following documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report: