

# **Unacceptable Behaviour Procedure**

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**It is the responsibility of all Cathedral Schools Trust employees, governors and volunteers to familiarise themselves with the contents of all Trust policies and any amendments hereafter.**

**Cathedral Schools Trust**  
**June 2025**

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## **1. Purpose and scope**

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure a safe working environment for all staff by preventing and addressing incidents of violence, aggression and unacceptable behaviour towards staff members from parents, carers and members of the public. Cathedral Schools Trust (CST) takes a zero-tolerance approach to all physical attacks against staff.

This procedure applies to the Trust's employees, whether permanent, temporary, casual, part-time or on fixed-term contracts, to ex-employees, to job applicants and to individuals such as agency staff, consultants, volunteers, Governors and Trustees who are not our employees, but who work, volunteer or attend at one or more of the schools. This procedure should be read in conjunction with CST's overarching health and safety policy and the detailed policies for primary and secondary schools.

For incidents of unacceptable behaviour by pupils, please refer to the school's behaviour policy. For unacceptable behaviour from staff members please follow the steps in the CST Employment manual and the CST Disciplinary Procedure and refer to CST HR.

## **2. Equalities**

CST is committed to complying with all relevant employment and equalities legislation and regulations. The Trust supports the principle of equal opportunities and opposes discrimination on the basis of age, sex, marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity (defined as Protected Characteristics). Any violence or abuse in relation to one or more protected characteristic may constitute illegal harassment under the Equality Act 2010.

## **3. Roles and responsibilities**

CST has a duty under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 to provide its staff with a safe and healthy workplace. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- a safe system of work
- a safe place of work
- carrying out risk assessments as set out in regulations, and taking steps to eliminate or control these risks
- appointing a 'competent person' responsible for health and safety to oversee day-to-day safety management, oversee safety inspections, and liaise with staff safety reps
- providing adequate facilities for staff welfare at work.

**The Trust Board**, as the employer, is responsible for the provision of measures to safeguard its staff. It delegates the implementation of the measures provided for within this procedure to the CEO who in turn delegates this to the Headteacher of each individual school.

**The Executive Leadership team/Headteacher and Leadership Teams** will:

- expect that risk assessments are undertaken where required;
- ensure that relevant staff receive training at appropriate intervals in skills that can be used to minimise risks to personal safety such as managing conflict training;
- ensure that all staff are aware of the procedure to report incidents of violence and aggression;
- ensure that all such reports are thoroughly investigated and responded to;
- offer and provide appropriate post-incident support to staff; and
- monitor the effectiveness of this procedure.

All **employees** are responsible for:

- following working procedures and risk assessments;
- reporting likely or actual incidents of violence or aggression; and
- taking due regard for their own personal safety and well-being and for withdrawing from a situation where the risk of actual or potential violence or aggression is high.

#### **4. Definitions**

CST (the Trust) acknowledges the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) [definition of workplace violence](#) as "any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work"<sup>1</sup>. This includes the following:

- **Physical Violence:** Any act that causes physical harm.
- **Verbal Aggression:** Use of language that is intimidating or threatening.
- **Threatening Behaviour:** Actions that imply harm including unacceptable behaviour on social media or in communication with the school/ Trust or malicious damage to property.

'Assault' refers to any form of violent conduct against a member of staff. It may be physical, psychological, sexual and/or verbal. Behaviours associated with assault may include, but are not limited to: hitting, pinching, biting, spitting, swearing, offensive gestures and unwanted physical contact such as unnecessary touching. This procedure also covers threats of and attempted assault of any kind, and includes abuse and threats made via the telephone or via social media.

A parent is defined in section 576 Education Act 1996 as not just natural parents, but also anyone with parental responsibility in the Children Act 1989 or who has care of the child.

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<sup>1</sup> [Violence and aggression at work - Overview - HSE](#)

## **5. Preventing assaults – risk assessment**

The school will conduct regular and suitable risk assessments in relation to violence and unacceptable behaviour towards employees. The risk assessment will be kept under review and updated as necessary. It will include assessment of the risk of unacceptable behaviour towards staff on the school premises and also the risk of violent and dangerous incidents in the wider community or wider vicinity of the school.

The risk assessment procedure involves:

- establishing the risk of violence, assault and unacceptable behaviour towards employees
- considering the risk of stress and/or secondary trauma which arises from working in fear of violence and assault
- taking appropriate steps to remove these risks including promoting the school's commitment to a zero tolerance approach and displaying information in public areas.
- where removal of the risk is not possible, reducing the risk by any necessary changes in working practices or by introducing appropriate protective and supportive measures
- reviewing the risk assessment periodically to ensure it is fit for purpose
- recording the results of the risk assessment.

## **6. Unacceptable behaviour**

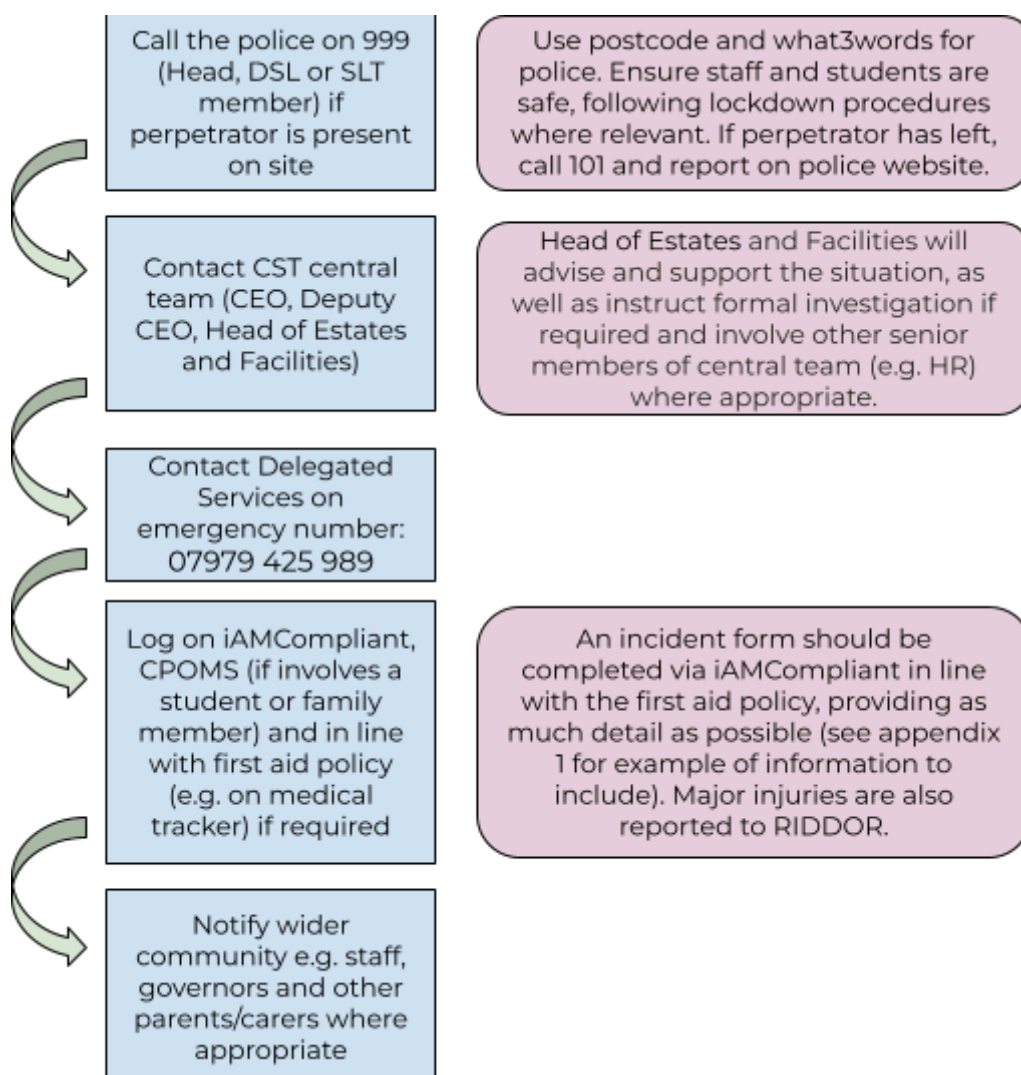
If there are instances of a pattern of unacceptable behaviour demonstrated by a parent, carer or member of the public, either in person, online or through written and verbal communication with the school, e.g. swearing or inappropriate verbal/writing communication or posting on social media, there will be a series of warnings.

A staged response will include written warnings (see appendix 2 below for template letters) firstly from a member of SLT, then from the Headteacher and then a final warning issued by Delegated Services. Depending on the severity of the incident, the school reserves the right to bar without going through a staged approach (see section 10 below for further information). If an appeal is made, the same process will be followed as shown in the flowchart in section 12.

## 7. Assaults physical or verbal intimidation by parents, carers or members of the public

If an employee is assaulted or is threatened with assault by a parent, carer or member of the public, action should be taken in line with the flowchart below:

Figure 1: serious incident flowchart



The school will liaise with the local police in line with the National Police Chief's Council guidance (NPCC) for dealing with assaults and violent incidents, including reporting on the [police website](#). This will allow the police to be notified and to respond promptly when such incidents occur. The Headteacher and/or the Designated Safeguarding Lead are responsible for contacting the police in these instances.

If a violent incident occurs that impacts on the school, the Headteacher will follow the steps in the school's critical incident and business continuity plan including lockdown arrangements and contact the police. This is particularly important if there is a

continuing risk. The school will convene a Critical Incidents Management Team and the response will follow the school's critical incident plan in terms of ongoing support to the whole school community.

The same procedure applies if a member of staff suffers an assault away from their normal workplace, but the assault arises in the course of/via the performance of their professional duties.

All assaults against staff should be reported, even if they initially appear trivial. An incident form is to be completed for any incident in line with the school's first aid policy.

If a Headteacher or member of SLT is assaulted, where appropriate the investigation will be carried out by the CEO, Deputy CEO or relevant members of the central team with support provided as required.

## **8. Harassment/Sexual Harassment**

The trust's Harassment and Bullying Policy in the Employment Handbook and accompanying sexual harassment risk assessment specifically considers the risk of sexual harassment against employees.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwanted conduct that violates an individual's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for the staff member.

It may take the form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, and it is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010. Any instances of harassment by third parties should be reported to the Headteacher in line with the CST Harassment and Bullying Policy.

## **9. Support for staff**

In the immediate aftermath of an incident:

- The employee will be allowed to access a private area following the incident.
- The incident will be recorded, as soon as possible after the incident, in line with the procedures set out in this document and the staff member will be asked to provide a statement when able to do so.
- Reports should include the date, time, location, and nature of the incident, along with any witnesses.
- Where required, medical treatment will be sought for the employee. The school's principal first aider will be asked to provide assistance, and further medical treatment assessment sought as necessary in line with the first aid policy.
- In the case of physical injuries, photos should be taken if possible.
- The Headteacher is responsible for delegating responsibility, if applicable, to ensure that written statements are taken from the employee, any witnesses, and the assailant (where applicable) as soon as possible following the incident.

- The employee will be invited to a debrief session with either a member of the senior leadership or safeguarding team to ascertain the circumstances surrounding the incident and support future risk management.

Additional support after the incident will include:

- Employees that have experienced an assault that is being investigated by police or leads to legal action will be permitted paid time off to meet with their trade union representative, the police, legal counsel and to attend court if necessary.
- If the employee sustains an injury arising from an assault at work, and it is necessary for them to take sick leave, the school will advise them of entitlement to sick pay and leave.
- The employee should also be encouraged to contact the trust's Employee Assistance Programme which includes counselling support. Following discussion with the school Business Manager or HR advisors, it may be appropriate to be referred to Occupational health for independent medical advice and support and any further support will be discussed with HR as required. This may include trauma counselling or additional supervision sessions for DSLs or other members of staff if required.

## 10. Barring

Schools have to act to ensure that they remain a safe place for pupils, staff and other members of their community. (See DfE guidance: [Controlling access to school premises](#)).

It is a criminal offence under section 547 of the Education Act 1996 for a person who is on school premises without lawful authority to cause or permit a nuisance or disturbance. An individual, including a parent/carer or member of the public may be asked to leave the premises in the event their behaviour is a cause for concern (for example their conduct is aggressive, abusive or insulting behaviour, or language) and presents a risk to staff or pupils, or makes them feel threatened.

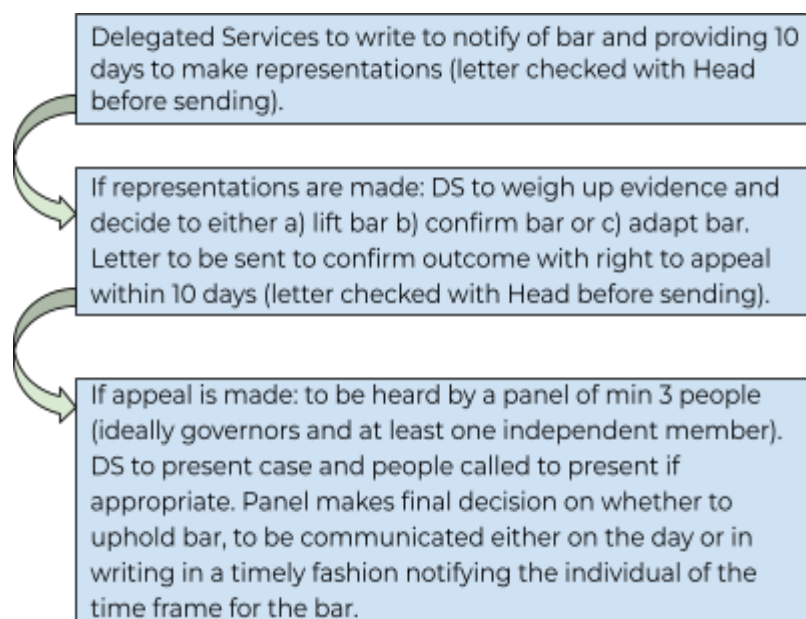
In serious cases Delegated Services will notify an individual in writing that their implied licence to be on school premises has been temporarily revoked and they are no longer permitted to come onto the premises in the future without an appointment. This bar, if immediate, will be a provisional barring until the individual has had the opportunity to make representations. These representations provide an opportunity to supply any additional context that may need to be taken into account.

After the individual's representations have been considered, Delegated Services will confirm if the bar will remain in place. Where the barring is confirmed, there will be a set time period for which the bar applies and when it will be reviewed. The flowchart below outlines this in more detail. On occasions where there are complaints alongside representations or an appeal on a bar, these should follow CST's complaints policy.



If a parent, carer or member of the public persists in entering the school premises and/or displaying unreasonable behaviour then a further meeting will be arranged to clarify the school's position with support for the Headteacher to be provided by Delegated Services and a member of the central team (e.g. Head of Estates, Deputy CEO). If that does not provide a resolution, the police will be contacted and the school will seek an injunction via a solicitor if required. If additional security is required, this can be arranged through Delegated Services.

Figure 2: barring flowchart



## 11. Investigation Process

A decision to carry out an investigation of the incident will be made by the Headteacher, or the CEO/Deputy CEO if required, based on the severity of the incident and the requirement for further action e.g. police referral or barring. Investigation of the incident will be carried out by Delegated Services, unless following procedures for staff in the CST employment manual. A report will be produced following the investigation and agreed with the employee and the school. A copy will be retained by the school. If the assault is being reported to the police, they may also receive a copy of the report. Following the incident, the risk assessment will be reviewed.

## 12. Record Keeping

The school will ensure that individual records and information about violence at work are managed appropriately in accordance with data-privacy requirements under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

### 13. Review and Monitoring

This procedure will be reviewed annually by the Trust board to ensure it remains effective and up-to-date and to reflect any changes in employment legislation.

Version	Date	Amended by	Recipients	Purpose
1	May 2025		Members of CST, every Trustee, each Local Governor, all Cathedral Schools Trust employees and volunteers and others at the discretion of the Chairman of the Trustees of CST. CST Website updated and emailed to parents.	

### 14. Approvals

Version	Date	Approved by
1	May 2025	
Date for next review of this procedure		



## Appendix 1 - Violent Incident Reporting

Name of Employee\_\_\_\_\_

Date of incident\_\_\_\_\_ Time of incident\_\_\_\_\_

Did the incident involve verbal abuse?

**Y N**

Did the incident involve a threat of violence?

**Y N**

Did the incident involve actual violence?

**Y N**

Did an injury occur because of the incident?

**Y N**

Was medical attention sought because of the injury?

**Y N**

Were the police notified of the incident?

**Y N**

Do you believe that this violent incident was carried out in relation to one or more protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and which may constitute illegal harassment under the Equality Act 2010?

**Y N**

Please describe the incident in detail. If an injury was sustained because of the incident, please describe the injury and any medical attention that was required. Attach any photographs that are available.

Signature of employee\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 2 - Template letters

### Stage 1 letter from member of SLT

Date

Address

Dear .....

It has been reported to me that on the afternoon of xxxxx you met with/phoned xxx to discuss .... and recent occasions where xxx has .....

I understand ....

Your responses and actions were unhelpful, lacking the care and respect we value as an organisation. We work in the interests of children and young people and our standards and expectations support us all to be able to listen and learn effectively each day.

(During the meeting I understood you .....

When interacting with any member of staff, it is important parents/carers conduct themselves in a calm and respectful manner throughout. It is unproductive when adults demonstrate unacceptable behaviour.

Should you have any concerns with xxx experience in school, please share your concerns and we will endeavour to help you. I would very much welcome a meeting to give you the opportunity to share any concerns you have and to establish a positive relationship with the school. Please contact XXX (xx@org) if you would like to meet with me.

Yours sincerely

## Stage 2 letter from Headteacher

Date

Name

Address

Dear xxxx

I understand on the morning/afternoon of xxxxxx you met with/phoned to discuss/concerned about.

It has been reported to me that during that meeting, you .....(be specific, quoting language used or body positions employed)

Your actions were unhelpful, uncooperative and disrespectful. We work in the interests of young people and their safety is always our priority.

During interactions with any member of staff, it is important parents/carers conduct themselves in a calm and respectful manner throughout. It is unproductive when adults demonstrate unacceptable behaviour.

(I note I had cause to write on xxxx regarding xxxxxxxxx.)

Schools have to act to ensure they remain a safe place for pupils, staff and other members of their community. (See DFE Advice on school security: Access to, and barring of individuals from, school premises December 2012). An individual, including a parent/carer may be asked to leave the premises in the event their behaviour is a cause for concern.

I must make it clear your interactions with staff and your refusal to cooperate was completely unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Should there be any repeat incident of you not fully cooperating with any member of staff or speaking to them in the manner that you did, I will be forced to consider further action under section 576 Education Act 1996 which could involve banning you from visiting the school site.

If you have any concerns with the contents of this letter, please do not hesitate to contact XXXX to arrange a meeting.

Yours sincerely