

STAFF SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE

We feel it is vital that staff feel safe in their working environment, therefore the centre will ensure that a healthy, safe working environment is maintained at all times. The Management Committee acknowledges that staff safety may be at risk through violence from several sources including parents, other staff, students or volunteers. The Management Committee will not condone violent, abusive or overly aggressive behaviour (physical or verbal) and harassment (face to face, written or via the telephone) against staff. Staff will develop strategies to keep themselves safe.

Strategies for dealing with face to face confrontations:

- Staff will be encouraged to look at the Centre environment and identify potential problems and risks.
- Staff will be encouraged to use appropriate measures to solve the problem if at all possible.
- In any situation where a staff member feels threatened they will be aware of their own position, where other people are in the Centre, the position of exits and phones.
- A second staff member will accompany a colleague into the office area in any potential threatening situation or a staff member is concerned.
- Staff will be encouraged to over-ride any privacy concerns such as a closed door if they are aware a colleague is in a potentially threatening situation.
- In any situation where a staff member feels vulnerable they will be encouraged to walk away from the conflict and notify a senior staff member of the incident.

Strategies for dealing with abusive phone calls:

- Staff will be encouraged to be aware of the tone of voice at all times, to listen and offer appropriate solutions if possible. These may include suggesting the caller rings back when calm, suggesting the concern be put in writing, offering to make an appointment for an interview in a controlled situation.
- If the tone of the phone call becomes abusive or offensive the staff member will not continue the conversation and will hang up.

Follow up strategies

- Police will be notified if this is seen to be appropriate or is desired by the victim.
- The offender will be offered the Grievance Procedure if appropriate.
- The staff member will be offered appropriate support and de-briefing following an incident where their physical or emotional well being has been threatened.

Grievance procedures

The relationship between parents and staff should be based on mutual respect and courtesy. Occasionally disputes may arise. Please discuss these with the staff member involved and/or the Director. We aim to maintain good open lines of communication between parents and staff. Most problems can be resolved through level headed

discussion between the parties concerned. If this is not the case parents should approach the Director or a member of the Management Committee.

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