



Violence towards support staff at Fraserburgh Academy

“It’s only a matter of time before a serious incident occurs”
“In my 20 years at this school morale is at an all-time low and it’s sad to see”

Background

Following numerous reports of violence against support staff at Fraserburgh Academy, UNISON undertook a survey of staff on incidents in the last year. The survey ran from 26 May to 2 June 2026 and included all support staff, irrespective of whether they were UNISON members or not.

23 staff completed the survey, covering a wide range of support staff and including Catering Staff, Janitorial / Cleaning, Library, Technician, Pupil Support Assistants, and Pupil Support Workers.

Headline results

The results are shocking. 96% of staff have witnessed verbal abuse of staff in the last year, and 74% have faced this themselves. 70% had objects thrown at them, and 43% had witnessed discriminatory abuse, potentially hate crimes. A third had personally been attacked in the last year. Almost three-quarters face violence at least once-a-week, and over a quarter experience incidents daily. These include being pushed and shoved, struck with an object, punched and spat at.

Only half of staff are confident that they know the proper reporting mechanism for these incidents. Not surprisingly, over a quarter didn’t report them at all. Only 17% reported all the incidents they suffered.

Not enough is done

In most cases, no action was reported as being taken in response to the incidents. No staff felt that existing measures were effective, and most damning of all, no staff felt they had enough support from senior management.

A key theme is not only the violence and aggression itself, but the lack of debrief, welfare check, risk reassessment, clear communication, consistent consequences and follow-up after incidents. Everyone said it was getting worse.

The everyday details

Staff gave many direct examples of what they face on a daily basis.

“In the corridor a half filled-bottle of coke was thrown along the length of the Corridor with some force & hit me in the back of the head. My neck was so painful afterwards.”

In an English lesson – “Student was doing everything to disrupt the class, when I tried to talk to him he was verbally abusive swearing at me, I suggested a walk for student to reset more verbal abusive. Eventually he

decided to walk out of class and proceeded to hold on to door shut so I could not get out the class. the teacher tried to get the door open, the door was held firmly shut by the boy. The teacher was shaking up and crying by this incident and took time out of class and another teacher stepped in. I spent the rest of that period walking round the school behind him getting regular verbal abusive.”

“I denied entry to the library and was told to 'fuck off' and had a water bottle squirted in my face. On another, a child started throwing chairs with the intent to harm.”

In Gym – “Asking student to put water bottles away then they squirt the floor and the student look at you as if to say what you going to do.”

"I asked a group of boys not to come through the crush hall as an exam was on, one of them said , 'fit the fuck are you gan to dee about it?' And shoved me into a door.”

“The class were arguing with the teacher being horrible whistling then when she would turn round they would stop, say she was imagining it. Throwing pencils around the class tearing school jotters. She called SLT but when they came in the class was behaved, SLT said all good here words to that effect. One student was taken out, i went out behind SLT and told them what was happening and that the class was like a circus. I got reprimanded in front of a student because I said class was like a circus. At the end of class the teacher was really upset saying there was no support and I gave her a hug.”

The staff have many of the answers

Support staff have clear ideas on what needs to change. Top priorities are:

- Consequences for actions, with a consistent approach
- Senior staff have to give leadership, to be more visible and give more support
- Schools don't operate in a vacuum, and better communication with parents is important
- More support for support staff is important too.

The demands of the staff

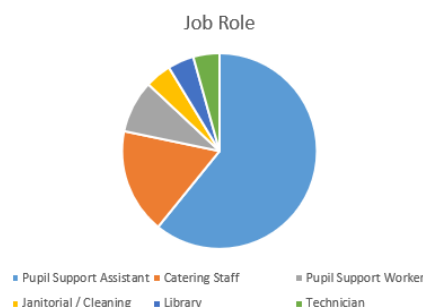
Staff are now calling for:

1. A safe workplace for support staff
2. Consistency of approach to violence and aggression by pupils
3. Clear and consistent consequences for poor behaviour
4. Support from the Senior Leadership Team for support staff
5. For the Senior Leadership Team to be accountable to support staff for delivering a jointly agreed plan to tackle violence and aggression

Full results

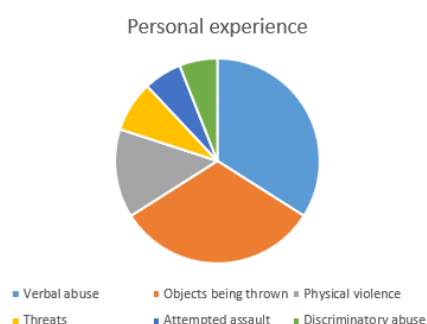
1. What is your role?

Pupil Support Assistant	61%
Catering Staff	17%
Pupil Support Worker	9%
Janitorial / Cleaning	4%
Library	4%
Technician	4%



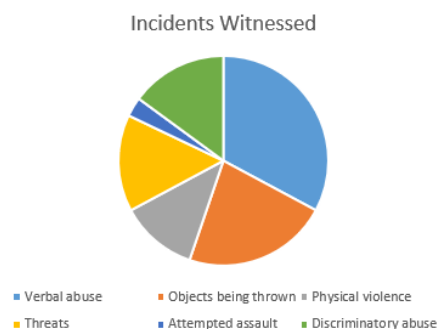
2. Over the last year, have you PERSONALLY been subject to:

Verbal abuse	74%
Objects being thrown	70%
Physical violence	30%
Threats	17%
Attempted assault	13%
Discriminatory abuse, including racist, disability-related, etc	13%



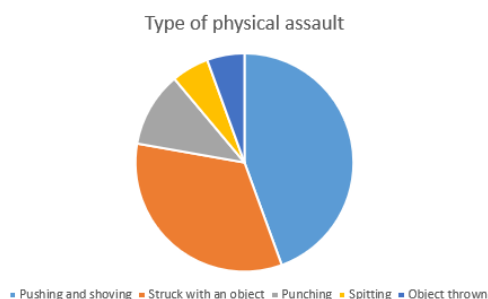
3. Over the last year, have you WITNESSED other staff being subject to:

Verbal abuse	96%
Objects being thrown	65%
Physical violence	35%
Threats	43%
Attempted assault	9%
Discriminatory abuse, including racist, disability-related, etc	43%



4. If you have been physically assaulted, what form did this take?

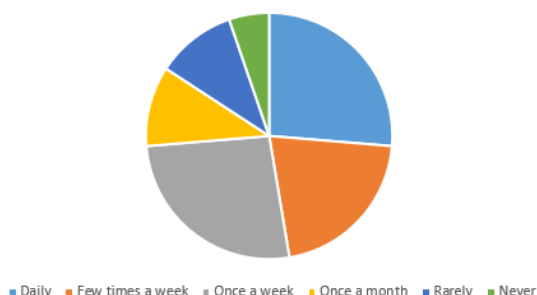
Pushing and shoving	35%
Struck with an object	26%
Punching	9%
Spitting	4%
Object thrown	4%



5. How often does this happen?

Daily	26%
A few times per week	21%
About once a week	26%
About once a month	11%
Rarely	11%
Never	5%

Frequency of incidents



6. Please tell us about one or more of these incidents

- A pupil punched me in the arm intentionally after fighting with another student. He verbally attacked me too. The incident was reported to the police and the pupil was charged.
- Been verbally abused when asked for pupils to pick up mess or to stop queue jumping and wait for dinner
- Children barging through people to get where they want to be without regard for people in the way
- Corridors - Bottles been thrown, cooking been thrown out windows or thrown down the stairs, I've had items just miss me in the being thrown from the 3rd floor banisters
- English - Have had to stand between two boys to stop fighting on more than one occasion, had a boy stand in front of me towering above me banging on the desk trying to intimidate me. Verbal abuse. items been thrown.
- English - Student was doing everything to disrupt the class, when I tried to talk to him he was verbally abusive swearing at me, I suggested a walk for student to reset more verbal abusive. Eventually he decided to walk out of class and proceeded to hold on to door shut so I could not get out the class. the teacher tried to get the door open, the door was held firmly shut by the boy. The teacher was shaking up and crying by this incident and took time out of class and another teacher stepped in. I spent the rest of that period walking round the school behind him getting regular verbal abusive.
- English - Tables getting thrown over paper aeroplane's total disregard to anything myself or teacher was saying a pupil kept playing Indian music (teacher was Indian) lots of swearing.
- English - Told to sit down the boy pointing to seats at other side of room saying you crazy, the same student has taken his finger across his throat and pointed at me because I took the lab top away after several times telling him to come off games.
- Gym - Asking student to put water bottles away then they squirt the floor and the student look at you as if to say what you going to do.
- Had boys stand close in front of me trying to intimidate me on several occasions to
- Have had items thrown at me. Pupils shove past when in corridors or when you try to stop them running. Lots of swearing & name calling
- Have witnessed teachers been constantly harassed by students asking to go to toilet after the teacher saying let me explain this then ill write out the slip.
- History - A second-year class behaviour was so bad that I went onto the PSA chat and asked if someone could collect my next student as i was concerned about leaving the supply teacher with the class.

- Hit on the bum with an object. Paper thrown in the face: pupil then stabbed paper on the floor with rage
- I asked a group of boys not to come through the crush hall as an exam was on, one of them said , 'fit the fuck are you gan to dee about it?' And shoved me into a door.
- I was pushed out of the way so the pupil could exit the classroom. I was not blocking the way out of the class, only in the way of the pupil.
- I was slapped by a pupil
- In the corridor a half filled bottle of coke was thrown along the length of the Corridor with some force & hit me in the back of the head. My neck was so painful afterwards.
- Kids in corridor play fighting/pushing and shoving each other whi h results in being caught up in it.
- Maths - Been called a C***
- Maths - Female teacher was trapped as one male student stood at the opening of the door and the other behind the teacher shouting at her demanding a toilet pass, I went up to the boys and told them to sit down as they were in a position of threatening the teacher and was not acceptable. one of the boys sat down but other continued to hassle the teacher in a loud voice trying to get a toilet pass.
- Objects like pencils and plastic bottles daily are thrown in the corridors and classes. Pushed in the corridors all the time.
- On a daily basis we are subjected to inappropriate language and objects thrown across classrooms. A marker pen just missing me by cms.
- On one occasion, I denied entry to the library and was told to 'fuck off' and had a water bottle squirted in my face. On another, a child started throwing chairs with the intent to harm.
- One class has two PSA's plus teacher and class still uncontrollable and facing up to myself and other PSA as well as teacher
- One of my colleagues was punched in the arm on purpose - the child returned to school the following week despite the staff member being told they wouldn't be coming back for the foreseeable
- Quite often swearing and cheek when children have been asked to follow orders in canteen
- Rulers were thrown down the staircase as I walked down
- Seen students swear at SLT
- The class were arguing with the teacher being horrible whistling then when she would turn round they would stop, say she was imagining it. Throwing pencils around the class tearing school jotters. She called SLT but when they came in the class was behaved, SLT said all good here words to that effect. One student was taken out, i went out behind SLT and told them what was happening and that the class was like a circus. I got reprimanded in front of a student because I said class was like a circus. At the end of class the teacher was really upset saying their was no support and I gave her a hug.
- Told to F*** O**
- Was walking with another PSA in front hall while a student verbally abused her
- When a pupil spat on my face
- Witnessed another PSA been hit with a 1/4 full small bottle of coca cola.
- Woodwork - A female student was constantly swearing at me I went to see my line manager regarding this, was told next time tell the teacher and leave the class. In woodwork she started swearing at me so i went to the teacher and explained, he asked me to stay with the student until SLT came. When SLT eventually came the student was told its early in the day and we could still have

a good day and if she apologised to the PSA (obviously didn't know my name) we could carry on. I was so shocked at what SLT said I just said yes. There was no, you shouldn't speak to the PSA like that.

7. Are you confident that you know the formal procedure to report an incident?

Yes	52%
No	48%

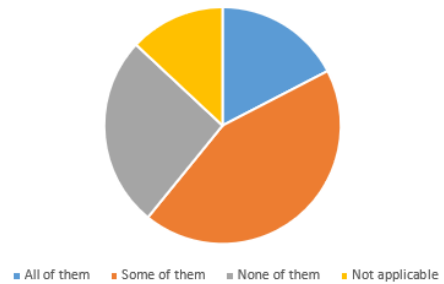
Confident of reporting procedure



8. Of the incidents, did you report

All of them	17%
Some of them	43%
None of them	26%
Not applicable	13%

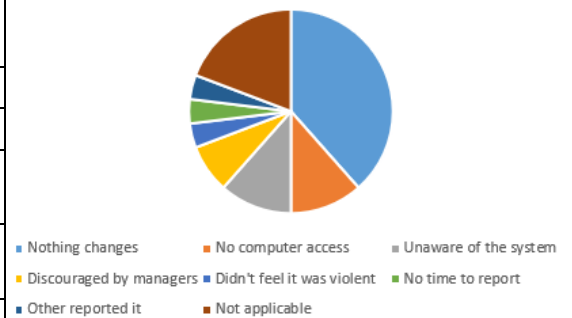
Incidents Reported



9. If you didn't report an incident, why not?

Nothing changes despite incidents reported	38%
No computer access in working hours	12%
Unaware of the incident reporting system	12%
Discouraged by school managers to report the incident	8%
I didn't feel that it was a violent incident at the time.	4%
No time to report the incident during working hours	4%
Other person reported it	4%
Not applicable	19%

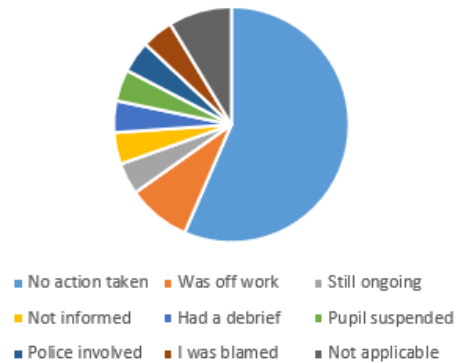
Reasons for not reporting



10. After the incident, what happened?

No action was taken	57%
Had to take time off work	9%
Still being actioned	4%
Was not informed	4%
Had a debriefing	4%
Sometimes bans were issued	4%
The police were involved	4%
Was made to feel it was my fault	4%
Not applicable	9%

Action afterwards



11. Do you believe that existing measures to ensure staff safety are effective?

Yes	0%
No	100%

Existing measures effective



12. Do you believe that support from senior management for staff is adequate?

Yes	0%
No	100%

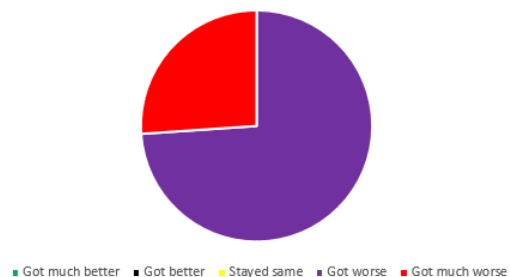
Senior Management Support



13. How has aggression from pupils changed over the last year?

Got much better	0%
Got better	0%
Stayed the same	0%
Got worse	74%
Got much worse	26%

Change in behaviour



14. What practical changes would you like to see implemented?

- CCTV that actually works. Consequences for actions. Senior Managers checking in on problem hotspots regularly to support staff.
- Children require consequences.
- Consequences - Consistency all SLT and teaching treating students the same when it comes to breaking the rules, Follow through i.e. the phone situation first while action was taken but now it's dropped and the past couple months have seen phone usage increase. consequences for actions

- Consequences for their actions been told on many occasions get SLT nothing will be f***** done even if they do come.
- Consequences implemented & seen through...
- Corridor patrol, disciplinary action, a deterrent, consistency in punishment
- Head management need too be present during the morning break ,especially lunch time where you would need eyes on the back of your head ,If something erupts and you are on the till's service how can you possibly attract someone ,s attention for help ,By that time it could be too late
- I would like more support and updates as to what has been done
- I would like to see consequences for those displaying these attitudes and behaviours.
- more discipline for there actions
- More expulsion of reoffending pupils
- More senior staff patrolling during breaks
- more senior staff present
- More senior staff visible at all times, police presence in corridors
- Need to bring back a system like "On the button" to improve communication with parents re. smaller issues, so that they have opportunity to nip bad behaviour in the bud, before it escalates.
- Permanent Expulsion from school
- Support for staff after incident, including a debriefing and support procedures.
- Support from line manager and SLT every time back up is needed/requested
- Teach pupils to be more responsible for their actions, have consequences for their actions and not treat psa's as their subservient.
- The teachers having more power to call home if an incident arises. Pupils taken out of class if disruptive to others learning. Adequate sanctions and deterrents put in place and followed through with. Weekly PSA meetings. PSA's used to help struggling students with learning rather than behavioural needs. Establish a multi-agency behavioural task force.
- there has to be consequences for pupils actions as currently there is nothing stopping pupils behaviour

15. Anything else you want to add?

- As PSAs, we communicate by a WhatsApp PSA group on our personal phones, no pupil information shared, only general messages. We supervise breaks and lunches on our own with a small group of pupils. Should an incident happen, there is no quick way to alert other members of staff to come to help apart from a message or a call on WhatsApp. Due to the location of these rooms being far away from the teacher's staff base, sometimes there is no backup in the immediate vicinity. This is worrying should a pupil have an outburst and no one is there as backup.
- I eventually asked senior management if during connect a reminder could be put up about the use of aerosol spraying not being allowed
- I feel that the "monkeys" have taken over the zoo. They no there is no consequences.
- I had to visit gp, no action was taken, I required time off work more than once due to students spraying deodorant / perfume after telling them I am asthmatic and it could cause me to be very ill
- I have never once been informed that there is an official reporting system for these incidents!
- I personally have not had as much incidents as others, I feel extremely lucky. However, due to the lack of respect, swearing being not recognised as such (it

has become normal language for pupils), pupil reluctance to follow the guidelines and inefficient consequences, I feel there will be many more frequent incidents.

- I will be the victim of a violent incident.
- I worry about the future of humanity
- If parents refuse to support school rules & encourage their child's behaviour, school should be able to remove pupil from school & parents can either homeschool, or find a new school. The council needs to support schools.
- In my 20 year at this school staff morale is at an all time low & it's sad to see. Ritchies4@
- It did go up in connect class
- It's making me consider moving jobs although I like my job and some pupils, I just dread coming to work.
- It's only a matter of time before a serious incident occurs due to the bad behaviour at the school and lack of consequence and support from certain PT departments towards their teaching staff
- Senior management need to be more visible & proactive
- Several members of staff have chest problems with one member of staff carrying an epi pen as she has life threatening allergy with spraying
- Something needs done please
- The behaviour of pupils is appalling
- The pupils no there are no real consequences & this is why they act in this way
- We need immediate support and follow up action when we do report an incident.