

Press Release: for immediate release

Aberdeen, 2 July 2026

Fraserburgh Academy: School staff say violence is putting pupils' education at risk

Pupil Support Assistants and other support staff at Fraserburgh Academy have released a damning report into the levels of violence and disruption they face on a daily basis, which they say is putting pupils' education at risk.

The survey, carried out by support staff through their trade union UNISON, found that three-quarters of staff face violence and aggression at least once a week, and a third had been personally attacked in the last year, including being pushed, shoved, hit with an object, punched and spat at.

More than two-in-five had witnessed discriminatory abuse, including racist or disability-related abuse. The violence is becoming so commonplace that more than a quarter of staff no longer report incidents at all.

Confidence in the school's current arrangements has collapsed, with no staff believing that existing measures are effective, and none feeling that they have enough support from senior management.

Support staff have been invited to meet junior members of the schools management team in small groups, but many are on fixed-term contracts and are fearful of retribution if they speak out. 54 staff have signed a letter to Aberdeenshire Council's Director of Education and Children's Services, Laurence Findlay, asking to meet with him directly to raise their concerns.

A Pupil Support Assistant at the school commented:

"This is the worst it has been in my many years at the school. It is so hard trying to support pupils to learn and develop when we face abuse every day. This situation has been hidden under the carpet for too long and the children deserve so much better. If this carries on, then it is only a matter of time before a serious incident occurs."

UNISON Assistant Branch Secretary Gabor Molnar said:

"There is a zero-tolerance policy, but the problem is that it's not enforced. We've been told that a group of pupils were excluded shortly after we shared the report with management. However, short-term behaviour responses alone will not resolve the issue. Support staff know what is happening on the ground, and they must be heard."

UNISON Regional Officer Simon Watson said:

"Politicians and education chiefs should read this report with shame. No worker should have to go out in the morning to face this level of violence and aggression. We need Laurence Findlay and senior council officers to come out and talk to the staff, and help work out solutions together."

School staff have met and discussed the survey results, and recommended an action plan including clear and consistent consequences for poor behaviour; updated risk assessments; better communication with affected staff; post-incident support and welfare checks; clear timescales, actions with named responsible managers, and a review early next term.

- Ends -

Notes to Editors:

UNISON, the union for school support staff, is the biggest trade union in Aberdeenshire Council.

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Attachments:

Staff survey