

## ASSAULT – YOUNG PEOPLE IN SPECIAL PROVISION

A younger student inadvertently caught the arm of an older student between tables, when moving furniture and the older student punched the younger one in face. Following the incident, the two students, who had previously enjoyed a supportive friendship, were then kept apart by staff. The older student was 'fixed term excluded' and when he returned to the Provision, staff requested a restorative intervention. The elder student had not previously behaved in this way at the Provision, but his placement at this facility was arranged following similar incidents at his school of origin.

Individual meetings were held with both students. The elder student, during the individual meeting, explained the circumstances of incident, regretted 'losing control in red mist', expressed concern for the other student's injuries and appeared anxious over the potential damage to the friendship. He presented as sincerely remorseful, stating he felt scared at the repetition of this behaviour, which he had hoped he had put behind him. He expressed despair at his apparent inability to gain control of this behaviour and was strident in asserting that he is better than this behaviour. This elder student disclosed that he wished he could have met like this with those he had previously harmed.

The younger student, in his individual meeting, explained the circumstances of the incident. He talked of his injuries and recovery, and stated that he needed an explanation as to why this had happened, an apology, and the chance to recover the friendship.

Both students were then brought together for the Joint Meeting. The elder student began with an explanation of the incident and expressed his sorrow for his actions, his concern for the welfare of his former friend and his need for help to control behaviour. He delivered a formal apology and expressed the value he places on the friendship with the younger student, and emphasised that in no way was there any fault on the younger student's part. He added that the younger student didn't deserve to be treated like that.

The younger student too, explained the circumstances of the incident and accepted the apology, saying that his questions were now answered. He said that he wanted to see the elder student get the assistance he needed and that he too wanted to reclaim the friendship they shared. The pair agreed to continue to support each other and to now place the incident behind them. They then stood up and shook hands and then hugged each other and held each other for some time. They then jointly returned to class and the teacher confirmed that they chose to sit together and that they related in harmony for the rest of the day and for the weeks to follow.

Both students clarified the circumstances of the incident, delivered and accepted the apology and committed to the continuance of friendship and to support each other. The Staff member in attendance during the meeting expressed admiration at the maturity shown by the students and stated that they had learnt much through the process, both about each other and also about how to heal relationships and put things right. In addition, they recognised support available to them from the Provision staff.