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**Title:** **VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE**

**Adopted:** November 2, 2010

**Reviewed:** October 1, 2013

**Revised:** September 2018

**Authorization:** Occupational Health and Safety Act (Section 32)

  

**Related:** Occupational Health and Safety Policy (HR.002)  
Workplace Harassment Policy (HR.001)  
Code of Conduct Policy (SHSM.003)  
Respectful Workplace Policy (HR.003)  
Bullying Prevention and Intervention (SHSM.004)

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## **Policy**

It is the policy of the Bloorview School Authority to address workplace violence towards workers from all possible sources (students, co-workers, trustees, visitors such as parents and community members, volunteers, permit holders, contractors and employees of other organization who work on or are invited onto Authority property). Violent behaviour towards workers in the workplace is unacceptable.

## **Guiding Principles**

1. Bloorview School Authority believes in the prevention of workplace violence and promotes a violence-free workplace in which all people respect one another and work together to achieve common goals. Any act of workplace violence is unacceptable conduct. Workplace violence in any form erodes the mutual trust and confidence that are essential to the well-being of our staff.

2. Definitions from the Occupational Health and Safety Act:
  - a) Workplace: land, premises, location or thing at, upon, in or near which a worker works
  - b) Worker: a person who performs work or supplies services for monetary compensation
  - c) Supervisor: a person who has charge of a workplace or authority over a worker
  - d) Workplace Violence:
    - the exercise of physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker;
    - an attempt to exercise physical force against a worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to a worker;
    - a statement or behaviour that is reasonable for a worker to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against a worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to a worker.
3. The Authority and its employees recognize that, wherever possible, the best way to protect workers from exposure to violence is to reduce the threat of violence or to reduce the risk involved.
4. There is a shared responsibility for the prevention of workplace violence. Every Authority employee regardless of job title has direct responsibility and accountability for violence prevention as an essential part of his or her job.
5. The working environment is any place where employees perform work or work-related duties or functions and includes Board sanctioned social events.
6. The Director of Education shall develop and maintain a workplace violence program that implements this Policy. The program shall include the following:
  - (a) measures and procedures to assess risk and to protect employees from workplace violence
  - (b) means of summoning immediate assistance
  - (c) a protocol for employees to report workplace violence
7. There are several types of workplace violence:

- (a) External perpetrators (vandalism, assaults by a person with no relationship to the workplace),
- (b) Client/customer (physical or verbal) assault or the threat of such and assault on an employee by a client/family member or student,
- (c) Employee to employee (physical or verbal assault from employee or former employee: includes harassment, stalking and bullying),
- (d) Sexual abuse of any kind
- (e) Domestic Violence ( personal relationship).

8. This policy and the following procedures should be reviewed annually

## **PROCEDURES**

1. The board shall investigate and deal with all incidents, complaints, or threats of workplace violence in a timely, fair, and equitable manner. The Authority shall take every precaution reasonable for the protection of workers by developing a safety plan that may include limited disclosure of information pertaining to individuals with a history of violent behavior. The privacy of all concerned shall be respected to the extent possible as per applicable legislation.
2. The Board is committed to the implementation of measures and procedures for the reduction of violent incidents through the assessment of risk, by providing employees information related to risk of workplace violence of a person with a history of workplace violence and instruction on how to report, and how the board will investigate.
3. In conjunction with its responsibilities and duties as outlined in the Occupational Health and Safety Act, the Board will take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of a worker.
4. Workers shall report all incidents of workplace violence using the Workplace Violence Incident Report (Appendix A), including disclosures of domestic violence pertaining to workers, to their immediate supervisor.

5. A copy of the policy and procedure shall be posted in a prominent location where employees are likely to see it.
6. Employees will be provided with information about appropriate Student Safety Plans.
7. Instruction or training about this policy and the following procedures should occur annually. Such training should, at least, include a review of these materials and may include reference to an on-line module.
8. Adequate arrangements must be made to investigate cases where violence and assaults against employees have occurred. Such arrangements should take into account:
  - any medical needs of the victim
  - adequate time to thoroughly acquire all relevant details
  - participation of the Health and Safety committee reps
  - any recommended follow up activities or changes to procedure.
9. The Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committees will review the effectiveness of anti-violence policies.
10. Regarding the disclosure of Students' Personal Information
  - a) Given their obligation to respond to serious student incidents and all inappropriate and disrespectful student behaviour that is likely to have a negative impact on the school climate, Employees who work directly with students may need to know, for any particular student, those behaviour(s) that may present a potential risk of physical harm to school staff or students as documented as part of progressive discipline in the student's Ontario Student Record (OSR).

b) Principals are only permitted to share information documented in the OSR with employees who do not have access to the OSR, if disclosure is necessary, so that employees can carry out their duties, including their duty to respond to inappropriate and disrespectful student behaviour. In such cases, principals may share only the necessary information pertaining to behaviour that may present risk of physical harm. The Board has policies in place for Employees regarding the confidentiality of information. Prior to disclosure, the Principal will remind employees that they must treat any information disclosed about a student or incident as confidential.

11. In cases where a risk of violence to a worker has been clearly identified, the Board shall establish and maintain measures and procedures to reduce the likelihood of incidents.

It is understood that the measures and procedures are in addition to and not a replacement for any particular training program about dealing with violence.

In developing measures and procedures to prevent violence, options such as job redesign and staffing assignments will be considered along with the need for personal protective equipment or alarms.

12. An employee will report to their Supervisor / Principal any incident where the employee is subjected to, witnesses or has knowledge of workplace violence or has reason to believe that workplace violence (including domestic violence) may occur.

13. In the event that the employee(s) identifies a safety risk in the direct performance of his/her duties the Employee shall:

a) Immediately bring the matter to the attention of the Principal.

b) Meet with the Principal to assess the degree of risk and develop a plan to ensure the safety of the employee while in the performance of his/her duties, a copy of plan will be provided to the Employee.

14. Such a plan shall include, but not be limited to:

- a) An employee's rights under the Occupational Health and Safety Act
- b) The recognition that each child/situation is different and that no one generic plan serves the needs of all.
- c) An identification of the risks to the employee.
- d) An identification of the triggers to a particular situation or signals that the likelihood of a possible situation has increased
- e) A debriefing with employee(s) to take place within 24 hours of incident
- f) Transfer to a different class or exclusion of the student
- g) The need for additional staff support (e.g. Social work or CYW from the Hospital)
- h) Temporary reassignment of worker or workers involved in the violent incident
- i) Referral to crisis related counseling
- j) Provisions for transportation and accompaniment (if necessary) to the hospital and/or home at the board's expense.
- k) If appropriate, provisions to minimize the situations in which the employee is working alone and/or provisions for such an employee to seek immediate assistance (e.g. buzzer, walkie-talkie, maintain eye contact with another etc).
- l) If appropriate, the presence of an adequate level of trained employees.
- m) Consideration as to whether training is needed (e.g. Behaviour Management Systems, CPI, seizures)

15. The board shall ensure that all forms required under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act are completed.

16. The board and the Union recognize that where preventative measures have failed to prevent violent incidents, counselling and support (e.g. EAP program) must be available to help victims recover from such incidents.

17. The board will assist an employee(s) who is threatened or assaulted at work to consult with police regarding possible charges against the assailant.

18. Compensation for damage, repair and/or replacement resulting from a confirmed act of workplace violence may be provided for items worn or carried by the employee for actual costs incurred upon provision of a receipt.
  
19. The board agrees that in all cases where there is an agreed upon need for personal safety the board shall provide alarms, paging systems or communication devices that will be effective in summoning immediate aid. The Board will be responsible for the routine maintenance, repair and periodic testing of the alarm or paging system.
  
20. All employees shall receive training about the use and reasonable care of such systems.
  
21. The board agrees that there shall be no discrimination exercised or practiced with respect to any Employee who is the victim of a violent incident arising while in the performance of his/her assigned work.