

**ST. CLAIR CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
SECTION D: STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION	PROCEDURE
EFFECTIVE: 2010 06 22 / 2015 04 28	

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES:

A. ADDRESSING WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

1.0 Responsibility

- 1.1 Under the *Occupational Health & Safety Act*, the Board as the employer is responsible to take every precaution reasonable to protect employees by developing a policy concerning workplace violence which includes the definition of "Workplace Violence". The employer will post this policy in the workplace in an area common to all employees.
- 1.2 The Board shall develop and maintain a Workplace Violence Program to include measures and procedures to control risks, means to summon immediate assistance if workplace violence occurs, steps for reporting incidents of workplace violence and steps in dealing with domestic violence. A process for conducting an investigation will be outlined.
- 1.3 The Principal/Supervisor will advise the employee of his/her responsibility to advise the Board or his/her Supervisor of any incident or risk of workplace violence of which he/she is aware.
- 1.4 In consultation with the Safety and Disability Administrator, Principal/Supervisors will release information to an employee that may be at risk of workplace violence from a person with a history of violent behaviour if:
 - a) the employee can be expected to encounter that person in the course of his or her work; and
 - b) the risk of workplace violence is likely to expose the employee to physical injury.
- 1.5 To assist in maintaining a safe work environment, the Board shall provide employees with the following:
 - a) Training that will review the Workplace Violence Prevention policy and procedures;
 - b) Information on reporting incidents of workplace violence and the investigation process;
 - c) A list of agencies in the area that can assist in coping with workplace or domestic violence.
- 1.6 This policy shall be reviewed annually with the Joint Health & Safety Committee.

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2.0 Expectations

- 2.1 To assist in minimizing workplace violence, a risk assessment was completed by employees that identified risks and where controls are required. The assessment took into account all circumstances that are common to workplaces and specific to Board workplaces. The results of the assessment were shared with the Joint Health & Safety Committee. A risk assessment will be conducted as often as necessary, or at the recommendation of the Joint Health & Safety Committee.
- 2.2 Principals/Supervisors are required to take every precaution reasonable against violence in the workplace of which they are aware. This also includes awareness of any domestic violence situations that is likely to expose an employee to physical injury in the workplace.
- 2.3 The Principal/Supervisor will not disclose more personal information than is reasonably necessary to protect the employee from physical injury.
- 2.4 This policy prohibits reprisals against individuals, acting in good faith, who report incidents of workplace violence or who act as witnesses. The Board will take all reasonable and practical measures to prevent reprisals, threats of reprisal, or further violence. Reprisal is defined as any act of retaliation, either direct or indirect.

B. ADDRESSING IDENTIFIED RISKS

The St. Clair Catholic District School Board takes a proactive approach to identify and address hazards in the workplace. The Board conducted a Risk Assessment to identify any risks of violence in the workplace. The following risks were identified and procedures were created to eliminate and/or minimize the risks.

3.0 Safety in the Workplace – Parking Lots

Board employees identified lighting in the school parking lots as a risk for violence in the workplace.

- 3.1 The Board is responsible to ensure all lights in school parking lots on Board property are maintained and in working order.
- 3.2 During the monthly workplace inspection an inspection of the lights located in the parking lot will occur.
- 3.3 The school custodian is required to enter work orders for lights which need replacing or repair.
- 3.4 The Principal/Supervisor is responsible to address any individual issues that may be brought up as a concern.
- 3.5 Employees who will be leaving the building after dark should park their vehicle near the school entrances.

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4.0 Safety in the Workplace – Aggression by Students Towards Employees

Board employees identified students who become hostile and aggressive towards employees as a risk for violence in the workplace.

- 4.1 Students have a right to education under the Education Act; policies and procedures are in place and training is provided to respond to situations where students become aggressive or hostile towards employees.
- 4.2 The Board requires all employees (Principal, Emergency Response Team members, Educational Assistants) who are regularly required to apply intervention techniques to participate in training with respect to non-violent crisis intervention.
- 4.3 The Principal/Supervisor is responsible to ensure any violent incidents that occur between an employee and a student are reported by completing an Accident/Incident Report Form.
- 4.4 The Joint Health & Safety Committee reviews incidents of aggression by students towards employees for possible trends. They determine if future actions are required and make recommendations to the Board accordingly.
- 4.5 In cases involving students with special needs, Human Resource Services consults with the Special Education Department where trends may suggest a change in the student's individual education plan may be warranted.

5.0 Safety in the Workplace – Working Alone

Board employees identified employees working alone as a risk for violence in the workplace. Any employee working alone must have a communication plan during that working alone time.

5.1 Custodians

- 5.1.1 Custodians who work alone are required to follow the procedural guideline set out by the Facility Services Department "Solitary Worker's Communication Plan."
- 5.1.2 Custodians are required to perform an inspection of the building before leaving for the evening to account for any employees who may still be working. The custodian is to notify the employee that they will be working alone and that they are required to set the alarm at departure.
- 5.1.3 The school security systems will no longer be alarmed automatically. Custodians will be required to set the alarm as they depart for the night unless other employees are still in the building where they will be notified as in 5.1.2. If the alarm is not set by the designated time, the maintenance pager will be called and someone will be dispatched to the school to investigate.

5.2 All other employees

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5.2.1 Employees who work after hours or over the weekend are responsible to ensure they have a communication plan in place in the event of an emergency or risk of violence in the workplace.

5.2.2 Employees are required to sign in and out when working after hours or during the weekend.

5.3 Communication Plan

5.3.1 When employees are working after hours or on weekends they must advise a colleague or a family member that they will be at work at a particular time. The two parties will agree on a check time and a plan of action if the employee is not reporting in at the agreed upon check time.

6.0 Safety in the Workplace – Other Measures

Measures which are already in place to protect employees from violence in the workplace include:

6.1 The Board requires all Board employees to wear identification badges while at work in any Board facility. Identification badges should clearly show the employee's photo and should be positioned above the waist so as to be clearly visible.

6.2 Visitors must "sign-in" when entering a school or Board facility. They will be provided with a visitor's badge that they will wear during their time at the Board facility.

6.3 To control visitor access to elementary schools during the school day, all doors are located with a security access system in place at each entrance.

6.4 School phones have a direct speed dial button which contacts the school office immediately.

6.5 When Board employees are working after hours/weekends, they are required to keep all doors locked.

C. REPORTING WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Every employee is required to report incidents where workplace violence has occurred or where it is likely to occur. Nothing in this procedure takes away the right of an individual to report such incident to the police. Furthermore, at any time during the investigation of a report of workplace violence the Board may decide it necessary to submit a police report. The following procedure outlines the steps required for reporting incidents of workplace violence.

7.0 Responsibility

Employee

7.1 The employee is to immediately report the incident to his/her Principal/ Supervisor.

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- 7.2 The employee is required to complete an Accident/ Incident Report Form.
- 7.3 Pending the investigation, the employee will follow the directions given by his/her Principal/Supervisor and the Safety and Disability Administrator.

Principal/Supervisor

- 7.4 The Principal/Supervisor is responsible to take all precautions reasonable to ensure workplace safety and the safety of persons reporting an incident of violence.
- 7.5 The Principal/Supervisor is responsible to immediately notify the Safety and Disability Administrator or the senior administrator responsible for Human Resource Services of an incident of violence in the workplace.

Safety and Disability Administrator

- 7.6 The Safety and Disability Administrator will conduct an investigation into the report of workplace violence.
- 7.7 The Safety and Disability Administrator will report to the senior administrator responsible for Human Resource Services or designate of the results of the investigation. As a result of the investigation, recommendations necessary to remedy the incident and put measures in place to control the risks may result.
- 7.8 The Safety and Disability Administrator will present the incident and findings of the investigations to the Joint Health & Safety Committee.
- 7.9 The Safety and Disability Administrator will report to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board any incidents of workplace violence for which the employee seeks medical attention or has lost time from work.
- 7.10 When appropriate, the Safety and Disability Administrator will further report to Senior Administration.

Joint Health & Safety Committee

- 7.11 The Joint Health & Safety Committee will review the incidents of Workplace Violence for trends and to determine if future actions are required and make recommendations to the Board accordingly.

D. SUMMONING IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE

In the moments preceding or during an event of workplace violence, employees need to have options available to summon immediate assistance.

8.0 Expectations

When an employee is the victim of workplace violence or where violence is likely to occur, the employee can summon immediate assistance with one of the following mechanisms. The method of summoning assistance will depend on a variety of circumstances including time of day and location. Depending on the situation, the employee has options such as:

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- a) Call to others, the Office, or 911 for "HELP!"
- b) School-wide P.A. System to page for assistance throughout the school
- c) 2-way Radio (Walkie/Talkie)
- d) Activate Fire Alarm

E. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The St. Clair Catholic District School Board is committed to take every precaution reasonable to protect employees from domestic violence that is likely to expose employees to physical injury in the workplace.

Unlike many risks which may lend themselves to regular and ongoing assessment, the risk of domestic violence in the workplace is much more variable and less easily anticipated.

9.0 Responsibility

- 9.1 The Board is responsible for taking action to reduce the risk of physical injury in the workplace against an employee from a domestic violence situation. Information regarding domestic violence is attached in Appendix A.
- 9.2 All employees are responsible for creating and maintaining a workplace environment in which employees are protected from domestic violence that may expose employees to physical injury in the workplace.
- 9.3 Employees who believe that they or other employees are subject to domestic violence that may expose them or other employees to physical injury in the workplace are responsible to inform their supervisor as stated in Section 28 (1) (d) of the Occupational Health & Safety Act.
- 9.4 The Principal/Supervisor is responsible to treat all reports of domestic violence in confidence and to notify the Safety & Disability Administrator or designate.
- 9.5 The Safety & Disability Administrator or designate is responsible to conduct an investigation by gathering information, making any necessary arrangements to ensure the safety for the victim or other employees in the workplace which may include contacting the police.
- 9.6 The Safety & Disability Administrator or designate is responsible to provide the victim and other employees with information about supports available for situations of domestic violence.
- 9.7 A Threat Assessment Team consisting of the Principal/ Supervisor, Safety & Disability Administrator and the senior administrator responsible for Human Resource Services will review each case of threat of domestic violence to ensure the level of threat is evaluated and appropriate safety measures are put in place.

F. INFORMING EMPLOYEEES OF POTENTIAL STUDENT VIOLENCE

The St. Clair Catholic District School Board is committed to taking every precaution reasonable to protect employees from violence presented by students that is likely to expose the employee to workplace violence in the workplace.

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Unlike many risks which may lend themselves to regular and ongoing assessment, the risk of violence in the workplace from students can be much more varied and less easily predicted. In addition, the Board is committed to ensuring students' right to an education and the obligation to protect their right to privacy from undue disclosure of private information.

The goal of this procedure is to clarify when information will be shared with employees regarding risks of workplace violence by students so that safety is enhanced and privacy is protected.

10.0 Responsibility

- 10.1 All employees are responsible for creating and maintaining a workplace environment in which employees are protected from violence including the reporting of violent incidents according to the Board's Student Discipline Policy.
- 10.2 Communicating on a "need to know" basis protects the privacy of the student and ensures that personal information about the student is restricted to an appropriate number of employees.
- 10.3 The Principal/Supervisor is responsible for treating all reports of violence in confidence to the extent possible pursuant to this procedure. The Principal/Supervisor is also responsible for determining whether a student poses a risk of workplace violence and determining the extent of and to whom the information will be disclosed. The disclosure of information *only* occurs when there is a history of workplace violence. It is important to note that the employer is only permitted to disclose the amount of student information reasonably necessary to protect employees from physical injury.
- 10.4 Each situation will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the needs of the individuals involved. The following considerations will guide the Principal when determining the extent to which employees will be warned of a risk of workplace violence:
 - a) Date of the event. The general guideline of a time frame when determining a history of violence is within the past 12 months.
 - b) Degree, intent, and frequency of the workplace violence.
 - c) The individual against whom the violence was directed.
 - d) Location of workplace violence (i.e., school property/school hours, or off-site/non-school hours), and that documentation is available for review.
- 10.5 Information will be provided to employees in accordance with this procedure where a student with a history of workplace violence presents a risk if the employee can be expected to encounter that student in the course of his or her work.
- 10.6 The information shared is to be objective and descriptive of behaviour (who, what, where, when, and if possible why), as opposed to subjective and conclusive. The information shared will include what types of behaviours may be expected, and what strategies are to be used by an employee in the event of escalating or workplace violence.
- 10.7 The guidelines below are to be followed by the Principal/Designate where a student could expose an employee to physical injury:

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- a) Students in full time supported programs (i.e., Life-Skills program) have contact with a limited number of employees.
 - i) The employees working with these students and employees likely to come into contact with these students will be advised by their Principal or designate of the behaviours that could pose a risk (i.e., hair pulling, hitting, etc.). The principal will review with employees a plan to both prevent and address these behaviours if, and when they occur.
 - b) Students in supported programs that integrate into regular classroom settings:
 - i) The employees working with these students and employees likely to come into contact with these students will be advised by their Principal or designate of the behaviours that could pose a risk (i.e., hair pulling, hitting, etc.). The principal will review with employees a plan to both prevent and address these behaviours if, and when they occur.
 - ii) Employees who may not work one on one with these students but could be expected to encounter them (i.e., classroom teachers) will be provided with information regarding risk of aggressive behaviours and strategies to address.
 - c) Students in regular classroom settings that are known to present a risk of workplace violence:
 - i) Any employee that could be expected to encounter the student will be advised by their Principal or designate of the risk factors and appropriate prevention and response.
- 10.8 The Principal will notify staff of the potential for violence directly in person or in a staff meeting, whichever is appropriate under the circumstances.
- 10.9 Where an incident of workplace violence occurs during the school year, the Principal will determine the extent to which employees will be notified and communicate that decision to the school's Health and Safety Representative.
- 1.10 Safety plans, or other support plans in place, will be appropriately implemented (i.e. medication monitoring, behaviour plans) and appropriate de-escalation strategies will be utilized for identified students.
- 10.11 The Principal/Supervisor will ensure that proactive strategies are in place and communicated to the employee to mitigate aggressive and potentially workplace violence by providing the appropriate guidance for violence prevention and de-escalation. Additional strategies in place include the Emergency Response Team protocol and Lockdown procedures. These will prepare employees to respond to students in both regular classroom settings and within the school who have not been previously known to present a risk of workplace violence.
- 10.12 Situations of change (i.e., schools, grades, teachers, educational assistants) may increase opportunities for aggressive behaviours. During times of transition it is particularly important to be vigilant with programming and supports for both employees and students.

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- 10.13 Should the employee disagree with the Board's decision regarding the disclosure relating to an incident of workplace violence under item nine (9) above, the employee shall request that the Principal reconsider this decision. In the event the Principal upholds the original disclosure decision, the employee is entitled to request reconsideration by the senior administrator responsible for Human Resource Services, whose decision is final in respect of whether disclosure will be made. This provision does not preclude the employee from exercising his or her rights under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.
- 10.14 A student who may pose a risk of workplace violence one year may or may not constitute a risk in future years. With this in mind, the length of time a student continues to be a risk of workplace violence and is subject of notification to staff will be determined at the discretion of the Principal.

G. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The St. Clair Catholic District School Board is committed to the principles of equity and inclusive education, consistent with our Catholic teachings, which value and promote human rights and social justice in all Board policies, programs, guidelines, operations and practices.

H. DEFINITIONS

Workplace: The workplace is any place where employees perform work or work-related duties or functions. Schools and school-related activities, such as extra-curricular activities and excursions, comprise the workplace, as do Board offices and facilities. Conferences and training sessions fall within the ambit of this policy.

Workplace Violence:

- a) the exercise of physical force by a person against an employee, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the employee,
- b) an attempt to exercise physical force against an employee, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to an employee,
- c) a statement or behaviour for which it is reasonable for an employee to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against the employee that could cause physical injury to the employee.

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APPENDIX A

What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence is widely understood to be a pattern of behaviour used by one person to gain power and control over another person with whom he/she has or has had an intimate relationship. The pattern of behaviour may include physical violence, sexual, emotional, and psychological intimidation, verbal abuse, stalking and using electronic devices to harass and control. Anyone can be a victim of domestic violence, whatever his/her age, race, economic status, religion, sexual orientation, or education. While men can be victims of domestic violence, women represent the overwhelming majority of victims.

Recognizing Domestic Violence

While there are numerous manifestations of domestic violence, the most common one in the workplace is harassment, either over the phone or in person. The following are a list of signs to help recognize domestic violence:

1. The victim may try to cover up bruises, appear sad, lonely and withdrawn. They may also have trouble concentrating on a task, apologize for the abuser's behaviour, or appear nervous when the abuser is in the workplace.
2. The victim may make last-minute excuses or cancellations, or use drugs or alcohol to cope.
3. The victim may miss work frequently or more often than usual with no explanation.
4. The abuser may interfere with the victim at work by phoning or emailing repeatedly, or by watching or stalking the victim.
5. The abuser may display jealous or controlling behaviour by arriving at the workplace for no reason, asking other employees questions about the whereabouts of the victim or threatening the victim.
6. The abuser may attempt to prevent the victim from getting to work by physically restraining her or interfering with her transportation.

Reasonable Precautions

It is important to deal with each situation on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the needs of the individuals involved.

Together with the Safety & Disability Administrator, the Principal/Supervisor and the employee will create a safety plan unique to the individual's situation. The plan will look at increased safety measures that can be implemented in the workplace.

Privacy While Protecting Employees

Sometimes the employer's duty to take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances to protect employees may outweigh an individual's expectation for privacy. In other words, the victim's privacy may need to be balanced against ensuring the safety of others.

Communicating on a "need to know" basis will ensure that information about a domestic violence situation is kept confidential or restricted to a minimum number of employees. (For example, only those who are directly responsible for ensuring the safety of those employees who may be at risk.)

Involving the victims in communication decisions may lessen the impact. For example, discuss who needs to be informed, what information will be communicated, expectations of confidentiality, and what the consequences will be for others if confidentiality is breached.

Caution should be exercised to ensure that the victim's safety is not compromised.

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What you can do to Help or if an Employee Discloses Abuse

If warning signs of domestic violence are noticed, or if an employee discloses abuse, here are some things you can do:

All Employees:

- Talk to the victim privately about what you or others have seen. Express concern for her safety.
- Assist with reporting the incident to the Principal/Supervisor or Safety and Disability Administrator.
- Provide information on help that is available and offer referrals to appropriate agencies (ex. Shelters, Assaulted Women's Helpline, Counselling, Employee and Family Assistance Program).
- Let the victim know that you will need to call the police if violence occurs at the workplace.

Principal/Supervisors should also:

- Help the victim develop a safety plan that takes into consideration safety at the workplace.
- Implement security measures and explore alternative work arrangements to increase safety.
- Assure the victim you are available to talk at any time and that support is available.
- Recognize that the victim knows the most about the violence and they may deny the signs of domestic violence.
- Let the victim know as the Supervisor you are responsible for workplace safety. Ask the victim to tell you if safety in the workplace becomes a concern.