

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Background:

As required by [Board Policy 19: Welcoming, Caring, Respectful and Safe Learning and Working Environments](#), these procedures are intended to assist staff in maintaining a safe learning and working environment that is free from workplace violence. Incidents of workplace violence require immediate action to protect staff.

Definitions:

Complainant:

means a person who has alleged they have been subjected to or is aware of an incident of workplace violence.

Domestic Violence:

is a pattern of behaviour used by one person to gain power and control over another with whom the person has or has had a personal relationship. It becomes a workplace hazard when it occurs at or affects the workplace posing a threat to the worker or co-workers.

Learning and Working Environment:

means the immediate school or school jurisdiction worksite location where staff and students are present and includes:

- any school or work-related social activities,
- any school or work-related travel and field trips,
- any settings where the individuals involved are engaged in a work or school-related activity such as vehicles, field placements or a co-operative educational work term, and
- the use of electronic or digital media such as telephone, fax, email, network computers and internet/intranet communications at any time if it impacts the learning or working environment.

Respondent:

means the person alleged by the complainant to have committed acts of workplace violence in contravention of this Administrative Procedure.

Sexual Violence:

refers to any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act or other act directed against a worker's sexuality using coercion by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in a workplace or work-related setting. This includes any sexual activity that occurs without consent such as rape and sexual assault, abuse and harassment.

Workplace Violence:

is the threatened, attempted or actual conduct of a person that causes or is likely to cause physical or psychological injury or harm—including, physical attacks or aggression, verbal or non-verbal threatening behaviours, written threats, domestic violence and sexual violence.

Procedures:

1. The Associate Superintendent of Human Resources shall:

- 1.1. develop, communicate and implement workplace violence prevention procedures and training in support of this Administrative Procedure and ensure they are communicated to all supervisory personnel, staff and contractors.

2. Principals and supervisors shall:

- 2.1. communicate this Administrative Procedure to all staff;
- 2.2. ensure staff complete training on workplace violence prevention and control;
- 2.3. followup on all reported incidents, identified hazards, or health and safety concerns;
- 2.4. complete a [violence risk assessment](#) at least once every three years to ensure steps are taken to eliminate or control identified risks;
- 2.5. ensure a site-specific school or department [working alone protocol](#) is developed and implemented;
- 2.6. ensure members of the administrative and counselling team complete Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) training;
- 2.7. if there are immediate concerns about a person or situations involving domestic violence, complete the [Threat Assessment Checklist](#) or [Domestic Violence at Work Assessment](#) and submit to the Occupational Health and Safety Specialist;
- 2.8. notify the Associate Superintendent of Human Resources of staff-related incidents that violate Division policies or procedures or may be criminal in nature; and
- 2.9. ensure all victims and staff involved in an incident of workplace violence are involved in subsequent debriefings, incident investigations and are being advised to consult a health professional (of the worker's choice) for treatment or referral. Workers should consider accessing services and resources through an employee assistance program.

3. Employees shall:

- 3.1. follow Division and site-specific security, violence prevention and working alone protocols, emergency and safe work procedures, report as soon as possible all incidents or potential incidents of workplace violence and participate in incident briefings and investigations; and
- 3.2. participate in assessment, control and elimination of workplace violence.

4. If subjected to workplace violence:

- 4.1. Secure your safety and others in your care first and, if possible, remove yourself from the situation. Do not engage the perpetrator with dialogue or physical response except for immediate defence.

- 4.2. If threat is imminent, call 911 and initiate building lockdown protocol if others may be at risk of violence.
- 4.3. Obtain first aid or medical attention.
- 4.4. Immediately report the incident to a supervisor, complete the applicable [Incident Report](#) and participate in the incident investigation.
- 4.5. Reach out to your supervisor and Benefits and Health Advisor for psychological support.

5. Reporting incidents of workplace violence:

- 5.1. If you have experienced or witnessed an incident of workplace violence, staff shall report the incident to a supervisor immediately.
- 5.2. All staff incidents of workplace violence shall be reported to the Associate Superintendent of Human Resources.
- 5.3. Complete the applicable [Incident Report](#) for all incidents.
- 5.4. If confidentiality is a concern, this form can be completed manually and submitted directly to the OHS Specialist or Benefits and Health Advisor.

6. Procedure for investigating incidents of workplace violence:

- 6.1. All staff incidents of workplace violence must be investigated by the Associate Superintendent of Human Resources or designate.
- 6.2. If the incident involves the Associate Superintendent of Human Resources, the investigation is conducted by the Superintendent or designate.
- 6.3. An incident involving the Superintendent is investigated by the Board Chair.
- 6.4. The investigator will advise the complainant and respondent of the investigation and seek their co-operation.
- 6.5. The investigation must include the nature of the violence, name of respondent, perpetrator (or alleged perpetrator), relevant date(s), time(s) and location(s), causation and preventive measures.
- 6.6. The complainant and the respondent involved in the incident shall be informed of the investigation outcome.
- 6.7. The Associate Superintendent of Human Resources shall, within 30 working days of investigation completion, determine the appropriate course of action, which may include:
 - 6.7.1. discipline of the employee(s) involved, which may range from a reprimand up to and including termination and legal referral,
 - 6.7.2. if the employee allegations are found to be submitted with the intent to injure the alleged perpetrator, discipline of the employee reporting the incident, which may range from a reprimand up to and including termination, or
 - 6.7.3. recommendation to the employee involved to refer the matter to the appropriate legal authority for criminal charges.
- 6.8. All records relating to the incident investigation must be kept separate from the perpetrator's personnel file except where the incident is substantiated.

- 6.9. If the investigation fails to substantiate the incident, no record of the investigation will be kept in the alleged perpetrator's personnel file, and the Associate Superintendent of Human Resources shall provide a formal letter to the alleged perpetrator confirming the incident was not substantiated.
- 6.10. Whether an investigation finds sufficient or insufficient evidence to support the incident report, the investigation report and supporting documentation will be sealed and maintained in a locked and secure file by the Associate Superintendent of Human Resources for at least three years.
- 6.11. Information gathered during the investigation must be handled with appropriate care and discretion and kept in strict confidence, except where disclosure is required by law, for the purposes of investigating the complaint, informing parties involved, taking corrective action, providing due process to the parties involved or in taking disciplinary action.
- 6.12. Any unauthorized disclosure of confidential information relating to an incident investigation may result in disciplinary action.

7. Authority of the Associate Superintendent when there are no reported incidents of violence:

- 7.1. In the absence of a reported incident, the Associate Superintendent of Human Resources or Associate Superintendent of Supports for Students may initiate an independent investigation when:
 - 7.1.1. there's a pattern of inquiries or concerns over time that suggests the existence of a specific problem or risk to students, employees, and their co-workers—for example, domestic abuse;
 - 7.1.2. there's reason to believe, as a result of an investigation or observations, that a broader, systemic problem exists that causes or contributes to workplace violence—for example, working alone or security issues; or
 - 7.1.3. there are other circumstances in which the Associate Superintendent deems appropriate.

8. Retaliation:

- 8.1. Any retaliation against an individual for:
 - 8.1.1. invoking this Administrative Procedure whether on their own behalf or on behalf of another individual,
 - 8.1.2. participating or co-operating in any investigation under this Administrative Procedure, or
 - 8.1.3. associating with a person who has invoked this Administrative Procedure or participating in procedures under this Administrative Procedureis strictly prohibited and shall be subject to discipline up to and including termination from employment.
- 8.2. If an individual has experienced retaliation, the individual must inform their supervisor or the Associate Superintendent of Human Resources about the exact nature of the retaliation. The Associate Superintendent of Human Resources must initiate an investigation into the allegations of retaliation.

9. If subjected to violence by students:

- 9.1. When a person suffers workplace violence that is initiated by a student, or is the result of behaviour by a student:
 - 9.1.1. the student's behaviour must be addressed under the *Education Act* and other applicable and appropriate EIPS administrative procedures and practices;
 - 9.1.2. the incident of student-initiated violence must be addressed on an individual basis taking into consideration all relevant factors including, but not limited to, circumstances and the behaviour support plan;
 - 9.1.3. principals will consult and collaborate with Supports for Students and Occupational Health and Safety, when appropriate, that will provide assistance and support as required; and
 - 9.1.4. follow the [Procedure for Student-Initiated Violence Incident Reporting and Investigation](#).

References:

Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act, Regulation and Code – Part 27

Alberta Human Rights Act

Board Policy 19: Welcoming, Caring, Respectful and Safe Learning and Working Environments

Administrative Procedure 170: Welcoming, Caring, Respectful and Safe Learning and Working Environments for Staff

Administrative Procedure 404: Employee Conduct

Employment Standards Code

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Criminal Code

[Violence Risk Assessment Toolkit](#)

[Working Alone Protocol Template](#)

[Threat Assessment Checklist](#)

[Domestic Violence at Work Assessment](#)

[Violence Risk Assessment Tool](#)

[Procedure: Student-Initiated Violence Incident Reporting and Investigation](#)