

# AVON MAITLAND DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

## ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

### NO. 404

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#### **SUBJECT: Violence Prevention in the Workplace**

Legal References: *Occupational Health and Safety Act, Education Act: Sections 283-CEO, Section 264-Duties of a Teacher, Section 265 Duties of Principal; Criminal Code of Canada.*

Related References: *Administrative Procedure 138 Positive Workplace Environment; AP 142 Religious Accommodation; AP 160 Access to School Premises; AP 170 School Emergency Procedures; AP 179 Lockdown and Hold/Secure; AP 182 Tragic Events Response; AP 351 Code of Conduct; AP352 Promoting Positive Student Behaviour; AP 353 Student Suspension; AP354 Student Expulsion; AP 357 Violence-Free Schools; AP 363 Physical Containment; AP 404 Violence Prevention in the Workplace; AP 405 Allegations Against Employees and Volunteers; AP 410 Environmental Health and Safety; AP 414 Refusing Unsafe Work; AP 514 Money Left in Schools*

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#### **1.0 Violence Prevention**

1.1 The Avon Maitland District School Board 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.

#### **1.2 Definitions**

**Workplace Violence:** as defined by the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, workplace violence is:

- a) The exercise of physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker,
- b) An attempt to exercise physical force against a worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to a worker,
- c) A statement or behaviour that it 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.

**Workplace:** any location, either permanent or temporary, where the employee performs any work-related duty. This includes the buildings and surrounding perimeters, parking lots, field locations. This procedure applies to all work activities that occur while on Board business, or board social events.

1.3 This procedure applies to all members of the Board community, including but not limited to, trustees, students, employees, visitors such as parents and community members, volunteers, permit holders, contractors, and employees of other organizations who work on or are invited onto Board property.



## 2.0 Measures to Control Risks of Workplace Violence

### 2.1 Responsibilities

The Board must:

- Take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances to protect employees
- Provide information, instruction and supervision to an employee to protect the health and safety of the employee.

The Principal or Site Supervisor must:

- Ensure an employee uses or wears the equipment, protective devices or clothing that the Board requires to be used or worn
- Advise employee(s) of the existence of any actual or potential danger to the health or safety of the employee(s) of which the principal or supervisor is aware
- Take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances to protect staff

Employees must:

- Use or wear equipment, protective devices, or clothing required by the Board
- Report to his/her principal or supervisor the existence of any hazards of which the worker is aware.

### 2.2 Workplace Violence - Risk Assessment

The risk of violence occurring in the workplace is linked to a number of factors, including the nature of the workplace, the type of work, or conditions of the work.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Location of the workplace, e.g., schools located in high crime areas, isolated areas
- Traveling in community, visiting families, teaching in alternative sites
- Parking
- Access to workplace (entry)
- Handling cash, e.g., fundraising activities, registration fees
- Working alone or in small numbers, e.g. working late, driving courier vehicle
- Working with unstable or volatile clients/students

2.3 The principal/supervisor shall identify and rank the risks of workplace violence occurring in their school or on board premises using the *Risk Assessment Checklist* and *Rating Scale*, Form 404A.

2.4 When surveying a school or board site; the presence of specific programs in addition to regular programs must be considered by the principal / supervisor, e.g., presence of night school programs, suspension and/or expulsion programs, community programs, etc.

2.5 The *Safe Schools* Teams, representing the employee groups at each school and board site, will be surveyed to determine the extent to which they feel their workplace is safe using the *Employee Survey-Workplace Violence Program*, Form 404B. The aggregate results of these surveys will be used to identify issues related to workplace violence.

2.6 Follow-up surveys may be conducted when necessary due to changing workplace circumstances that require a reassessment of the risk of violence in the workplace.

- 2.7 Input from the Joint Health and Safety Committee and the results of the safe school climate or other student surveys will be reviewed, when appropriate, as part of the school or board site *Risk Assessment*.
- 2.8 Assessments will include the identification of any existing controls, measures or procedures already in place and additional controls, measures or procedures required to minimize risks of workplace violence.
- 2.9 When additional controls, procedures, and measures are identified, a site action plan will be developed for the implementation of these measures by e.g. the Safe Schools Team, the Emergency Response Team.
- 2.10 The results of the *Risk Assessment* must be reported to the JHSC and recorded in the minutes.
- 2.11 The *Risk Assessment* must be reassessed as often as necessary to prevent incidents of violence, at the very least when workplace conditions substantially change.
- 2.12 The Board will ensure controls; procedures and measures are modified as necessary.

### **3.0 Summoning Immediate Assistance**

- 3.1 All schools and Board sites must have appropriate communication procedures in place for staff to summon immediate assistance in the event of a workplace violence incident. Examples of communication devices are attached as Appendix A "*Types of Communication Devices*."
- 3.2 When required, the appropriate Emergency Measures communication procedures will be followed as per AP170 *Emergency Procedures*.
- 3.3 All staff must be aware of and trained in emergency and immediate assistance communication procedures.

### **4.0 Response to a Violent Incident/Threat**

- 4.1 Staff must promptly report all incidents of workplace violence/threat to the principal/supervisor using the *Employee Accident/Incident Report Form*, Form 175A.
- 4.2 The principal/supervisor shall inform the police, in accordance with the *Police-School Board Protocol*. In the event police are involved they will take control and complete their investigation before an internal investigation will start.
- 4.3 The principal/supervisor will conduct an investigation of any violent incident or threat.
- 4.4 All investigations must be viewed as fair and impartial.
- 4.5 The report must not include any personal or identifying information relevant to the victim and/or the perpetrator.
- 4.6 The principal/supervisor shall inform the affected staff of any actions taken or to be taken to address the concern.

- 4.7 The report of the investigation findings and any action taken will be provided to the Superintendent of Human Resources for sharing with the JHSC as required by the Occupational Health and Safety Act.
- 4.8 The Superintendent of Human Resources will provide appropriate victim support and the appropriate management of the offender.
- 4.9 All incidents of workplace violence will be documented and reported as required to the JHSC.

## 5.0 Domestic Violence

- 5.1 The board and principal/supervisor will take every reasonable precaution to protect employees from domestic violence that is likely to expose employees to physical injury in the workplace. Refer to Appendix B for a sample Checklist for a Domestic Violence Program.
- 5.2 Staff who have information that they or a fellow worker is subject to domestic violence; that may expose the individual or fellow workers to physical injury in the workplace, have a responsibility to inform their principal/supervisor; except where the principal/supervisor may be party to the domestic violence, in which case the employee shall inform the Superintendent of Human Resources.
- 5.3 The principal /supervisor will assess the risk of domestic violence and put in place precautions to protect the staff.
- 5.4 The board will educate staff regarding domestic violence and make available information about supports available and resources for victims of domestic violence. Examples of training, supports and resources are attached as Appendix C *Training / Support Services and Resources*.
- 5.5 The principal/supervisor must tell the victim they should contact the police, if they feel at risk of physical harm, inside or outside the workplace; or at home.

## 6.0 Education and Training

- 6.1 The Board and the principal / supervisor shall ensure that all staff in the workplace are aware of the board procedures on *Workplace Violence Prevention*.
- 6.2 Specific to those staff in workplace areas where a moderate to high risk of workplace violence exists the board and the principal /supervisor shall ensure that, based on the level of risk to which individual staff is exposed, the board and the principal or site supervisor shall ensure that:
  - All staff who work on a regular basis in positions where moderate to high risk exists have the qualifications, experience and training necessary to minimize the risk of workplace violence;
  - All staff have received training in the nature and recognition of the risks specific to their assignment;
  - All staff have received training in procedures/safety measures that minimize the risks specific to their assignment;
  - All staff have any personal protective equipment (PPE) deemed reasonable and necessary in the circumstances;

- Individual physical demands analysis has been conducted to ensure that all staff have the physical well-being to carry out procedures/safety measures that minimize their risk of injury (reviewed on an ongoing basis);
- The effected and necessary staff are involved in the development of plans for a safe workplace
- Procedures and safety measures are available to the effected staff as required;
- Training is updated and/or refreshed as often as necessary;
- Procedures are in place when these staff members are absent e.g. replacement staff are made aware of risks and have the required training and/or support of additional trained staff

**Types of Communication Devices**

Device	Strengths	Weaknesses
<b>School-wide P.A. System</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Immediate school-wide communication</li> <li>▪ Useful for “code” alerts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> May not be heard by those in noisy areas</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> One way communication only</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Restricts type of information that can be communicated (confidentiality)</li> </ul>
<b>Classroom P.A. System</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Direct link to the main office</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Simple usage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Requires someone to be in the office</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fixed location in the class means staff may not be able to access in an emergency</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Useful inside the building only</li> </ul>
<b>Individual Cell Phone</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fast direct one-to-one communication</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Can be used almost all locations including community</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Few range limitations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Can be used to text messages (when speaking is not an option; use with deaf/hard of hearing)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Can be used for a variety of messages including 911</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Requires message recipient to be available</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Signal strength may be poor in elevators, basements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If being attacked, employee may not be able to use – not enough time to dial</li> </ul>
<b>2-Way Radio (Walkie-Talkie)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Almost instant communication</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> One button use</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Can use voice or signal communication</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Can select specific recipient or numerous recipients</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Can be used for a variety of messages</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Few weak spots within range</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Requires base station to be continuously staffed or select receivers always active (also may move about)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No 911 component</li> </ul>
<b>Personal Alarms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Panic type (incapacitating sound) may deter attack</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sound brings assistance to general area</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Non-panic type (transmits emergency signal to a receiver) may include two-way communication as well as identification</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Immediate, one button use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use limited to extreme situations unless two-way communication included</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> May take time to pinpoint location (if GPS not included)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No 911 component</li> </ul>

### **Sample Checklist for a Domestic Violence in the Workplace Program**

Developed from January 2010 Draft Workplace Resource of the Occupational Health and Safety Council of Ontario,  
Workplace Violence Prevention Series

1. Ensuring members of the board community are aware of examples of domestic violence, e.g.
  - repeated acts of isolation
  - put-downs
  - threats of violence against the victim, the victim's children, or others, including family pets
  - hitting, burning, strangling, or throwing things
  - destroying property
  - sexual assault
  - repeated unwanted communications with the victim
  - stalking
2. Making members of the board community aware of who the victims of domestic violence may be, e.g.
  - current or former intimate partners
  - adults and adolescents
  - between people of all racial, economic, educational, and religious backgrounds
  - heterosexual and same sex partners
  - male or female, although women represent the overwhelming majority
3. Training members of the board community on the need to report to the employer any reasonable suspicions that domestic violence may occur in the workplace, and on the fact that communicating on a need to know basis may outweigh an individual's expectation of privacy
4. Raising awareness regarding when domestic violence is more likely to come into the workplace, and signs of high risk, e.g.
  - when co-workers in a workplace are involved in or have been involved in an intimate relationship
  - when a worker has sought shelter or left a relationship due to domestic violence
  - when threats of violence have been made against a worker
5. Revising the *Police/School Board Protocol* to include communication with the police when the police are aware of threats or threatening behaviours which may be carried out in the workplace
6. Working with organizations in the community that provide services to victims to understand the scope of domestic violence in the community
7. Reporting procedures



## Training / Support Services

There are numerous training and support services currently in place, which employees can access to help in the prevention of violent situations and also help in the event a violent incident does occur.

**Behaviour Management Systems (BMS) Training** - is provided by certified trainers who are employees of the Board. Full certification and re-certification sessions are run periodically throughout the year, such as on professional activity days and after regular hours. Educational Assistants are required to take the training as well as other Board staff who work with behaviourally-challenged students.

**In-Service from Outside Agencies** - The special education department periodically provides in-service from outside agencies, such as the Geneva Centre and the Thames Valley Children's Centre, for working with, for example, students who fall under the autism spectrum disorder. The AMDSB has a partnership with the Thames Valley Children's Centre for the services of two autism spectrum disorder consultants.

**Student Support Teams (SST)** - Under the direction of the Superintendent of Learning Services, two Student Support Teams (SST), consisting of two teachers and four educational assistants, are available to provide support, guidance and model appropriate techniques to help school-based staff work safely and effectively with students with behaviour challenges. Employees who feel that they would benefit from the services of the SST should first follow the protocol of requesting a School Team Meeting to ensure that all procedures have been followed at the school level. The Principal of the school may contact the Student Support Team teachers for a consultation which may result in a referral for support. Other support services are available through consultation with the Special Education Consultant.

**Employee Assistance Program (EAP) 1-877-596-6626** – The AMDSB EAP is a confidential, counseling and referral service available to AMDSB employees, their spouses and dependents. Within a solution-focused model, employees will receive the number of sessions necessary to resolve their concern. Confidential, professional help is available for such concerns as: stress management, relationship concerns, family problems, grief and loss, substance use/abuse, anxiety and depression, child management and parenting, legal questions, separation and divorce, dealing with conflict, career and work related concerns, eldercare worries and health and wellness services.

**Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC)** – AMDSB has a central JHSC with representation from all unions, non-unions and management. The committee's purpose is to encourage active participation by all employees in the prevention of occupational accidents and illnesses and to promote health and safety in the workplace. Each site also has one or more site-based health and safety representatives responsible for conducting monthly inspections, promoting health and safety in the workplace and acts as a link to the JHSC.

**Emergency Measures Program** – Every Board site is required to develop an Emergency Plan dealing with: Bomb Threat, Chemical/Spill/Hazardous Emission, Emergency Evacuation and Relocation, Fire and False Alarms, Medical Emergencies and First Aid, Severe Weather, and Violent Acts. As part of the plan each site has a trained Emergency Response Team (ERT) who is responsible for putting the plan into action.

## **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Personal protective equipment such as protective sleeves, jackets, face shields, shin-pads, gloves etc. are available “as warranted” by application through the principal to the Superintendent of Learning Services. Employees who feel that they require personal protective equipment in order to work safely with students should discuss their situation with the school principal prior to applying to the Superintendent of Learning Services.

### **Resources**

- [Ministry of Labour Workplace Violence and Harassment: Understanding the Law](#)
- [A Guide to the Occupational Health and Safety Act](#)
- [Domestic Violence Doesn't Stop When Your Worker Arrives at Work: How to get Help or Support a Colleague who may Need Help](#)