



South Shore
Regional Centre for Education

VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE PREVENTION PLAN

(School name)

Completed by _____
(Principal)

In consultation with _____
(JOHS Committee Co-Chair or Employee Representative)

(Date)

INTRODUCTION

The Violence in the Workplace Regulations is established under the Nova Scotia Occupational Health and Safety Act. These Regulations do not diminish the responsibility of all workplace parties to recognize violence as an occupational health and safety hazard in carrying out their precautions and duties under the Act. The essence of the Regulations is to clarify, in detail, how to address this particular occupational health and safety hazard.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to provide a template for Principals and Supervisors to understand the legislative obligations. The Principal/Supervisor will be prompted to complete a hazard assessment for risks of violence in the workplace and then develop workplace-specific preventative procedures.

A completed copy of this plan must be available for examination at the workplace by any employer, contractor, constructor, supplier, employee, owner or self-employed person in the workplace.

VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE PREVENTION PLAN

The Violence in the Workplace Prevention Plan must be reviewed at least annually or sooner if the Principal/Supervisor becomes aware of any of the following:

- A type of violence occurring in a similar school that was not taken into consideration when the previous risk assessment was conducted;
- A change in the way work takes place, interactions, physical location or layout;
- A new facility or renovation to an existing facility;
- Ordered to do so by the Department of Labour.

The essential elements of the Plan are:

- the workplace violence prevention statement;
 - the assessment of each workplace to determine if there is a risk of violence;
 - the measures taken to minimize and, to the extent possible, eliminate the identified risks of violence in the workplace;
 - the procedures for providing employees with the information and training required for the significant risks of violence they face; and
 - the procedures for reporting, documenting and investigating incidents of violence.
-

DEFINITION

The Regulations define “Violence” as any of the following:

- a) Threats, including a threatening statement or threatening behaviour that gives an employee reasonable cause to believe that the employee is at risk of physical injury,
- b) Conduct or attempted conduct of a person that endangers the physical health or physical safety of an employee.

Other conduct towards employees, such as bullying, discrimination and harassment, is governed by the South Shore Regional Centre of Education’s *Dignity in the Workplace Policy #630* and may only be deemed as “Violence in the Workplace” if it meets the definition above.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Employees

- Understand the definition of workplace violence.
- Be aware of the Violence in the Workplace Prevention Plan.
- Immediately report incidents of workplace violence to a Principal/Supervisor.

Principals / Supervisors

- Annually identify and assess risks of workplace violence and develop prevention procedures.
- Consult with Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee/Representative when assessing risks and establishing prevention procedures.
- Provide general training and review of the Violence in the Workplace Prevention Plan for all employees.
- Communicate prevention plans to employees exposed to identified risks of workplace violence.
- Ensure incidents of workplace violence are documented, promptly investigated and necessary preventative actions are implemented.

Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committees/Representatives (JOHSC/Rep)

- Consult on the Violence in the Workplace Prevention Plan, including risk assessments and prevention procedures.
- Review preventative actions from an investigation of incident of violence.
- Investigate situations of an employee unsatisfied with preventative actions following an incident of violence and make recommendations.

Health & Safety Manager

- Monitor and advise on risks of violence in the educational sector.
- Track reported incidents and monitor for trends.
- Provide support to implement the plan in workplaces.

Human Resource Services Department

- Provide support when incidents of workplace violence have Human Resource implications, such as misconduct or labour relations.
- Support Principals/Supervisors and employees as needed, such as training and Employee Assistance Program.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION STATEMENT

The South Shore Regional Centre for Education has adopted the following workplace violence prevention statement as part of the *Occupational Health and Safety Policy #670*. This policy must be posted and remain posted in a prominent place in the workplace where it can be accessed by employees:

“The SSRCE also recognizes, with reference to Violence in the Workplace Regulations under the Nova Scotia Occupational Health and Safety Act, that violence in the workplace is an occupational health and safety hazard. The SSRCE also recognizes there can be physical and emotional harm resulting from and any form of violence in the workplace is unacceptable. The SSRCE is committed to minimize, and where possible, eliminate the risk of violence in the workplace.”

INFORMATION & TRAINING

At a minimum, the Principal/Supervisor shall make all school employees aware that a Violence in the Workplace Prevention Plan exists for their school and share relevant information with affected employees at least annually.

The Principal/Supervisor will ensure prevention procedures are communicated to individual employees who are directly exposed to any identified risks. If a prevention procedure is associated with a specific individual, the sharing of personal information must be limited to an “as-needs-to-know” basis with significant consideration given to the nature of the risk and who may be exposed. The nature of the risk and the interaction with the risk will dictate what information is shared with an employee. Behavioural management plans (BMP) or similar plans, including individual program plans (“IPP”) may contain information that is related to the specific prevention procedure.

Employees who may be exposed to workplace violence risks shall receive the following training (refer to the supporting training materials).

- Rights and responsibilities under the OH&S Act;
- The SSRCE Workplace Violence Prevention Statement;
- Measures taken to minimize or eliminate the risk of the violence;
- How to recognize and react to a situation where there is potential for workplace violence;
- How to respond to a workplace violent incident which has occurred;
- How to obtain assistance; and
- How to report, document and investigate incidents of workplace violence.

REPORTING, DOCUMENTING AND INVESTIGATING

A summary of the reporting process can be followed using the Flow Chart – Appendix “A”.

Incidents of Violence in the Workplace are to be reported by employees by completing a *Violence in the Workplace Incident Report Form*, Appendix “B”. This form is submitted to the Principal/Supervisor to complete the investigation. If the violence source is another employee, that employee’s Principal/Supervisor and the Human Resources Department shall be informed immediately. If the incident may lead to criminal charges, the matter is to be reported to police authorities.

The Principal/Supervisor will promptly investigate the incident (even if an external investigation such as the police is also taking place) and identify any preventative actions to reduce or eliminate the chance of recurrence. All preventative actions will be documented on the Violence in the Workplace Incident Report Form. Completed forms are to be securely retained at the workplace by the Principal/Supervisor for a period of at least five years, and a copy sent to the Health & Safety Manager.

The Principal/Supervisor will notify both the affected employee(s) and the workplace JOHSC/Rep of the preventive actions. As a reminder, JOHSC are to discuss only the details regarding the incident and not individuals or personal information that is irrelevant to the situation (eg. names, family, personal situations). If the employee is not satisfied with the preventative actions, they are to report this in writing to the JOHSC/Rep and the SSRCE OHS Manager is to be notified. The JOHSC/Rep will then investigate and make recommendations to remedy. If recommendations are made in writing, the recipient management authority must respond with 21 days with either an indication of acceptance of the recommendations, or reasons for disagreement. If the response cannot be reasonably made within 21 days, then an indication of when response will be made must be provided to the JOHSC/Rep. If the employee is still unsatisfied, or the JOHSC/Rep is not satisfied with any delay in response, the matter is to be reported to the NS Department of Labour, OHS Division. An OHS Officer will investigate the situation, determine the adequacy of preventative actions or responses, and if necessary, issue orders under their authority.

DEBRIEFING AND TREATMENT

Employees who have been exposed to workplace violence must receive appropriate debriefing and must be advised to consult a health professional of their choice for treatment or counselling, including Employee Assistance Program. The Principal/Supervisor may include other resources for support to assist with debriefing.

EAP Services:

- Non-Teachers: Shepell-FGI, 1-866-833-7690, <https://www.workhealthlife.com>
- Teachers: NSTU Early Intervention Program, 1-800-565-6788, <https://www.homewoodhumansolutions.com/MSA/Manulife/MyResilience>

RISK ASSESSMENTS AND PREVENTION PROCEDURES

An analysis by the Occupational Health and Safety professionals in the Nova Scotia Public School Boards, have identified the 11 significant risks on the following pages that are most likely to occur in educational sector. Associated prevention strategies for those risks are also provided.

Principals/Supervisors, in consultation with the JOHSC/Rep shall:

- a) Determine if each risk is relevant for the individual workplace. If yes, check the “yes” box at the top of the page. Relevance considerations include: if this type of violence has occurred in this or other similar workplaces in the past, the circumstances in which work takes place, interactions that occur, the physical location and layout of the workplace. If not relevant, check the “no” box and continue to the next.
- b) If “yes”, review listed prevention strategies and determine if appropriate and relevant for the workplace. Modify as necessary to reflect any workplace-specific procedures and add further measures as necessary.
- c) If there are other risks, use the Workplace Specific Risk Assessment and Prevention Procedures “Template” to identify the risk and develop prevention strategies.
- d) Identify employees affected by each risk and provide copies of the relevant Risk Assessment and Prevention Procedures page to those employees.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE RISK ASSESSMENT AND PROCEDURE #1

Risk Assessment:

Are there times when an employee is working alone in the building?

YES NO

Prevention Procedures:

- Lock exterior doors when school is closed to the public.
- Have access to a telephone.
- Keep phone numbers of Principal/Supervisor and emergency contacts easily accessible.
- Look for anyone outside when entering or exiting the building.
- Be mindful of possible exit routes.
- Call police to request a patrol check if there is anything suspicious around the school.
- Report any concerns to the Principal/Supervisor.
- Avoid areas of poor lighting. If outside lights are not working, arrange for repair.
- If working after dark or during unusual hours, make someone aware of expected time of return.
- Keep valuables out of sight.
- Do not carry large amounts of cash while working alone.

Additional Prevention Strategies:

-
-
-

Employees Affected:

Copy Provided

TO THE EMPLOYEE: IF YOU ARE PROVIDED A COPY OF THIS PROCEDURE, YOU HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS BEING POTENTIALLY EXPOSED TO THIS PARTICULAR RISK OF VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE. PLEASE REVIEW AND APPLY PREVENTATIVE MEASURES ABOVE AND IF YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR PRINCIPAL/SUPERVISOR.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE RISK ASSESSMENT AND PROCEDURE #2

Risk Assessment:

Do employees handle or collect cash or valuables?

YES NO

Prevention Procedures:

- Unless it is avoidable, do not leave money in the school overnight.
- Keep funds in the cash box to a minimum.
- Keep cash locked up when not actively adding or disbursing.
- Do not count or make significant amounts of cash visible to others.
- Ask those purchasing items to bring exact change.
- During a robbery, do attempt to diffuse. Leave the area, notify others to leave, and call 911.

Additional Prevention Strategies:

-
-
-

Employees Affected:

Copy Provided

TO THE EMPLOYEE: IF YOU ARE PROVIDED A COPY OF THIS PROCEDURE, YOU HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS BEING POTENTIALLY EXPOSED TO THIS PARTICULAR RISK OF VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE. PLEASE REVIEW AND APPLY PREVENTATIVE MEASURES ABOVE AND IF YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR PRINCIPAL/SUPERVISOR.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE RISK ASSESSMENT AND PROCEDURE #3

Risk Assessment:

Are employees interacting with troubled students (such as an agitated student waiting in office, or delivering discipline)?

YES NO

Prevention Procedures:

- Implement best practices for classroom management skills (PEBS, *Guidelines for the Use of Physical Restraint (Department of Education, 2011)*, etc.)
- Follow SSRCE *Regional Code of Conduct Policy #204* and the school's written code of conduct.
- Do not discipline students in front of others, especially their peers.
- Arrange discussion in confidential location, but where help can be summoned quickly. If possible, keep doors open and someone nearby.
- If student is agitated, allow them time to calm down.
- Stay calm and in control.
- Be respect of personal space.
- Focus on the student's behaviour and not the individual.

Additional Prevention Strategies:

-
-
-

Employees Affected:

Copy Provided

TO THE EMPLOYEE: IF YOU ARE PROVIDED A COPY OF THIS PROCEDURE, YOU HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS BEING POTENTIALLY EXPOSED TO THIS PARTICULAR RISK OF VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE. PLEASE REVIEW AND APPLY PREVENTATIVE MEASURES ABOVE AND IF YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR PRINCIPAL/SUPERVISOR.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE RISK ASSESSMENT AND PROCEDURE #4

Risk Assessment:

Are there students with cognitive function that leads to acts of violence (ie, special needs students)?

YES NO Student: _____

Prevention Procedures:

- For each individual student, refer to the student's Behaviour Management Plan (BMP, IPP or similar).
- Follow student programming expectations and keep structure to the students' day.
- Consider students personal space and be aware of any triggers for the student.
- Be alert for lead-ups or warning signs, including verbal and non-verbal cues.
- Discuss concerns or changes in behaviour with Teacher or Principal.
- Dress for the assignment (appropriate footwear, minimize jewellery, keep hair tied back).
- Wear personal protective equipment as required.
- Utilize skills from training such as; Non-Violent Crisis Intervention, Autism Spectrum, etc.
- Focus on verbal de-escalation, keeping calm, polite and stay in control.

Additional Prevention Strategies:

-
-
-

Employees Affected:

Copy Provided

TO THE EMPLOYEE: IF YOU ARE PROVIDED A COPY OF THIS PROCEDURE, YOU HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS BEING POTENTIALLY EXPOSED TO THIS PARTICULAR RISK OF VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE. PLEASE REVIEW AND APPLY PREVENTATIVE MEASURES ABOVE AND IF YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR PRINCIPAL/SUPERVISOR.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE RISK ASSESSMENT AND PROCEDURE #5

Risk Assessment:

Is there a known family or custody dispute?

YES NO

Student: _____

Prevention Procedures:

- Inform employees of any court order or other information, including photo if possible, that restricts access to a student (include all teaching and other employees that supervise the student, Administrative Assistants, Bus Drivers, etc.)
- Limit school access as much as possible.
- All requests for contact with students must be made through Administration office. This should be clearly communicated to parents/guardians at the start of the school year and as often as needed.
- Standard procedures for releasing students should be implemented.
- Standard procedures for visitor sign in-out should be implemented, including access ID badges.
- Specific plans to deal with custody situations may be necessary depending on the risk to student or employees.
- If violent situation arises, consider implementing Hold & Secure, Lockdown and contacting 911.

Additional precautions

-
-
-

Employees Affected:

Copy Provided

TO THE EMPLOYEE: IF YOU ARE PROVIDED A COPY OF THIS PROCEDURE, YOU HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS BEING POTENTIALLY EXPOSED TO THIS PARTICULAR RISK OF VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE. PLEASE REVIEW AND APPLY PREVENTATIVE MEASURES ABOVE AND IF YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR PRINCIPAL/SUPERVISOR.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE RISK ASSESSMENT AND PROCEDURE #6

Risk Assessment:

Is Principal/Supervisor responsible for disciplining or having difficult conversations with employees?

YES NO

Prevention Procedures

- Do not discipline or reprimand employees in the presence of co-workers.
- Contact Human Resources for guidance on the particular situation.
- Plan for an appropriate and neutral meeting space. (Office, classroom, meeting room, or off-site)
- Arrange discussion in confidential location, but where help can be summoned quickly. If possible, keep doors open and someone nearby.
- Develop a plan on how help can be summoned.
- The meeting place set-up should allow direct access to an exit and decrease any possibility of becoming confined.
- Be aware of warning signs that the situation is escalating.
- Allow employee to voice concerns and vent as long as it does not escalate or become inappropriate.
- Listen empathetically, stay calm, and respectful of the employee's position and point of review.
- Suggest accessing any supports such as Employee Assistance Programs or other resources.

Additional precautions

-
-
-

Employees Affected:

Copy Provided

TO THE EMPLOYEE: IF YOU ARE PROVIDED A COPY OF THIS PROCEDURE, YOU HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS BEING POTENTIALLY EXPOSED TO THIS PARTICULAR RISK OF VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE. PLEASE REVIEW AND APPLY PREVENTATIVE MEASURES ABOVE AND IF YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR PRINCIPAL/SUPERVISOR.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE RISK ASSESSMENT AND PROCEDURE #7

Risk Assessment:

Do employees exercise security functions (monitor dances)?

YES NO

Prevention Procedures:

- Set up building access controls, with one entrance/exit that is monitored.
- Have adequate number of chaperones and ensure they are aware of emergency procedures.
- Notify the police of the event if concerned or as a pro-active measure.
- Be aware of signs of attendees under the influence of drugs or alcohol and restrict access. Ensure all attendees are aware of the expectations and rules.
- Be aware of any suspicious or inappropriate behaviour by attendees.
- Be aware of signs of any weapons, and monitor the individual or situation closely. Do not attempt to disarm.
- If violent situation arises, consider implementing Hold & Secure, Lockdown and contacting 911.

Additional precautions

-
-
-

Employees Affected:

Copy Provided

TO THE EMPLOYEE: IF YOU ARE PROVIDED A COPY OF THIS PROCEDURE, YOU HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS BEING POTENTIALLY EXPOSED TO THIS PARTICULAR RISK OF VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE. PLEASE REVIEW AND APPLY PREVENTATIVE MEASURES ABOVE AND IF YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR PRINCIPAL/SUPERVISOR.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE RISK ASSESSMENT AND PROCEDURE #8

Risk Assessment:

Do employees dispense medicines that may be at risk for theft?

YES NO

Prevention Procedures

- Refer to SSRCE *Administration of Prescription/Non-Prescription Medication to Students Policy #286* for details on procedures.
- Drugs should be kept in a secure location.
- Minimum quantities should be stored.
- In an attempt to steal drugs, do attempt to diffuse. Leave the area and notify others to leave the area and report to the Principal/Supervisor.

Additional precautions

-
-
-

Employees Affected:

Copy Provided

TO THE EMPLOYEE: IF YOU ARE PROVIDED A COPY OF THIS PROCEDURE, YOU HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS BEING POTENTIALLY EXPOSED TO THIS PARTICULAR RISK OF VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE. PLEASE REVIEW AND APPLY PREVENTATIVE MEASURES ABOVE AND IF YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR PRINCIPAL/SUPERVISOR.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE RISK ASSESSMENT AND PROCEDURE #9

Risk Assessment:

Do you have students that employees may visit at home or in community based settings?

YES NO

Prevention Procedures:

- Pre-assess with the Principal and discuss the situation at the home and any threats that may be present and determine if the situation is safe or any precautions need to be taken.
- Consider the following, and if necessary use the "Workplace Specific Risk Assessment and Prevention Procedure" template:
 - Animals at the home
 - Remoteness of location
 - Family members or others present at the home
 - History of violence of the student
 - Drug or alcohol abuse at the home
 - Physical condition of house, yard, access points
 - Available cell service
- Do not deviate from the plan of the visit.
- Do not enter if animals are not secured.
- Make schedules and locations known, including expected return time
- Have access to a phone and with programmed emergency contacts.
- Park on the street or back vehicle into the driveway, to avoid being blocked in.
- Do not go into remote or vulnerable areas of the house, ie: bedroom, basement, etc.
- Stay calm and in control.
- If any warnings of impending violence, leave immediately, and call 911 if situation warrants.

Additional precautions

-
-
-

Employees Affected:

Copy Provided

TO THE EMPLOYEE: IF YOU ARE PROVIDED A COPY OF THIS PROCEDURE, YOU HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS BEING POTENTIALLY EXPOSED TO THIS PARTICULAR RISK OF VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE. PLEASE REVIEW AND APPLY PREVENTATIVE MEASURES ABOVE AND IF YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR PRINCIPAL/SUPERVISOR.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE RISK ASSESSMENT AND PROCEDURE #10

Risk Assessment:

Do employees provide service where they may deal with agitated adults (parents)?

YES NO

Prevention Procedures:

- Limit school access as much as possible
- Be aware of signs of escalating violence
- Watch for non-verbal cues (arms folded, clenched fists, red face, intrusion of personal space, etc.)
- Stay focused on the topic of discussion
- Have a plan on how to assistance from others can be summoned. If necessary, develop a system for discreet means of requesting help.
- Consider physical layout for meetings to allow for direct exit and avoid being blocked from leaving. Make others aware of a meeting if there are concerns.
- If possible do not meet alone.
- Allow individual to voice concerns as long as it does not escalate or become inappropriate.
- Listen empathetically and respect a safe personal space.
- Stay calm, and respectful of the individual's position and point of view. If you are not able to maintain a calm and in controlled behaviour take a time out to re-focus, if able.
- If violent situation arises, consider implementing Hold & Secure, Lockdown and contacting 911.
- Consider legal restrictions on the individual if concern is on-going.

Additional precautions

-
-
-

Employees Affected:

Copy Provided

TO THE EMPLOYEE: IF YOU ARE PROVIDED A COPY OF THIS PROCEDURE, YOU HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS BEING POTENTIALLY EXPOSED TO THIS PARTICULAR RISK OF VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE. PLEASE REVIEW AND APPLY PREVENTATIVE MEASURES ABOVE AND IF YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR PRINCIPAL/SUPERVISOR.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE RISK ASSESSMENT AND PROCEDURE #11

Risk Assessment:

Are there organized groups associated with illegal activities or violent behaviours that may impact the school community (e.g. drugs, gangs)?

YES NO

Prevention Procedures:

- Discuss concerns with school or community resource officer.
- Develop any precautions with the officer.
- Limit access to the building and monitor activity.
- Advise all employees of the concern and what to report to Principal/Supervisor.
- If violent situation arises, consider implementing Hold & Secure, Lockdown and contacting 911.

Additional precautions

-
-
-

Employees Affected:

Copy Provided

TO THE EMPLOYEE: IF YOU ARE PROVIDED A COPY OF THIS PROCEDURE, YOU HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS BEING POTENTIALLY EXPOSED TO THIS PARTICULAR RISK OF VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE. PLEASE REVIEW AND APPLY PREVENTATIVE MEASURES ABOVE AND IF YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR PRINCIPAL/SUPERVISOR.

**WORKPLACE SPECIFIC
RISK ASSESSMENT & PREVENTION PROCEDURE
"TEMPLATE"**

Risk Assessment:

Identified Risk:

Prevention Procedures:

-
-
-
-
-
-
-

Employees Affected:

Copy Provided

TO THE EMPLOYEE: IF YOU ARE PROVIDED A COPY OF THIS PROCEDURE, YOU HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS BEING POTENTIALLY EXPOSED TO THIS PARTICULAR RISK OF VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE. PLEASE REVIEW AND APPLY PREVENTATIVE MEASURES ABOVE AND IF YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR PRINCIPAL/SUPERVISOR.