

VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE PREVENTION PLAN

(School name)		
Completed by		_
	(Principal)	
In consultation with		
(JOHS Committee	e Co-Chair or Employee Represent	_ ative)
		_
	(Date)	

PREAMBLE

The Violence in the Workplace Regulations is established under the Nova Scotia Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) 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 significant risks of violence in the workplace and then develop 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.

Employee OH&S Rights in Nova Scotia

Every employee has three fundamental rights in regards to OHS:

- **The Right to Know** about OHS issues in the workplace, particularly about hazards in the workplace and how to protect themselves and others.
- **The Right to Participate** in OHS activities in the workplace, including as a member of the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee or Representative.
- The Right to Refuse Unsafe Work when an employee has reasonable grounds that a situation is unsafe for themselves or others.

ELEMENTS OF THE PLAN

The essential elements of the Plan are:

- the workplace violence prevention statement:
- the assessment of each workplace to determine if there are significant risks of violence;
- the measures taken to minimize and, to the extent possible, eliminate the identified significant 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, such as bullying, discrimination and harassment, is governed by the South Shore Regional Centre for Education's *Respectful Workplace Policy* #630, and may only be deemed as "Violence in the Workplace" if it meets the definition above.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Principals / Supervisors

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

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

- To consult on:
 - Conducting workplace violence risk assessments,
 - Establishing a Violence in the Workplace Prevention Plan,
 - Existing workplace violence prevention procedures, and
 - Preventative actions taken to eliminate or minimize workplace violence incidents that have occurred.

Employees

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

Health & Safety Manager

- Monitor and advise on risks of violence in the educational sector.
- Track reported incidents.
- Provide support to Principals/Supervisors and employees on legislative requirements.

Human Resource Services Department

- Provide support when workplace violence has other Human Resource impacts, such as discipline or labour relations.
- Support Principals/Supervisors and employees as needed, such as training and Employee Assistance Program supports.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION STATEMENT

The South Shore Regional Centre for Education 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.

CONDUCTING THE RISK ASSESSMENT

When conducting the risk assessment, consider the following:

- a) Violence that has occurred in the workplace in the past;
- b) Violence that has occurred at other similar workplaces;
- c) The circumstances in which work takes place;
- d) The interactions that occur in the course of performing work; and
- e) The physical location and layout of the workplace.

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;
- b) A change in the way work takes place, interactions, physical location or layout;
- c) A new facility or renovation to an existing facility;
- d) Ordered to do so by the Department of Labour.

INFORMATION & TRAINING

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

The Principal/Supervisor will ensure prevention procedures are communicated to individual employees who are directly exposed to 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. Individual student plans 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 SSRSB 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

Incidents of Violence in the Workplace are to be reported by employees by completing a Violence in the *Workplace Incident Report Form*. This form is submitted to the Principal/Supervisor to complete the investigation. If the violence source is another employee, that employee's Principal/Supervisor shall be informed immediately, who shall inform the Human Resources Department 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 Violence Incident Report. Completed forms are to be securely retained at the workplace by the Principal/Supervisor for a period of at least five years.

The Principal/Supervisor will notify both the affected employee(s) and the workplace JOHSC/Rep of the preventive actions taken. As a reminder, JOHSC are to discuss the details regarding the incident and not individual employee or student personal information that is irrelevant to the situation (eg. names, family, personal situations).

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 will consider requesting other Regional resources for support to assist with debriefing.

Non-Teachers: http://www.myinconfidence.ca

Teachers: www.myresilience.com

VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE PREVENTION PROCEDURES

Health and Safety professionals in the Nova Scotia Public School Sector have identified the following risks as likely significant in schools. Risks and associated prevention procedures identified within the education sector are provided below. Each plan/procedure shall be customized for each workplace and distributed to the appropriate employees for information so they are aware of hazards related to violence in their workplace as well as prevention strategies.

- a) Review each identified risk and determine if relevant for the individual workplace. If yes, check the "yes" box at the top of the page. If not, check the "no" box.
- b) If yes, review listed prevention strategies to determine if appropriate and relevant for the individual workplace. Adjust as necessary to reflect workplace specific strategies. Add further measures as necessary.
- c) For risks not listed, use the attached form to identify the risk and develop prevention strategies.
- d) Ensure relevant employees are made aware of the appropriate components of the Workplace Violence Prevention Plan. This can be done by providing copies of relevant procedures.

RISK ASSESSMENT AND PREVENTION PROCEDURES

Are there times when an employee is working alone in the building that present a significant risk of violence?

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Prevention Procedures

- Lock exterior doors when school is closed to the public.
- The employee working alone in a school needs to have access to a telephone.
- Keep phone numbers of supervisor and emergency contacts in easily accessible area.
- Look for anyone outside when entering the building.
- Be aware of possible exit routes.
- Call the police to request a patrol check if there is anyone suspicious hanging around the school.
- Report any concerns to the Principal/Supervisor.
- Avoid areas of poor lighting. If outside lights are not working submit a maintenance request.
- If working after dark or during unusual hours, make someone aware of expected time of return.
- Keep valuables out of sight.

Additional Prevention Strategies:

Do not carry large amounts of cash while working alone.

● ● Employees Affected: □ Copy Provided

RISK ASSESSMENT AND PROCEDURE #2

Do your employees handle or collect cash or valuables that present a significant risk of violence? YES \sqcap NO \sqcap

Prevention Procedures

- Unless it is avoidable, do not leave money in the school overnight.
- Keep funds in the cash box/safe to a minimum.
- Keep cash locked up when not actively adding or disbursing.
- Do not count or in other ways make visible significant amounts of cash where others can see it.
- Ask those purchasing items like tickets or yearbooks to bring exact change.
- If anyone is present when someone is attempting to rob the funds, do not interfere—leave the area while encouraging others to leave the area call 911.

Additional precautions	
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Employees Affected:	□ Copy Provided

Do your employees provide service where they may deal with troubled students (such as a distraught student sent to the office) and/or disciplining students that present a significant risk of violence?

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Prevention Procedures

- Stay calm and in control.
- Do not discipline students in front of their peers.
- If students are agitated, allow them time to calm down, respect their personal space.
- Arrange a meeting with the student where the discussion can be confidential but where help can be summoned (door open with someone outside but out of the line of sight and let someone know there may be concerns).
- Implement best practices for classroom management skills. Follow school and Regional processes.
- Focus on the student's behaviour and not the individual.

Additional Prevention Strategies: • • • Employees Affected: □ Copy Provided

Is there an individual student whose temperament leads to significant risks of violence (such as students with special needs or behavioral issues)?

or behavi	oral issues)?
	YES - NO -
Student ID:	<u>.</u>
(To respect priva	cy, students can be identified by initials or partial names, such as "JM" or "JOhn in Grade 3".)
Prevention I	<u>Procedures</u>
For each indi	vidual student that fits in this risk refer to the individual student plan (social development or
similar) and i	n addition use the following best practices for defusing a potentially violent situation:
0	Be aware of warning signs of potentially violent situations.
0	Be aware of changes in student's verbal and non-verbal communications.
0	Maintain consistency in communications (verbal and non-verbal), i.e. arms crossed, loud
	voice.
0	Dress for the assignment (appropriate footwear, minimize jewelry, keep hair tied back).
0	Wear personal protective equipment as determined to be required.

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- Follow student programming expectations.
- Keep structure to the students' day.
- Discuss concerns or changes in behaviour with teacher/principal.
- 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.
- Consider students personal space and be aware of any triggers for the student.

Additional Prevention Strategies:

elsewhere, they should be referred to here.)
□ Copy Provided

Is there a known family or custody dispute that present a significant risk of violence? YES - NO -

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Prevention Procedures

- If the school receives a copy of a court order, including photo, restricting access to a child, employees
 need to be made aware. This includes relevant teaching staff, administrative assistant, bus drivers
 and other employees with interactions with the individual student.
- All requests for contact with students must be made through Administration office. This should be clearly communicated to parents/guardians at the beginning of the school year and more often as needed.
- Standard procedures for releasing students should be implemented.
- Standard procedures for signing in/out visitors should be implemented, including access badges.
- Doors should be kept locked and/or monitored as much as possible
- Specific plans to deal with custody situations may be necessary depending upon the risk to student or employees.
- If a threat arises the school would consider enacting their Hold & Secure or Lockdown procedure.

Additional precautions • • • Employees Affected: □ Copy Provided

Are Supervisors responsible for disciplining or having difficult conversations with employees that present a significant risk of violence?

YES - NO -

Prevention Procedures

- Do not discipline or reprimand employees in the presence of other co-workers.
- Contact Human Resources for suggestions on handling the situation.
- Consideration for the most appropriate and neutral meeting space (Office, classroom, meeting room, off-site)
- Pre-arrange a meeting with the employee and ensure another colleague is aware of the situation (not details) and is readily available to assist if the Supervisor believes the meeting may become elevated.
- Develop a plan that identifies how the Supervisor will request help.
- The set-up of the meeting place should allow direct access to an exit and decrease likelihood of being confined in the meeting space.
- Be aware of warning signs that the situation is escalating
- Allow the employee to voice concerns and vent as long as it does not escalate.
- Listen empathetically.
- Stay calm, and respectful of the employee's position and point of view.
- Suggest accessing any supports that may be available for the problems expressed such as Employee Assistance Programs or other resources.

Additional precautions

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Employees Affected:	□ Copy Provided

Do your employees exercise security functions (monitor dances) that present a significant risk of violence? YES NO

Prevention Procedures

- Set up access control features. One entrance/exit that is monitored during the event. Keep all fire
 exits clear.
- Have adequate number of chaperones and ensure they are aware of emergency procedures.
- Call 911 immediately for situations that are criminal in nature or the person in charge feels there is a threat of violence.
- 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.
- Notify the police of the event if concerns or as a pro-active measure.
- If situation arises during event, consider implementing Hold & Secure or Lockdown procedures.

Additional precautions • • • Employees Affected: □ Copy Provided

Do your employees dispense medicines that may be at risk for theft involving a significant risk of violence? YES - NO -

Prevention Procedures

Additional precautions

- Refer to SSRCE Policy 286 Administration of Prescription/Non-Prescription Medication to Students for details on procedures for administering drugs.
- Medications should be kept in a secure location.
- Minimum quantities should be stored to minimize the temptation of theft.
- Do not attempt to restrain or stop someone intent on stealing the medications, but report the incident and details immediately and summon help.

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Employees Affected:	□ Copy Provided

Do you have students that employees may visit at home or in community-based settings that present a significant risk of violence?

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Prevention Procedures

- Complete a pre-visit assessment with the Principal. Discuss the situation at the home and any threats
 that may be present. At this time a decision should be made whether it is safe or any precautions
 need to be taken for the employee to do a home visit.
- Consider the following prior to the visit and develop a written individualized prevention plan using the template form if further details are required.
 - Pets present 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
 - Condition of steps, house, yard
 - Is there cell service available
 - Other concerns
 - Does Employee doing home visit have NVCI or similar skills.
- When doing home visits ensure the following:
 - Do not deviate from individualized plan.
 - Do not enter if animals such as dogs are not secured.
 - Make schedules and locations known, including expected return time
 - Have access to a cell phone and with programmed emergency contacts.
 - o Park only 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 threats of violence occur, leave immediately and call 911 if situation warrants.

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Employees Affected:	□ Copy Provided

Do employees provide service where they may deal with agitated adults (parents) that present a significant risk of violence? YES NO

Prevention Procedures

- Ensure school access is limited as much as possible.
- Be aware of signs of escalating violence.
- Be aware of non verbal communication and body language (arms folded, clenched fists, red face, intrusion of personal space, etc.)
- Stay focused on the topic of discussion
- Request assistance from others. Develop a system for requesting help in code if necessary (ie please get me the orange folder)
- If meeting with the individual(s) consider the location, the set up of the meeting place should allow direct access to an exit and decrease likelihood of being confined in the meeting space. Ensure others are aware of the meeting and of the concerns.
- If possible do not meet with individuals alone.
- Allow individuals to voice concerns and vent as long as it does not escalate.
- 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.
- Call 911 if situation continues to escalate or direct threats of violence made.
- Initiate a Hold & Secure or Lockdown as necessary.
- Consider legal restrictions for the individual visiting the school if this is an on-going concern

Additional precautions

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• Employees Affected:	□ Copy Provided

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

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 School Administration.
- If the situation warrants, initiate Hold & Secure or Lockdown procedures and call 911.

Additional precautions ● ●	
● Employees Affected:	□ Copy Provided
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To The Employee: If you are provided a copy of this procedure, you have been identified as having potential risk for this particular situation 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 WORKPLACE SPECIFIC TEMPLATE

Date :	
Identified Significant Risk of Violence:	
Prevention Strategies:	
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Employees Affected:	□ Copy Provided —
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