

**NLSchools** refers to all public K-12 English schools and school-related facilities under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education, Education Operations Branch and all employees working therein providing services and supports to such schools, including those who work in the areas of school facilities, student transportation, program implementation, student services, and procurement.

## Policy Name

Prevention of Workplace Violence

## Policy Statement:

The Department of Education recognizes that the potential for violence against its employees exists in its workplaces and is committed to providing a safe work environment for all staff. Recognizing sources of violence, and evaluation and implementation of controls to reduce risk to employees, are key components of any violence prevention program. This policy will comply with applicable regulatory requirements under the [Occupational Health and Safety \(OH&S\) Legislation](#) and relevant collective agreement language.

## Background:

The specific roles and responsibilities of the various workplace parties as they relate to violence prevention are noted below.

### Employer

- Establish and maintain a process for identifying, evaluating and controlling potential sources of violence.
- Provide the necessary human and financial resources to support the implementation of effective controls and corrective measures.
- Ensure that all violence-related incidents and accidents are thoroughly investigated to determine the causes and contributing factors.
- Ensure that identified controls and corrective measures are implemented on a timely basis.

### School Principals, Managers and Supervisors

- Complete the violence risk assessment form on a yearly basis.
- Review and update the violence risk assessment with employees at least yearly, or as conditions change.

- Advise all workers to promptly report and document all violence-related incidents and accidents.
- Develop and implement controls/corrective measures to reduce the potential of recurrences.
- Monitor the effectiveness of controls/corrective measures.
- Promptly forward all completed documentation (i.e., Form 6, Form 7 if necessary); Accident/Incident Investigation Report) to the Human Resources Manager (OH&S).
- Co-operate with an OH&S Officer from Digital Government and Service NL (OH&S Division) who is exercising his/her duties under the OH&S legislation.

### **Workers**

- Participate in the review of the violence risk assessment.
- Work within the identified controls to reduce the potential of a recurrence.
- Promptly report and document all violence related incidents and accidents, regardless of the severity, to the school principal, manager or supervisor.
- Help to identify what caused the incident/accident and suggest controls/corrective actions to reduce the potential of a recurrence.
- Co-operate with an OH&S Officer from Digital Government and Service NL who is exercising their duties under the OH&S legislation.

### **OH&S Committees**

- Review and discuss potential for violence, and documented violence-related incidents during committee meetings.
- Participate in the investigation of violence-related incidents, when requested.
- Monitor the effectiveness of controls/corrective actions to prevent potential recurrence.

### **Education Operations Branch, Human Resources Manager (OH&S)**

- Maintain appropriate records/documentation (e.g., violence risk assessments; Form 6, Form 7, Accident/Incident Investigation Report) for all violence-related incidents and accidents.
- Conduct the investigation of a serious injury, as identified in the OH&S legislation, in consultation with the principal, supervisor/manager and OH&S committee. Complete the Serious Injury Investigation Report on a timely basis and copy it to the:
  - OH&S Officer with Digital Government and Service NL
  - Superintendent of Schools
  - Principal and respective supervisor(s)/manager(s)
  - Co-chairpersons of the OH&S committee

## Scope

This policy applies to all employees within NLSchools. The policy also applies to students, parents or guardians of students, volunteers, and other persons who have cause to be present in schools or on school-related property. This policy will comply with applicable regulatory requirements under the OH&S legislation and relevant collective agreement language.

## Definitions:

### Abuse

Abuse means to ill-use, to misuse, or to insult, in a manner that endangers an employee's job or reputation, undermines performance, or threatens the economic livelihood of an employee.

Abuse includes, but may not be limited to, verbal or psychological abuse. (Physical abuse would be considered "violence" in accordance with the provisions of this policy).

- Verbal abuse is any use of language to undermine someone's dignity or security through insults or humiliation.
- Psychological abuse is a form of mistreatment that causes mental or emotional pain or injury and includes, but is not limited to: statements or actions that humiliate or belittle, insults, and isolation.

### Family Violence

Family violence is defined in section 3 of the [Family Violence Protection Act](#):

### Hazard

A hazard is a condition, substance, practice or behaviour that has the potential to cause injury, illness or property damage.

### Risk

Risk is the chance or probability of danger, loss or injury.

### Violence Risk Assessment

A violence risk assessment is an evaluation that is performed in a workplace when there may be a risk of injury to employees from violence arising out of their employment. A violence risk assessment identifies whether a risk exists, and if so, the nature and severity of that risk, as well as means for addressing that risk and the hazards to be controlled. It must consider previous experience in the workplace, occupational experience in similar workplaces, and the location and circumstances

in which employees may be working.

### **Safety Plan**

A Safety Plan is created when a risk of injury to employees from violence is identified by a violence risk assessment and controls are required to be implemented. It identifies controls such as procedures, policies and work environment arrangements to mitigate the risk to employees from violence.

### **Threat**

A threat indicates the potential for harm or for someone to act out violently against someone or something. Threats may be verbal, written, drawn, posted on the Internet, sent electronically or by information/communication technology of any type, made by gesture or reasonably inferred from the surrounding circumstances of events. Threats may be direct, indirect, conditional or veiled.

### **Violence**

Violence is the attempted or actual exercise by a person of physical force that causes or has the potential to cause injury to an employee, and includes threats or other behaviour which give an employee reason to believe that he or she is at a risk of injury.

## **Policy Directives**

1. Employees working within NLSchools are obligated to take every reasonable precaution to protect their co-workers where they are, or ought to be, reasonably aware that family violence will likely expose an employee to physical injury that may occur in the workplace.
2. The violence risk assessment form must be completed. This outlines the potential for violence against employees. There are various sources of violence, including:
  - Students
  - Parents or guardians
  - Intruders
  - All potential sources of violence must be recorded on this form. Names of specific individuals are not to be included.
  - The sources of violence are to be assessed following directions included on the form and rated according to the scale (see violence risk assessment form for specific directions).
  - Controls are to be identified and included on the violence risk assessment form. Typical controls include, but are not limited to:

- Behavioural modification plans
  - Emergency response plans
  - [Safe and Caring Schools Policy and Procedures](#)
  - Lock down procedures
  - The violence risk assessment form must be reviewed each year, or as conditions change (e.g., new student with known violent tendencies, result of an incident).
  - The violence risk assessment form must be reviewed with employees and signed off as having been received.
  - The violence risk assessment form must be kept on file at the school and submitted to the Manager of Human Resources (OH&S) annually.
3. All violence-related incidents and accidents are to be reported and investigated.

## Administrative Procedures

### 1 Responsibilities

#### 1.1 NLSchools is responsible for:

- a) an annual review of this policy; and
- b) understanding and communicating with members of the community about this policy.

#### 1.2 The Superintendent of Schools is responsible for:

- a) implementing and operationalizing this policy; and
- b) allocating employees and resources to support the policy and related procedures; establishing procedures for reporting and responding to incidents of workplace violence and abuse, and ensuring that such procedures are communicated, maintained and followed.

#### 1.3 Senior Management Officials (as delegated by the Superintendent) are responsible for:

- a) ensuring that incidents of abuse or violence are responded to appropriately; and
- b) ensuring personnel are appropriately trained to implement this policy.

#### 1.4 Directors of Schools and Directors are responsible for:

- a) recognizing potential risks and hazards;

- b) working with OH&S managers to ensure that Risk Assessments are prepared, implemented and reassessed as necessary; and
- c) ensuring that incidents of abuse (raised by staff, Occupational Health and Safety Committees, or worker health and safety representatives), are responded to appropriately, and supporting administrators and other employees as required.

**1.5 The Occupational Health and Safety Manager** is responsible for:

- a) recognizing potential risks and hazards;
- b) reviewing risk assessments forms as required;
- c) providing support to administrators, managers and supervisors in the process of assessing and reassessing the risks of workplace violence;
- d) developing and maintaining training related to workplace violence; and
- e) maintaining and monitoring documentation related to workplace violence.

**1.6 School Administrators and/or Site Managers** are responsible for:

- a) recognizing potential risks and hazards;
- b) completing violence risk assessment forms, with employee input; and
- c) ensuring that employees and the Occupational Health and Safety Committee/Representative in their workplace are aware of this policy and related procedures, and that this policy and related procedures are reviewed annually in a staff meeting;
- d) posting this policy on the Occupational Health and Safety bulletin board;
- e) encouraging the reporting of incidents of workplace violence;
- f) ensuring that employees who may be exposed to the risk of violence are informed of the nature of the risk and the precautions that may be taken. This includes providing information related to the risk of violence from persons who have a history of violent behaviour and whom employees are likely to encounter in the course of their work.

**1.7 All employees** are responsible for:

- a) immediately notifying their supervisor if they are involved in, or have observed, any incident of workplace violence; and
- b) summoning immediate assistance, if available, if they are involved in, or have witnessed a violent incident. In the case of an extreme or imminent threat of physical harm, or when immediate assistance is unavailable, they

should contact the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

In the event that an employee is unsure of how to proceed, they should contact a Human Resources Division representative or their union as soon as possible.

- 1.8** Any **volunteer or contractor** who is involved in, or who witnesses, a violent incident must also summon immediate assistance, if available. In the case of an extreme or imminent threat of physical harm, or when immediate assistance is unavailable, he or she should contact the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

**Note:**

**All supervisors and administrators** are responsible for ensuring that employees who may be exposed to the risk of violence are informed of the nature of the risk and the precautions that may be taken. This includes providing information related to the risk of violence from persons who have a history of violent behaviour and whom employees are likely to encounter in the course of their work. Information is shared to ensure that all NLSchools employees who may be at risk are able to respond in a safe and appropriate manner.

## **2 Violence Prevention**

NLSchools does not tolerate incidents of workplace violence. NLSchools will take all reasonable steps to prevent violence by:

- 2.1 engaging in early identification, assessment, and appropriate responses to risks, hazards, violence and abuse;
- 2.2 offering supportive interventions and providing employees with the skills and knowledge to act effectively in response to potential or actual violence or abuse; and
- 2.3 allocating sufficient resources to identify, assess and respond appropriately to risks and hazards.

## **3 Violent Incident Protocol**

NLSchools employees, volunteers and contractors are subject to the following reporting and investigation protocols in cases of violent incidents, recognizing that each case may require different interventions, responses and supports:

- 3.1 All incidents of violence must be immediately reported to an appropriate supervisor.
- 3.2 The incident will be investigated at the workplace and, where appropriate, consultation will occur with NLSchools personnel,

agencies and/or authorities.

- 3.3 All appropriate documentation must be completed by appropriate personnel, in consultation with the employee(s), and any steps taken to prevent a recurrence recorded.
- 3.4 In cases where an employee suffers workplace violence and requires medical attention as a result, the incident must be reported to appropriate law enforcement authorities and/or agencies.
- 3.5 In cases where an employee suffers workplace violence, NLSchools personnel, in consultation with school personnel, will prepare or update a Risk Assessment, as required.

#### **4 Family Violence**

- 4.1 Where NLSchools becomes aware, or ought reasonably to be aware, that family violence would likely expose a worker to physical injury that may occur in the workplace, NLSchools shall take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of the worker. This may include:
  - a) Asking the employee what they need to have in place to address any concerns regarding potential injury in the workplace from family violence (as per the definition of family violence in section 3 of the Family Violence Act);
  - b) Consulting with other workers to notify of procedures to follow should they witness violence or believe it is likely to occur;
  - c) Implementing proper security safeguards to address access to the workplace where necessary;
  - d) Addressing any issues and implement safeguards with respect to working alone;
  - e) Consulting with law enforcement where necessary/appropriate.

#### **5 Other**

- 5.1 NLSchools prohibits reprisals against those who have raised good-faith concerns or provided information regarding a concern or incident of workplace violence.
- 5.2 The Prevention of Workplace Violence policy and associated Administrative Procedures will be communicated to the broader school community through the website and other means as



directed.