



The Limestone District School Board is committed to workplace health, safety and security and believes in the prevention of workplace violence and the promotion of a violence-free workplace in which all people respect one another and work together to achieve common goals. Any form of violence in the workplace, or at any work-related and/or staff function, or in any other work-related circumstance is unacceptable. Workplace violence in any form erodes the mutual trust and confidence that are essential to the well-being of our staff and students. The goal of this procedure is therefore to prevent violence from taking place, and where necessary to act upon incidents of violent behaviour promptly, fairly, collaboratively and judiciously.

In order to facilitate the implementation of this Procedure, a Workplace Violence Program has been developed. The Program includes measures and procedures to protect employees from workplace violence, a means for summoning immediate assistance, a process for workers to report incidents or concerns as well as community partnerships that support our commitment to staff safety and a violent-free workplace.

1. Workplace Violence Defined

1.1. As defined by the Occupational Health & Safety Act Section 1(1), workplace violence includes:

- The exercise of physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker.
- An attempt to exercise physical force against a worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker.
- A statement or behavior that it is reasonable for a worker to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against the worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker.
- Workplace violence against a worker may be a one-time occurrence or



involve repeated behaviours over time such as hitting, kicking, and biting a worker that causes or could cause physical injury. Workplace violence may also include an attempt to exercise physical force against a worker, such as an attempt to hit or bite, and may also include a statement or behaviour which is reasonable for the worker to interpret as a threat of violence, such as leaving a worker a threatening note or threatening an act of violence against a worker.

1.2. Workplace violence may be physical or psychological in nature. Examples of physical and/or psychological violence may include but are not limited to:

- Assault or battery (with or without a weapon), including shoving, hitting, pushing or kicking
- Behaviour intended to intimidate such as vandalism, arson, sabotage, or throwing objects
- Displays of any kind of weapon
- Verbal and/or written threats
- Threatening messages relayed through a third person
- Intimidation and/or bullying

2. Domestic Violence

2.1. Domestic violence occurring in the workplace is recognized by the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) as workplace violence. Unlike many risks which may lend themselves to regular and ongoing assessment, the risk of domestic violence taking place in the workplace is much more variable and less easily anticipated, although nonetheless real. Although the OHSA does not require an assessment of the risks of domestic violence becoming workplace violence, the Limestone District School Board is committed to educating workers regarding domestic violence, and



to take every reasonable precaution to protect workers from domestic violence that is likely to expose workers to physical injury in the workplace.

3. Application

- 3.1. According to the Internal Responsibility System (IRS), all individuals in the workplace, at all levels and functions, must accept the responsibilities involved in achieving the spirit and intent of this procedure in order to ensure the safety of our staff, students, volunteers, trustees as well as members of the broader school community.
- 3.2. Members of the general public, visitors to Board facilities, individuals conducting business with the Board and employees of contractors or other organizations providing services to the Board are also expected to refrain from violence towards employees.

4. Roles & Responsibilities

- 4.1. All employees have the right to work in an environment free from violence; therefore, all employees share the responsibility to support a violence-free workplace.
- 4.2. The Limestone District School Board is responsible for
 - Providing a workplace free from all forms of violence, threats of violence, intimidation or other disruptive behaviour, including domestic violence and hate motivated behaviours/violence.
 - Creating an environment through protocol, community partnerships, practices and staff training that encourages victims of violence and witnesses/bystanders to report all incidents or threats of violence.
 - Providing regular, ongoing violence awareness/prevention education, training and information to employees, including workplace violence



prevention and intervention procedures

- Reporting to the Occupational Health & Safety Coordinator and Certified Worker Representative and the respective Union/Federation/Association, as required, within four days of a violent incident occurring if it results in a worker becoming disabled or requiring medical attention
- Reporting to the Ministry of Labour, the Occupational Health & Safety Coordinator, the Certified Worker Representative and the respective Union/Federation/Association if a workplace incident results in a person being killed or critically injured, including notifying in writing, within 48 hours, a director of the Ministry of Labour, giving the circumstances of the incident and any information that may be required.

4.3. Management and supervisory staff are responsible for:

- Identifying and assessing the risks of workplace violence, including domestic violence and hate motivated violence, occurring on Board premises, or while engaging in workplace activities or workplace social events, and to take reasonable precautions to protect employees from possible threats of violence, including domestic violence in the workplace.
- Providing information, instruction, supervision and safety plans to employees to protect their health and safety, using board and community experts.
- Adhering to the Act, when employees make a determination to remove themselves from harmful situations or request accommodations to the workplace if they have reason to believe that they are at risk of imminent danger/harm due to workplace violence.
- Reporting and consulting with the Occupational Health & Safety Coordinator, the Joint Health & Safety Committee (JHSC), and where appropriate, Human Resources and Union/Federation, in conducting work



place violence risk and threat assessments, and develop practical steps to minimize, or eliminate the identified/assessed risks.

- Advising the Joint Health & Safety Committee of assessment and reassessment results.
- Responding promptly to all reports of violence, immediately addressing all incidents of workplace violence, including domestic violence, and not condoning or permitting any behavior contrary to this procedure.
- Ensuring incidents of workplace violence are investigated as appropriate and documented, based on the nature of each incident and the assessed threat to worker safety, and communicated to affected employees, including the resulting plan/controls to be implemented to ensure the safety of staff.

4.4. The Joint Health and Safety Committee is responsible for:

- Identifying risks and reviewing all Workplace Violence Risk Assessment results and providing recommendations to management to reduce and eliminate the risk of violence by identifying systemic practices that exist within the organization.
- Recommending corrective measures, including employee training, for the improvement of employee health and safety.
- Responding to employee concerns related to workplace violence and communicating these concerns to management.
- Reviewing the Violence in the Workplace procedure on a regular basis.

4.5. Employees are responsible for:

- Maintaining a safe work environment, whenever possible, treating all employees and members of the public with respect and dignity



- Responding to and reporting all violent, threatening, intimidating or other disruptive behaviors in the workplace, at any work-related functions, or in any other work-related circumstances.
- Refraining from engaging in or threatening violence and/or using any Board resources such as workplace phones, fax machines, mail or email to commit or threaten violence.
- Refraining from engaging in violence or threatening violence which has arisen out of a workplace incident or relationship while at work or away from the workplace.
- Reporting, immediately, through [eBASE](#) and to their immediate supervisor, any incident where the employee is subjected to, witnesses, or has knowledge of workplace or domestic violence, or has reason to believe workplace violence, including domestic violence, has/may occur.
- Cooperating fully in any internal or external investigation of a violent incident.

5. Risk Assessment for Violence in the Workplace

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

5.2. Risks include, but are not limited to:

- Location of the workplace
- Communication with hard to serve and/or aggressive parents/guardians
- Travelling in the community, to and from the workplace, home visits, teaching in sites other than schools such as alternate education sites



- Parking areas
- Public access to the workplace, including board services located in secluded areas of a school building/site
- Working with unstable or volatile clients/students and/or parents/guardians, e.g., students with severe needs or with a history of violent behaviours
- Handling cash, main office access, for example, fundraising activities, registration fees for adult programs
- Working alone or in small numbers, e.g., working late and at night, meeting parents after school hours, driving a courier vehicle

5.3. As a result, the following characteristics will be assessed on a regular basis in terms of low, moderate or high risk:

- The nature of the workplace and the workplace location, including physical aspects such as the ability to leave site quickly and safely
- Type of work performed, including activities and populations served
- Conditions of work, including hours of work, mobility of workers, working alone, handling of money
- Circumstances specific to the workplace, including layout and design, high risk clients, security measures/safety plans, past violence in the workplace, access to the street in high risk/isolated neighbourhoods.

Level of Risk

5.4. Low Risk: One or more potential risks which rarely place a member of the board community at risk of workplace violence, and/or the risk of workplace violence is minimal. The risk of workplace violence is not related to a normal part of the work routine, and/or there is minimal potential for intervention or first aid to be



required.

5.4.1. Moderate Risk: One or more potential risks of workplace violence which may occasionally place a member of the board community at risk of workplace violence, and/or the risk of workplace violence is possible. The risk of workplace violence may be related to a normal part of the work routine on an infrequent basis, and/or there is moderate potential for intervention, or first aid or medical aid to be required.

5.4.2. High Risk: One or more potential risks of workplace violence which may regularly place a member of the board community at risk of workplace violence, and/or the risk of workplace violence is related to a normal part of the work routine on a regular basis, and/or there is a high potential for intervention(s), or medical aid to be required.

5.5. As part of the risk assessment, both current and required controls, procedures and measures for addressing these risks must be identified yearly, when an incident occurs or whenever the environment changes, as necessary.

5.6. Where new/additional controls are required, an implementation plan will be developed in consultation with appropriate staff/community experts/Union/Federation, including required actions, responsible parties, community partners, timeframes for completion as well as ongoing review by staff and evaluation by experts, as appropriate.

5.7. Based on the results of a risk assessment, the board and the site/department supervisor shall ensure that:

- All staff who work on a regular basis in positions where moderate to high risk exists are aware and have the qualifications, experience and training necessary to assess and minimize the risk of workplace violence.
- All staff have received training in the nature and recognition of the risks specific to their assignment.



- All regular 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 and that employees wear/use it as required.
- Individual physical demands analysis has been conducted, as necessary, to ensure staff have the physical well-being to carry out procedures/safety measures that minimize their risk of injury (reviewed on an ongoing basis).
- Affected staff, as necessary, are involved in the development of the Safety Plan procedures and safety measures are available to the effected staff as required.
- Training is updated and/or refreshed as often as necessary and tracked by Human Resources.
- Procedures/protocols are in place when staff assigned to high-risk students are absent.
- Any replacement staff (short or long-term) is aware of the associated risks and either has the training requirements noted above, or is supported by additional employees who have the training requirements.

6. Reassessing the Risk of Workplace Violence

6.1. A reassessment of the risks of workplace violence is required by the OHSA as often as necessary to ensure that the workplace violence policy and program continues to protect workers from workplace violence. Changes or events within a school board workplace that may warrant a reassessment may include:

- a) an increase in the number, frequency or severity of workplace violence



incidents for that specific workplace (e.g., school, classroom, school board office, etc.)

b) a change in the physical environment of the workplace (e.g., the addition/removal of portables or security controls)

c) a change in the student population of a school; and/or

d) a change in curriculum or scheduling, or a change in environment (e.g., noisy construction at school), to determine if such change could provoke violent behaviours.

7. Definitions

7.1. Assault: Any attempt or threat to inflict injury upon another person, and/or any display of force that would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm.

7.2. Bullying: The misuse of power or position to persistently criticize and condemn and/or openly humiliating and undermining an individual's ability. Bullying behaviour may be sudden, irrational and unpredictable.

7.3. Domestic Violence: Is a pattern of behaviour used by one person to gain power/control over another with whom they have had an intimate relationship. It may include physical violence, sexual, emotional or psychological intimidation, verbal abuse, stalking and/or the use of electronic devices to harass and control.

7.4. Conditional Threat: Whether written or verbal, involves a condition. For example, "If you don't stop..., you will be sorry".

7.5. Direct Threat: Is a clear and explicit written or verbal statement which clearly indicates that the perpetrator intends harm. For example, "You're going to pay for what you did".

7.6. Veiled Threat: Involves behaviours or statements that suggest that the perpetrator



intends to harm. For example, “This hammer could really do some damage”.

8. Responding to Incidents of Violence in the Workplace

- 8.1. The nature of the response to violence in the workplace will be dependent on the seriousness of the incident; therefore, depending on the nature, location and level of risk, this may include reporting the incident to one’s immediate supervisor, initiating a risk and/or threat assessment for employee threat making behaviours, summoning assistance from the site supervisor as well as community assistance through 911, including implementing Site-Specific Emergency Response and/or Lockdown Procedures, as appropriate.

Threat Assessment for Adult Threat Making Behaviours

- 8.2.1. In order to remove or reduce, as far as possible, any threats to the safety of staff, students or members of the broader school community, identified employee behaviours that pose a potential risk to other staff, students or members of the community will be assessed, as required, in consultation with the appropriate police service and/or relevant community agency.

Such behaviours include, but are not limited to, uttering, writing and/or emailing a threat to kill a target or target(s).

Summoning Assistance

- 8.3. When determining the effectiveness of various communication devices, it is important to consider the employee’s location (onsite or offsite) and time of day (working during or outside of regular hours) as well as existing protocols such as Lockdown Procedures.

- 8.3.1. There are several communications devices that may be used to summon assistance. The following chart is intended to identify the various devices, including strengths and weaknesses of each.



Device	Strengths	Weaknesses
School-wide P.A. System	▪ Immediate school-wide communication ○ Useful for “code” alerts	▪ May not be heard by those in noisy areas ▪ One way communication only ▪ Restricts type of information that can be communicated (confidentiality)
Classroom P.A. System	▪ Direct link to the main office ▪ Simple usage	▪ Requires someone to be in the office ▪ Fixed location in the class means staff may not be able to access in an emergency ▪ Useful inside the building only
Individual Cell Phone	▪ Fast direct one-to-one communication ▪ Can be used almost all locations including community ▪ Few range limitations ▪ Can be used to text messages (when speaking is not an option; use with deaf/hard of hearing) ▪ Can be used for a variety of messages including 911	▪ Requires message recipient to be available ▪ Signal strength may be poor in elevators, basements ▪ If being attacked, employee may not be able to use – not enough time to dial ▪ Service may not be available in specific locations
2-Way Radio (Walkie-Talkie)	▪ Almost instant communication ▪ One button use ▪ Can use voice or signal communication ▪ Can select specific recipient or numerous recipients ▪ Can be used for a variety of messages ▪ Few weak spots within range	▪ Requires base station to be continuously staffed or select receivers always active (also may move about) ▪ No 911 component ▪ May require a private circuit to avoid interference



Device	Strengths	Weaknesses
Personal Alarms	▪ Panic type (incapacitating sound) may deter attack ▪ Sound brings assistance to general area ▪ Non-panic type (transmits emergency signal to a receiver) may include two-way communication as well as identification ▪ Immediate, one button use	▪ Use limited to extreme situations unless two-way communication included ▪ May take time to pinpoint location (if GPS not included) • No 911 component
GPS Tracking System	▪ Continuous or signaled tracking ▪ May be included in personal alarms	▪ Requires continuous monitoring of all signals (additional staffing) ▪ Most expensive communication system - No 911 component

8.4. Each site must have an individual protocol for activating an emergency response plan and/or Lockdown procedures, including how immediate assistance is to be summoned.

Threats of Domestic Violence

8.5. If the threat of domestic violence is from a co-worker, the supervisor, with guidance from Human Resources, must take steps to ensure the victim and other workers are protected. Such steps may include, but are not limited to, warnings, employee transfers, informing police, and requesting restraining orders.

8.6. If the threat of domestic violence is from someone outside of the workplace, the supervisor, with guidance from Human Resources, must take steps to ensure the victim and other workers are protected. Such steps may include, but are not limited to, warnings, employee transfers, informing police, and requesting restraining orders.



9. Documentation

- 9.1. The board shall ensure that all incidents of workplace violence are documented, which should include a description of the incident, the date, time, location, name of the perpetrator(s), the name of the victim(s), and any witnesses. Such incidents shall be reported immediately to the site supervisor, the Occupational Health & Safety Coordinator and the Certified Worker Representative, as required.

10. Education & Training

- 10.1. The Limestone District School Board is committed to providing training and education to ensure that all Board staff has knowledge about their rights and responsibilities under the Violence in the Workplace Procedure, including what domestic violence is, the seriousness of domestic violence, and their responsibilities in informing the appropriate staff when they are reasonably aware that domestic violence/violence in the workplace may occur.

11. Compliance

- 11.1. Any employee or volunteer who is found to have violated this Procedure may be disciplined, up to and including dismissal.
- 11.2. Members of the general public, parents/guardians, education/ social science students on placement, visitors to Board facilities, individuals conducting business with the Board and employees of contractors or other organizations providing services to the Board who are found to have engaged in violent workplace behaviour will also face consequences appropriate to the behaviour/actions.

12. Reprisal

- 12.1. Any form of retaliation against employees exercising their rights under this Procedure will be considered a serious violation of this procedure and will not be tolerated. Such retaliatory actions may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and



including dismissal.

13. False Accusations

13.1. Any employee found to have lodged or otherwise supported a false accusation will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

14. Confidentiality

14.1. The Limestone District School Board, including system administrators, supervisors and staff, will make every effort to ensure appropriate confidentiality where an incidence of violence has occurred.

15. Program Review

15.1. The Violence in the Workplace Procedure shall be reviewed on a regular basis by Human Resources in consultation with key stakeholders.

15.2. The Violence in the Workplace Program shall be reviewed or revised regularly and/or if:

- A reassessment of risks indicates that revisions are required.
- Workers, or the JHSC indicate that measures are not adequate or are not being followed.
- A violent incident demonstrates that measures or procedures are not adequate.
- The workplace's response to a violent incident or complaint demonstrates the reporting or investigation procedures need to be revised.

Administrative Procedure 407

Violence in the Workplace



Legal References:

Ontario Occupational Health & Safety Act

Related Procedures:

Respect in the Workplace: Anti-Harassment & Discrimination

Safe Schools

Emergency Response Plans

School Lockdown Procedures



REPORTING PROCESS

