

Workplace Violence



Background

Prairie Land Public School Division Board Policy 2, *Welcome, Caring, Respectful and Safe Learning and Work Environments* states that the “Board of Trustees is committed to establishing and maintaining safe, inclusive, equitable and welcoming learning, teaching and work environments.” All staff members must support a violence free workplace, demonstrate respect to all with whom they come in contact and protect the dignity, worth and human rights of every person. Any act of violent conduct at work, whether on Division premises or at Division sponsored activities, is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. The Division regularly completes workplace hazard assessments.

The purpose of this Procedure is to ensure that:

- Individuals are aware of and understand that acts of workplace violence are considered a serious offence for which necessary action will be imposed.
- Those subjected to acts of workplace violence are encouraged to access any assistance they may require in order to pursue a complaint.
- Individuals are advised of available recourse if they are subjected to, or become aware of, situations involving workplace violence.

Definitions

Domestic Violence: is a pattern of behaviour used by one person to gain power and control over another with whom the person has or has had a personal relationship. It becomes a workplace hazard when it occurs at or affects the workplace posing a threat to the worker or co-workers.

Workplace Violence: whether at a work site or work-related, means the threatened, attempted or actual conduct of a person that causes or is likely to cause physical or psychological injury or harm, and includes domestic or sexual violence.

Procedures

1. The Chief Deputy Superintendent shall:

- 1.1 develop, communicate and implement workplace violence prevention procedures and training in support of this Administrative Procedure and ensure they are communicated to all supervisory personnel, staff and contractors.

2. Principals and supervisors shall:

- 2.1 Communicate this Administrative Procedure to all staff
- 2.2 Ensure staff complete training on workplace violence prevention and control

- 2.3 Ensure staff are aware of and have reviewed AP 400.116 *Working Alone*
 - 2.4 Follow up on all reported incidents, identified hazards, or health and safety concerns
 - 2.5 ensure all victims and staff involved in an incident of workplace violence are involved in subsequent debriefings, incident investigations and are being advised to consult a health professional (of the worker's choice) for treatment or referral. Workers should consider accessing services and resources through an employee assistance program.
3. **Employees shall:**
 - 3.1 follow Division and site-specific security, violence prevention and working alone protocols, emergency and safe work procedures, report as soon as possible all incidents or potential incidents of workplace violence and participate in incident briefings and investigations; and
 - 3.2 participate in assessment, control and elimination of workplace violence.
4. **If subjected to workplace violence:**
 - 4.1 Secure your safety and others in your care first and, if possible, remove yourself from the situation. Do not engage the perpetrator with dialogue or physical response except for immediate defense.
 - 4.2 If threat is imminent, call 911 and initiate building lockdown protocol if others may be at risk of violence.
 - 4.3 Obtain first aid or medical attention.
 - 4.4 Immediately report the incident to a supervisor, complete the applicable Incident Report and participate in the incident investigation.
 - 4.5 Reach out to your supervisor and Human Resources for psychological support.
5. **Reporting incidents of workplace violence:**
 - 5.1 If you have experienced or witnessed an incident of workplace violence, staff shall report the incident to a supervisor immediately.
 - 5.2 All staff incidents of workplace violence shall be reported to the Chief Deputy Superintendent
 - 5.3 Complete the applicable Incident Report for all incidents.
 - 5.4 If confidentiality is a concern, the Incident Report can be completed and submitted to a Confidential Investigator.
6. **Procedure for investigation of incidents of workplace violence:**
 - 6.1 All staff incidents of workplace violence must be investigated by the Chief Deputy Superintendent
 - 6.2 If the incident involves the Chief Deputy Superintendent, the investigation is

conducted by the Superintendent or designate.

- 6.3 An incident involving the Superintendent is investigated by the Board Chair
- 6.4 The investigator will advise the complainant and respondent of the investigation and seek their co-operation
- 6.5 The report resulting from the investigation must include the nature of the violence, name of the complainant, name of the respondent, relevant date(s), time(s), location(s), causation and preventive measures.
- 6.6 The complainant and the respondent involved in the incident shall be informed of the investigation outcome.
- 6.7 The Deputy Superintendent shall, within 30 working days of completion of the investigation, determine the appropriate course of action, which may include:
 - 6.7.1 Discipline of the employee(s) who were found to be guilty of the allegation, which may range from a reprimand up to and including termination and legal referral
 - 6.7.2 If the allegations are found to be unsubstantiated and were submitted with the intent to injure the alleged respondent, discipline of the complainant, which may range from a reprimand up to and including termination
 - 6.7.3 Recommendation to the complainant to refer the matter to the appropriate legal authority for criminal charges

7. Authority of the Chief Deputy Superintendent when there are no reported incidents of violence:

- 7.1 In the absence of a reported incident, the Chief Deputy Superintendent may initiate an independent investigation when:
 - 7.1.1 There is a pattern of inquiries or concerns over time that suggests the existence of a specific problem or risk to students, employees, and their co-workers
 - 7.1.2 There is a reason to believe, as a result of an investigation or observations, that a broader, systemic problem exists that causes or contributes to workplace violence – for example, working alone or security issues
 - 7.1.3 There are other circumstances in which the Chief Deputy Superintendent deems appropriate.

8. Retaliation

- 8.1 Any retaliation against an individual for:
 - 8.1.1 Invoking this Administrative Procedure, whether on their own behalf or on behalf of another individual
 - 8.1.2 Participating or co-operating in any investigation under this Administrative

Procedure, or

- 8.1.3 Associating with a person who has invoked this Administrative Procedure or participating in procedures under this Administrative Procedure

Is strictly prohibited and shall be subject to discipline up to and including termination from employment

- 8.2 If an individual has experienced retaliation, the individual must inform their supervisor or the Chief Deputy Superintendent about the exact nature of the retaliation. The Chief Deputy Superintendent must initiate an investigation into the allegations of retaliation.

9. **If subjected to violence by students:**

- 9.1 When a person suffers workplace violence that is initiated by a student, or is the result of behaviour by a student:

- 9.1.1 The employee must submit an Incident Report.

- 9.1.2 The student's behaviour must be addressed according to the Education Act and other applicable and appropriate Prairie Land Administrative Procedures and practices.

- 9.1.3 The incident of student-initiated violence must be addressed on an individual basis taking into consideration all relevant factors including, but not limited to, circumstances and any individualized or behaviour support plans.

- 9.1.4 Principals will consult and collaborate with Learning Supports and Occupational Health and Safety, when appropriate, to provide assistance and support as required.

10. **Appeals**

- 10.1 Employees who are not satisfied with the action taken with respect to a complaint may appeal the decision to the Superintendent.

- 10.2 Either party has the right to seek civil or criminal redress through the courts or to file a complaint with an Occupational Health and Safety officer, the Alberta Teaching Profession Commission or the Alberta Human Rights Commission.

References:

Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act, Regulation and Code – Part 27
Alberta Human Rights Act
Education Act
Employment Standards Code
Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
Criminal Code

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