

<b>Procedure Title</b>	<b>Workplace Violence</b>		
<b>Date of Issue</b>	June 15, 2010	<b>Related Policy</b>	BP 7523-D
<b>Revision Dates</b>	October 19, 2011; April 23, 2013; February 15, 2017; March 28, 2019; November 25, 2020; March 31, 2021; June 15, 2022	<b>Related Forms</b>	Online Incident Reporting Tool (formerly AF 7520); AF 7523; AF 7525; AF 7526; AF 7527
<b>Review Date</b>		<b>Originator</b>	Administrative Council
<b>References</b>			
Education Act, Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, Human Rights Code, Criminal Code of Code BP 7520-D “Human Rights”, Occupational Health and Safety Act, Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act; BP 6820-D “Safe and Accepting Schools”; AP 3804-D “Joint Health and Safety Committees”; AP 7525-D “Work Refusal”; BP/AP 2101-D “Access to Board Premises”			

**1.0 RATIONALE**

- 1.1 Bluewater District School Board believes in the prevention of workplace violence and promotes a violence-free workplace in which all people respect one another and work together to achieve common goals. Any act of workplace violence is unacceptable conduct. Workplace violence in any form erodes the mutual trust and confidence that are essential to the well-being of our staff.
- 1.2 Bluewater District School Board acknowledges the following three rights of employees under the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSa):
  - (a) Employees have the right to know about hazards in their workplace and to receive information, instruction, and supervision to protect their health and safety on the job. In addition to the board’s responsibility to inform, it is also the employee’s responsibility to actively seek out such information (see section 3.5.2).
  - (b) Employees have the right to participate in identifying and solving workplace health and safety problems, following the procedure outlined in Appendix A of AP 3804-D “Joint Health and Safety Committees”.
  - (c) Employees have the right to refuse work in situations they believe would be dangerous to their health and safety or to that of any other employee in the workplace, as per AP 7525-D “Work Refusal”.
- 1.3 This procedure applies to all work activities or workplace social events that occur while on, or off, board premises.
- 1.4 This procedure applies to all members of the board community, including but not limited to, trustees, students, employees, visitors such as parents and community members, volunteers, permit holders, contractors, and employees of other organizations who work on, or are invited onto, board property. Threatening, violent or harassing student misconduct is dealt with by the Safe and Accepting Schools provisions of the *Education Act* and board policy BP 6820-D “Safe and Accepting Schools”, or the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* depending upon the circumstance. This procedure, therefore, applies in appropriate circumstances.

**2.0 DEFINITION**

Workplace violence, as defined by the Occupational Health and Safety Act is:

- (a) the exercise of physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker;
- (b) an attempt to exercise physical force against a worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to a worker;
- (c) a statement or behaviour that it is reasonable for a worker to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against a worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker.

**3.0 PROCEDURE****3.1 Workplace Violence Risk Assessment****3.1.1 General Responsibilities**

- a) Board staff (usually the principal/supervisor) shall identify the risks of workplace violence occurring on board premises, or while engaging in workplace activities or workplace social events using AF 7523 "Risk Assessment Checklist". Risk assessment should include a rating of the risk of workplace violence taking place in a given workplace. A suggested rating scale is included in section 3.1.2. The presence of specific programs in a school community (in addition to regular programs) must be considered when reviewing a school community, e.g., presence of night school programs, programs for students with severe needs, suspension/expulsion programs, school used for community programs, etc. Risk assessments will be done as often as necessary, usually prompted by the identification of a new risk, to ensure that employees are protected from workplace violence, but at a minimum, annually.
- b) Employee groups will be surveyed to determine the extent to which they feel their workplace is safe. The aggregate results of these surveys may be used to identify issues related to workplace violence. Following the initial survey(s) used for the implementation of this procedure, follow-up surveys may be conducted when deemed necessary due to changing workplace circumstances that require a reassessment of the risk of violence in the workplace, but at a minimum, annually. As per Section 32.0.3 (1) of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, the appropriate principal/supervisor will advise the applicable Joint Health and Safety Committee of the results of the risk assessment(s).
- c) Assessments should include the identification of existing controls, measures/procedures already in place and additional controls, and measures/procedures required to minimize risks of workplace violence.
- d) While usually conducted for other purposes, the results of Safe and Accepting School surveys, or other student surveys, may be reviewed as part of a risk assessment.

**3.1.2 Rating Scale**

- a) A rating scale is provided to determine the likelihood of violence in the workplace, and to assist in deciding the nature of the controls to be put in place. The rating scale suggests rating the risk of workplace violence as low, moderate, or high, according to the following definitions, which rely on a combination of frequency and severity.
  - i. **Low**  
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.
  - ii. **Moderate**  
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.

**iii. High**

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.

**3.1.3 Risk Factors**

- a) The risk of violence occurring in the workplace is linked to a number of factors, including the nature of the workplace, the type of work, or conditions of the work.
- b) Examples include, but are not limited to:
  - i) Location of the workplace, e.g., schools located in high crime areas, isolated areas;
  - ii) Travelling in community to and from workplace, visiting families, teaching in sites other than schools;
  - iii) Parking;
  - iv) Access to workplace (entry);
  - v) Working with unstable or volatile clients/students/employees, e.g., students with severe needs, workplace population including members of youth gangs and hostile members of the community;
  - vi) Handling cash, e.g., fundraising activities, registration fees for adult programs;
  - vii) Working alone or in small numbers, e.g., working late, meeting parents after school hours, driving a courier vehicle;
  - viii) Other employees/members of the community.

**3.1.4 Assessing and Controlling Risks**

- a) At a minimum, workplaces need to be assessed for the following characteristics:
  - i. **Workplace Location:** risk of workplace violence occurring due to the nature of the community in which the workplace is located, working in the community (off-site of the workplace, e.g., home schooling), working alone or in isolation, physical attributes of the workplace, areas on the periphery of the workplace (e.g., parking lots, portables in playing fields), controls on entry to the workplace and on entry to parts of the workplace, use of the workplace by non-employees (e.g., community groups). Some of these may be considered significant enough that separate assessments need to be completed.
  - ii. **General Workplace:** Clients/Students/Visitors/Employees - risk of workplace violence occurring due to the characteristics of the general workplace population, including employees, students, parents, and the general public. This risk may vary by area within workplaces.
  - iii. **Specific Workplace:** Clients/Students/Visitors/Employees – risk of workplace violence occurring due to individual students, clients, or employees who create a specific risk of workplace violence, e.g., students, clients, or employees with a history of violence.
  - iv. **Handling Money:** risk of workplace violence occurring due to employees and others handling money arising from school fund-raising activities such as selling material items, school photos, school trips, charitable donations, staff funds (e.g., coffee fund, special occasions), school fees (e.g., locks, equipment, supplies, uniforms, etc.), registration fees, (e.g., night school).
- b) As part of the risk assessment, administrative form AF 7523 “Risk Assessment Checklist” will be completed and current controls, procedures, and measures for controlling these risks should be identified, along with additional controls, procedures, and measures for controlling risk, which may be necessary. When additional controls, procedures, and measures are identified, a plan will be developed for the implementation of these measures. A worker survey is a useful tool in identifying perceptions of

violence, and in identifying workplaces which may be of particular concern with regard to workplace violence, as may be the results of other surveys conducted in the board.

### **3.2 Summoning Immediate Assistance**

- 3.2.1 The principal/supervisor will ensure that appropriate measures and procedures are in place for summoning immediate assistance when workplace violence occurs or is likely to occur (OHSA Section 32.0.2(3)). Examples of types of communication devices include class phones, cell phones, and walkie talkies. Please refer to 'Appendix A: Types of Communication Devices' for additional potential methods of summoning immediate assistance. The need for specific methods could be linked to the risk of workplace violence.
- 3.2.2 Depending on the nature, location, and level of risk, this includes summoning assistance from the site principal/supervisor or site emergency response team as well as community assistance through 9-1-1. When determining the effectiveness of various devices, it is important to consider the employee's location (onsite or offsite), and time of day (working during or outside of regular hours). Training in emergency communication procedures is essential if they are to be used effectively.

### **3.3 Reporting Workplace Violence**

- 3.3.1 A worker who experiences workplace violence (or believes that they have) will immediately report the incident to their (immediate) principal/supervisor or designate (if their principal/supervisor is the accused, the worker will report the incident to their principal/supervisor's supervisor). The principal/supervisor will be responsible for determining the appropriate response and immediate course of action.
- 3.3.2 At the first available and safe opportunity following the report of a violent incident, the principal/supervisor will:
- a) ensure that the worker has sought medical attention, where required, and is aware of the availability of the board's Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP), and other available supports, as applicable;
- NOTE: In cases where the worker has been injured, the principal/supervisor will also ensure that AF 7850 "Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) Injury/Disease and Investigation – Principal/Manager/Supervisor Report" is completed.
- b) ensure that the Online Incident Reporting Tool has been completed (emergency staff will complete paper version of AF 7520 "Workplace Incident Report", available for principals/supervisors to print from the Administrators' Handbook and provide in emergency staff folders) - (please see Appendix B: Safe Schools Incident Reporting / Workplace Violence Incident Quick Reference Chart);
  - c) subject to the nature and seriousness of the incident, contact the police. Incidents involving physical assaults causing bodily injury requiring medical attention must be reported to police. In other cases, the principal/supervisor will exercise their discretion whether to contact police based on the nature of the incident and extenuating circumstances;
  - d) subject to the nature and seriousness of the incident, and the identity of the aggressor (e.g., student, co-worker, visitor, etc.) consult and/or seek assistance from other appropriate board staff, which may include their area superintendent of education, superintendent of education responsible for human resource services, superintendent of education responsible for learning services – student support;
  - e) conduct an investigation into the incident (see section 3.4); and

- f) assess / reassess the risks of a reoccurrence and determine the appropriate course of action (controls) to prevent a recurrence (refer to section 3.5 if applicable).

### 3.4 **Employer Investigations**

- 3.4.1 Conducting an internal investigation of a complaint or incident must be done with a high degree of sensitivity and will take into account the rights and privacy of not only the accuser, but also the accused. In a school board setting, the accused could be a student, employer, visitor, parent, or outside community member. A comprehensive investigation needs to be performed to ensure compliance with applicable legislation, and to withstand scrutiny of the courts, arbitrators, and/or other administrative tribunals. The investigation needs to be fair and unbiased. Investigators will contact the health and safety officer and/or the superintendent of education responsible for human resources services for guidance on board practice.
- 3.4.2 All investigations should be performed based upon knowledge of complaint or notification submitted by the employee.
- 3.4.3 All investigators shall be impartial and non-biased.
- 3.4.4 Once the investigation is completed, a summary of the findings and any action taken will be provided to the health and safety officer and/or the superintendent of education responsible for human resources services for sharing with the applicable Joint Health and Safety Committee. The report should **NOT** include any personal or identifying information relevant to the victim and/or the perpetrator.
- 3.4.5 The superintendent of education responsible for human resources services may provide victim support, as well as appropriate management of the offender.

### 3.5 **Disclosure of Information Related to a Person with a History of Violent Behaviour**

- 3.5.1 When it has been determined that there is a likelihood of reoccurrence, or the principal/supervisor is aware of has reason to believe that workers may be exposed to a risk of workplace violence from a person with a history of violent behaviour, the principal/supervisor has an obligation to provide information to workers at the site using a 'Safety Alert – Notification of Potential Risk of Injury' (AF 7526), if:
  - a) the worker can be expected to encounter the person with a violent history in the course of their work; and
  - b) the risk of workplace violence is likely to expose the worker to physical injury.

The information provided to workers who may be at risk can include personal information, **but should not include any more than is reasonably necessary to protect the worker from physical injury and in keeping with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the protections afforded confidential student information under the Education Act.**

- 3.5.2 Completed AF 7526 'Safety Alert – Notification of Potential Risk of Injury' forms will be stored in a confidential manner by the worksite principal/supervisor. Each staff member meeting the criteria as set out in 3.5.1 a-b must review the form(s) at a minimum annually (new staff must review applicable safety alerts upon hiring), or as updates are made. Staff must acknowledge that they are aware of the information identified on the form(s) by completing AF 7527 "Acknowledgement of Safety Alert (Bill 168) - Notification of Potential Risk of Injury" along with their administrator/supervisor. This includes occasional and supply staff as well as support services, and plant services staff who may be expected to encounter the violent person while on school premises.
  - a) The principal/supervisor has a responsibility to ensure this disclosure is made to appropriate staff.
  - b) All staff (including non-school staff) must follow standard site access procedures, as per BP/AP 2101-D "Access to Board Premises", ensuring that they connect with the site

administrator/supervisor, or designate, and sign-in (AP 2101-D) prior to starting any work within the building. This process ensures that the site administrator/supervisor, or designate, can fulfil their duty to inform.

- 3.5.3 In determining whether there is an obligation to provide information, the principal/supervisor must consider which workers are likely to encounter the person in the course of their work and whether the person presents a risk to those workers. Factors to consider include:
- a) whether the history of violence was associated with school or the workplace;
  - b) whether the history of violence was directed at a specific person, including a worker or workers in general, or at others;
  - c) length of time since the most recent incident(s);
  - d) measures and procedures already in place to protect workers; and
  - e) any other extenuating or mitigating factors that impact on the risk of violent incidents recurring.

**3.6 Role of the Joint Health and Safety Committees (JHSC)**

- 3.6.1 The Occupational Health and Safety Act outlines the legal requirements for the establishment of JHSCs and the powers of the Committees.
- 3.6.2 The applicable JHSC must be notified within four (4) days when a worker is injured due to workplace violence and, as result of the incident, the worker is disabled from performing his or her usual work or the worker requires medical attention. However, consideration should also be given to providing findings of investigations of workplace violence related issues.

**3.7 Information and Instruction**

- 3.7.1 *OHSA 32.0.5(2) An employer shall provide a worker with, (a) Information and instruction that is appropriate for the worker on the content of the policy and program with respect to workplace violence;*
- 3.7.2 *OHSA 25(2)(a) An employer shall ... provide information, instruction and supervision to a worker to protect the health or safety of the worker; 27(2)(a)(b)(c) A supervisor shall ... advise a worker of the existence of any potential or actual danger to the health or safety of the worker of which the supervisor is aware ... provide a worker with written instructions as to the measures and procedures to be taken for protection of the worker, and ...take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of the worker.  
Intensity and types of training will vary according to the risk level for workers as identified in the assessment(s).*

**3.8 General Information for All Staff**

- 3.8.1 Bluewater District School Board and the principal/supervisor shall ensure that all employees in the workplace have been trained on board policy BP 7523-D "Workplace Violence" and this procedure, and that both policy and procedure are posted on the site health and safety bulletin board.

**3.9 Information and Instruction Specific to Staff in Workplace Areas where Moderate to High Risks Exist**

- 3.9.1 The board and the site principal/supervisor shall ensure that:

- a) proper information has been provided to all necessary employees. Such information will include, where applicable, but not be limited to; relevant Ontario Student Record (OSR) information, violent incident reports etc.
- b) all the staff who work on a regular basis in positions where moderate to high risk exists shall have the qualifications, experience, and training necessary to minimize the risk of workplace violence;
- c) all staff have received training in the nature and recognition of the risks specific to their assignment;
- d) all staff have received training in procedures/safety measures that minimize the risks specific to their assignment;
- e) all staff have and use any personal protective equipment (PPE) deemed reasonable and necessary in the circumstances;
- f) all concerns regarding physical limitations in relation to workplace safety, as identified by the employee, are followed-up on.
- g) the affected and necessary staff are involved in the development of the safety plan, using AF 7526 (if incident/risk is in relation to a student, a Positive Behaviour Safety Plan will be required in addition to AF 7526);
- h) procedures and safety measures are available to the affected staff as required;
- i) training is updated and/or refreshed as often as necessary;
- j) Any replacement staff (short or long-term) are aware of the risks, and either have the training requirements noted above, or are supported by additional staff who have the training requirements.

### **3.10 Reassessment**

- 3.10.1 OHSA 32.0.3(4) states *“an employer shall reassess the risks of workplace violence as often as is necessary to ensure that the related policy under clause 32.0.1 (1) (a) and the related program under subsection 32.0.2 (1) continue to protect workers from workplace violence. 2009, c. 23, s. 3.”*
- 3.10.2 The reassessment shall be reviewed annually in consultation with the JHSC and workplace parties who have knowledge and experience dealing with workplace violence and its prevention in that specific workplace.
- 3.10.3 In many circumstances, the risk of workplace violence can only be controlled or minimized rather than eliminated. The risks associated with specific community environments, the requirements of a small number of students with special needs, the necessity of handling money, all continue even with controls, procedures, and measures in place to minimize risk. Therefore, it is essential that reassessments of the risk of workplace violence take place at the very least when workplace conditions substantially change.
- 3.10.4 The board shall ensure that:
  - a) all incidents of workplace violence are documented.
  - b) ongoing review procedures are in place to monitor levels of workplace violence risk and to evaluate the effectiveness of controls, procedures, and measures in place;
  - c) all incidents of workplace violence are documented and reported immediately to the site principal/supervisor and to the applicable Joint Health and Safety Committee; and
  - d) an ongoing site-based process is in place to modify controls, procedures, and measures as necessary.

**APPENDIX A  
Types of Communication Devices**

<b>Device</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<b>School-wide P.A. System</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Immediate school-wide communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ May not be heard by those in noisy areas</li> <li>▪ One-way communication only</li> <li>▪ Restricts type of information that can be communicated (confidentiality)</li> </ul>
<b>Classroom P.A. System</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Direct link to the main office</li> <li>▪ Simple usage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Requires someone to be in the office</li> <li>▪ Fixed location in the class means staff may not be able to access in an emergency</li> <li>▪ Useful inside the building only</li> </ul>
<b>Individual Cell Phone</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fast direct one-to-one communication</li> <li>▪ Can be used almost all locations including community</li> <li>▪ Few range limitations</li> <li>▪ Can be used to text messages (when speaking is not an option; use with deaf/hard of hearing)</li> <li>▪ Can be used for a variety of messages including 9-1-1</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Requires message recipient to be available</li> <li>▪ Signal strength may be poor in elevators, basements</li> <li>▪ If being attacked, employee may not be able to use – not enough time to dial</li> </ul>
<b>2-Way Radio (Walkie-Talkie)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Almost instant communication</li> <li>▪ One button use</li> <li>▪ Can use voice or signal communication</li> <li>▪ Can select specific recipient or numerous recipients</li> <li>▪ Can be used for a variety of messages</li> <li>▪ Few weak spots within range</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Requires base station to be continuously staffed or select receivers always active (also may move about)</li> <li>▪ No 9-1-1 component</li> <li>▪ Must be inspected on a regular basis to ensure that they are charged.</li> </ul>
<b>GPS Tracking System</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continuous or signaled tracking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Requires continuous monitoring of all signals (additional staffing)</li> <li>▪ Most expensive communication system</li> <li>▪ No 9-1-1 component</li> </ul>



**APPENDIX B: SAFE SCHOOLS INCIDENT REPORTING / WORKPLACE VIOLENCE INCIDENT QUICK REFERENCE CHART**

What type of incident is this?	<a href="#">Online Incident Reporting Tool</a> Safe Schools Incident <sup>1</sup>	<a href="#">Online Incident Reporting Tool</a> Workplace Violence Incident <sup>2</sup>	Reporting form for worker injury: <a href="#">AF 7850</a> "WSIB Injury/Disease and Investigation Principal/Manager/Supervisor Report"	BWDSB workplace injury report to WSIB (completed by HR Services)
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• serious student incident</li> <li>• workplace violence incident</li> <li>• no worker injury</li> </ul>	✓	✓	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• serious student incident</li> <li>• workplace violence incident</li> <li>• worker injury                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ criteria for injury report to WSIB not met</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	✓	✓	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• serious student incident</li> <li>• workplace violence incident</li> <li>• worker injury                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ criteria for injury report to WSIB are met</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• aggressor is not a student</li> <li>• workplace violence incident</li> <li>• no worker injury</li> </ul>		✓	
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• aggressor is not a student</li> <li>• workplace violence incident</li> <li>• worker injury                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ criteria for injury report to WSIB not met</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		✓	
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• aggressor is not a student</li> <li>• workplace violence incident</li> <li>• worker injury                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ criteria for injury report to WSIB are met</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		✓	✓

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** If a person (staff, student, or visitor) is critically injured due to a workplace violent incident, the administrator must report it to their area superintendent and the health and safety officer immediately so that it can be reported to the Ministry of Labour, Trades and Skills Development.

Developed from: [http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/workplace/violence.html#\\_AppendixOne](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/workplace/violence.html#_AppendixOne)

<sup>1</sup> emergency workers do not have access to the Online Incident Reporting Tool and will complete a paper copy of the SSIR-I instead (provided to them by their administrator/manager) in accordance with AP 6819-D

<sup>2</sup> emergency workers do not have access to the Online Incident Reporting Tool and will complete a paper copy of workplace violence incident form (AF 7520) instead (provided to them by their administrator/manager) in accordance with AP 7523-D