

Title	DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE	Procedure No. 2005I
Department	ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES (HUMAN RESOURCES)	
Reference(s)	Health and Safety Policy Violence in the Workplace Policy Privacy and Records Management Policy Safe Schools Policy <i>Occupational Health and Safety Act</i>	Effective Date 2011 Dec. 20

1.0 Preamble

Domestic violence is a pattern of behaviour used by one person to gain power and control over another with whom he/she has or has had an intimate relationship. It may include physical violence, sexual, emotional and psychological intimidation, verbal abuse, stalking, and use of electronic devices to harass and control.

Anyone can be a victim of domestic violence, regardless of age, race, religion, sexual orientation, economic status or educational background. The abuser may be a friend, relative, current or former spouse or anyone with whom a person has had an intimate relationship.

Domestic violence which is likely to expose a worker to physical injury 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.

The employer 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.

1.1 Education - Employees

Board employees shall be made aware of what domestic violence is, the seriousness of domestic violence, and the responsibility to inform the appropriate staff when they are reasonably aware that domestic violence may occur in the workplace.

Links to resource materials related to domestic violence in the workplace are available through the Employee Portal on the Health and Safety web-site.

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Amendment Date(s)	

1.2 Responsibility

If the employer becomes aware of a real or potential threat of domestic violence that would likely expose an employee to physical injury in the workplace, every precaution reasonable in the circumstances will be undertaken for the protection of the employee and others.

The responsibility for creating and maintaining a workplace environment in which employees are protected from injury arising from domestic violence in the workplace rests with all employees and managerial staff.

1.3 Responsibility to Report

The Occupational Health and Safety Act requires employees of the Thames Valley District School Board to report hazards to their supervisor. Employees must inform their supervisor if they, or a fellow worker, is subject to domestic violence that may expose them or their fellow employees to physical injury in the workplace. If the supervisor may be subject to the domestic violence, the supervisor shall inform the Associate Director, Organizational Support Services.

The supervisor will notify the Associate Director, Organizational Support Services or designate and the School Superintendent of Student Achievement regarding the report. All such reports will be held in confidence with disclosure of information only to the extent that is necessary for the protection of employees in the workplace.

1.4 Investigation

With guidance by Human Resources, supervisors who are advised that there is an employee who may be subject to domestic violence in the workplace must assess the nature and extent of the threat. This may require the supervisor to interview both the source of the information about the threat, and the worker(s) who may be subject to the risk of domestic violence in the workplace. It may also require more detailed investigations to be conducted by Human Resources.

Documentation may be requested in order to assist in assessing the risks and to implement precautions to protect the worker. Such documentation may include a copy of a court order, police report or photograph of the alleged perpetrator.

All proceedings regarding the investigation shall be detailed and documented. This confidential documentation shall be maintained in an appropriate secure location by Human Resources.

1.5 Follow-up

If the threat of domestic violence is from a co-worker, the supervisor, under advice from Human Resources, must take steps to ensure the victim and other workers are protected. Such steps may include, but are not limited to, disciplinary action, employee transfers, informing police, and requesting restraining orders. These measures will be documented and outlined in a safety plan. This plan shall include methods for calling for assistance and who will be responsible for responding to such calls for assistance. This plan, or aspects of it, will be shared with all individuals who may be impacted by the threat of domestic violence in the workplace. Safety Specialists will assist in the development and implementation of safety plans.

If the threat of domestic violence is from someone outside of the workplace, the supervisor, in consultation with 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.

The employer will provide to employees, information about supports available for victims of domestic violence. Such supports may include, but not limited to, Employee and Family Assistance Program, community counselling, support groups, shelters, and the police. Further information regarding community supports is available through Disability Management Officers.

In all circumstances, where the victim feels at risk of physical harm the employee should be instructed to contact the police.