VIOLENCE RISK ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT FOR THE EDUCATION SECTOR

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VIOLENCE RISK ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT

FOR EDUCATION SECTOR (SCHOOL BOARDS)

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ABOUT PSHSA

Public Services Health & Safety Association (PSHSA) provides occupational health and safety training and consulting services to various Ontario public sectors. These include healthcare, education, municipalities, public safety, and First Nations communities.

As a funded partner of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD), we work to prevent and reduce workplace injuries and occupational diseases by helping organizations adopt best practices and meet legislative requirements. To create safer workplaces, employers and employees must work together to identify potential hazards and eliminate or control risks before injuries and illnesses occur.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PSHSA gratefully acknowledges the contributions of members of Health & Safety Committee members of the Ontario Association of School Business Officials (OASBO), and the many education

professional and health and safety professionals across the country, who assisted with the preparation of this toolkit.

We thank the partner groups in British Columbia who granted us permission to adapt their Workplace Violence Risk Assessment Tool for the K-12 public education [British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF), British Columbia

Principals' & Vice-Principals' Association (BCPVPA), British Columbia School Superintendents Association (BCSSA), British Columbia Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA), (Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), School Safety Association of British Columbia (SSABC), WorkSafeBC, as well as occupational health and safety specialists representing rural and urban school districts], herein referred to as the BC Group.

A special thanks to those who participated in the Violence Risk Assessment Tool development workshop. The stakeholders represented include:

- Ontario Association of School Business Officials (OASBO)
- Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation (OSSTF)
- Elementary Teacher Federation of Ontario (ETFO)
- Ontario Public Services Union (OPSEU)
- Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)
- Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association (OECTA)
- Ontario Catholic School Trustee's Association (OCTSA)
- Ontario Public School Board Association (OPSBA)
- Council of Directors of Education (CODE)
- Ontario Principals Council (OPC)
- Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers Association (OCSOA)
- Ontario Public Supervisory Officer Association (OPSOA)
- Association of Public School Councils of Ontario (ACEPO)
- OFIS: Ontario Federation for Independent Schools
- CAIS: Canadian Accredited Independent Schools

DISCLAIMER

PSHSA's Workplace Violence Risk Assessment Toolkit for the Education Sector is a resource and guide for education workers, supervisors, multi-workplace Joint Health and Safety Committee (M/JHSC) members, health and safety representatives, school boards, and school authorities. Some topics, like weapons-related issues, drugs, and cyber bullying aren't covered here. For more information, refer to the Ministry of Education (EDU)'s Safe Schools Act. To find specific sections of the OHSA and the Education Act, visit e-Laws online at www.ontario.ca/laws.

ACRONYMS

Below are the acronyms used in this toolkit, along with their corresponding phrases or names:

BMS	Behaviour Management System
EA	Educational Assistant
ECE	Early Childhood Educator
EDU	Ministry of Education
ESL	English as a Second Language
CYW	Child and Youth Worker
HSR	Health and Safety Representative
IEP	Individual Education Plan
IPRC	Identification, Placement, and Review Committee
IRS	Internal Responsibility System
JHSC	Joint Health and Safety Committee
MFIPPA	Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
M/JHSC	Multi-Workplace Joint Health and Safety Committees
MLITSD	Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development
MOU	Memorandum of Understand
OHSA	Occupational Health and Safety Act
PA	Professional Activity
PHIPA	Personal Health Information Protection Act
POCRA	Point of Contact Risk Assessment
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PPM	Policy and Program Memorandum
PSHSA	Public Services Health & Safety Association
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association

RACE	Recognize, Assess, Control, and Evaluate
START	Short-Term Accommodation Response Team
WSIB	Workplace Safety and Insurance Board

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE TOOLKIT

The purpose of PSHSA's **Workplace Violence Risk Assessment Toolkit for the Education Sector** is to help education employees identify potential violence-related concerns or risks in their workplace. The toolkit includes guidance and an easy-to-use **Workplace Violence Risk Assessment Tool**. It's designed for all education employees, including educators (for example, teachers, educational assistants, instructional assistants), special education specialists, non-teaching employees (for example, secretaries, custodians), Principals or designates, members of Joint Health and Safety Committees (JHSCs), health and safety representatives (HSRs), and school boards and authorities.

The objectives are to help users:

- **Create Awareness:** About potential workplace violence hazards within schools or sites.
- **Identify Violence Hazards:** Guide users to recognize situations that may pose a risk of violence.
- **Prioritize Hazards:** Help users decide which hazards are most likely to cause violence and physical injury, illness, or property damage. It includes a Risk Rating Matrix to help users decide which safety measures are most important and where to allocate resources.
- **Develop and Implement Control Measures:** Help users think about ways to prevent violence hazards, create a plan to put safety measures in place, and decide if more is needed to keep everyone safe.
- **Prevent Injuries and Mitigate Consequences:** By addressing workplace violence risks proactively and to mitigate harm from violent incidents.

HOW THE TOOLKIT WAS DEVELOPED

The toolkit, originally published in the 2018, was updated and refined with funding from the MLITSD as part of their initiative to address workplace violence in schools. Data collection and analysis activities included a jurisdictional scan, online survey, virtual focus groups, and a literature review. The toolkit development engaged education workers, education administrators, health and safety specialists, labour union representatives, and ministry and worker compensation representatives from across several provinces, representing various types of schools (specifically elementary, secondary, public, private, specialized, French) and school boards. We adapted the Workplace Violence Risk Assessment Tool for the K-12 public education developed by British Columbia's Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA) with their permission.

TOOLS AVAILABLE IN THE TOOLKIT

Several tools are included in the appendices to help you conduct a thorough violence risk assessment of your school or site. They include:

- **Appendix A:** Understanding the Internal Responsibility System
- **Appendix B:** Relevant Legislation for Workplace Violence in Education
- **Appendix C:** Duties and Responsibilities
- **Appendix D:** Leading Practices for Preventing Workplace Violence in Education

To access and use the Workplace Violence Risk Assessment Tool, click here:

You'll also find a **Glossary of Terms at the end of the toolkit** to clarify any unfamiliar terminology used throughout this document and the **Workplace Violence Risk Assessment Tool.**

All of these tools can be downloaded individually from the PSHSA website as well as additional resources that you may find helpful for your workplace violence prevention program but are not included in this toolkit.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE AND ITS IMPACT

The Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)[1] defines **workplace violence** as:

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 the worker,

c. A statement or behaviour that 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 remains a top hazard and risk for workers in the education sector. Education workers, such as teachers, educational assistants (EAs), early childhood educators (ECEs), office workers, and administrators, face instances of workplace violence, which can be traumatic and life-altering. Educators often encounter both physical and verbal violence, leading to adverse impacts on their well-being and job satisfaction.[2,3]

In Ontario, labour unions have pointed out a rise in student violence and harassment, especially affecting teachers.[4–6] The majority of elementary and secondary school teachers have either experienced or witnessed violence against their co-workers, with special education workers being particularly vulnerable.[4]

Violence against education workers poses a significant challenge and is linked to various negative outcomes, including burnout, higher levels of stress, a reduced sense of well-being, feelings of being unsafe at school, reduced job and life satisfaction, and being more likely to move to another school or leave the profession altogether.[7] Educators also report experiencing bullying by students, with about three in five teachers encountering bullying at some point in their careers.[8]

Did You Know?

Preventing workplace violence isn't just a rule—it's the law! Workers have the right to know about risks and to stay safe at work. Employers and supervisors must ensure that risks are identified and "take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of a worker" *(OHSA sections 25(2)(h); 27(2)(c)).1*

Keeping everyone informed is essential for a safer workplace!

Did You Know?

Workplace violence isn't always intentional. Even if someone doesn't mean to hurt a worker, their actions can still be considered workplace violence.

Imagine a scenario where a student has a medical condition that causes sudden physical outbursts when feeling overwhelmed. If the student inadvertently strikes an Educational Assistant (EA) during one of these episodes, it's still considered workplace violence, even though they didn't mean to harm the EA.

Understanding a person's capacity helps you decide how to handle these situations, regardless of intent.

THE INTERNAL RESPONSIBILITY SYSTEM AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR RISK ASSESSMENTS

In workplaces, the Internal Responsibility System (IRS) is the important concept that highlights how everyone shares responsibility for safety. This means that everyone, from school board members, to administrators, to educators, to education staff, plays a part in preventing workplace violence.

Understanding the IRS is crucial for preventing workplace violence because it makes sure that everyone knows what they need to do to find and fix possible risks of violence at work. This helps create a teamwork approach to keeping the workplace safe for everyone.

Collaborative professionalism—fundamental to Ontario's vision for education—promotes collective action and shared commitment to improving student achievement and well-being. It aligns closely with the principles of the IRS, fostering a culture of collaboration and collective responsibility within the education system.

Refer to Appendix A to learn more about the IRS.

Score with Safety: Unlocking Your IRS

Think of the IRS like playing on a soccer team. Just as every player has a role to play on the field, everyone in the workplace has a part to play in keeping it safe.

If you notice something unsafe, like an unsecure access point or unlit parking lot, speak up! Just like how each player on a soccer team works together to win the game, every person in the workplace works together to ensure a safe and healthy environment. Your contribution matters!

UNDERSTANDING THE LAW

Legislation provides legal rights and protections for all workers in education. The main law on workplace health and safety that all education workers must follow is the **OHSA**.

Education workers, supervisors, and employers also have roles and responsibilities when it comes to keeping themselves, others, and their workplace safe, and each party must adhere to regulations outlined in the **Education Act** and the **Ministry of Education's Policy and Procedure Memoranda (PPMs)**. Specific sections of these laws can be accessed online at e-Laws: www.ontario.ca/laws.

Refer to Appendix B for specific sections related to workplace violence in the applicable legislation.

Refer to Appendix C for a comprehensive list of roles and responsibilities as outline various legislation.

Quick tip

The OHSA and other Legislation are available online for easy reference and definitions.

Visit http://www.ontario.ca/laws for the Occupational Health and Safety Act and other legislation.

Visit https://www.ontario.ca/document/education-ontario-policy-and-program-direction for PDF files of some Ontario Ministry of Education Policy/Procedure Memoranda (PPM).

Visit https://www.ontario.ca/document/workplace-violence-school-boards-guide-law for the resource, *Workplace Violence in School Boards: A Guide to the Law.* This guide provides important insights, advice, and leading practices related to education sector legislation. It was developed by the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD) and Ministry of Education (EDU).

PRIVACY AND SHARING INFORMATION

As a teaching professional, you uphold ethical standards such as care, respect, trust, and integrity,[9] which includes safeguarding the privacy of all your students, even those who may demonstrate violent behaviours.

However, all workers have a right to a safe work environment.[1]

What does this mean for disclosing personal information about a student with a history of violent behaviours?

Employers and supervisors, including school boards, have a duty to advise workers of any health and safety risks they may face.[1] This includes providing workers with personal information if it pertains to a risk of workplace violence, such as from a student or parent with a history of violent behaviour. However, there are limits to disclosure:[1,10,11]

Personal information should only be shared with workers who are likely to encounter the person in their work and face a risk of violence that could result in physical injury.
Employers must avoid disclosing more personal information than is reasonably necessary to protect workers, while still respecting privacy as much as possible.

Do you need consent from the student or their parent/guardian to disclose personal information?

No. Legally, consent is not required for an employer or supervisor to disclose a student's personal information related to the risk of violence.[1] While consent isn't required, employers and supervisors should provide enough information to workers to keep them safe.

They should also share general information with the school community about the requirements for disclosure. This could be done through channels such as the school website, school newsletter, or student handbook.

What personal information can be shared?

Just enough personal information that's needed to protect workers who might encounter the individual from physical injury. For example, if the risk of violence is from a student, you might disclose the student's:

- Name and picture,
- Past violent behaviours, and
- Factors that trigger violence.

Other laws alongside the OHSA regulate privacy and provide information in the education sector. These include the **Education Act**,[10] the **Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)**,[11] the **Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA)**,[12] and the **Child, Youth and Family Services Act**.[13] If there is a conflict between the OHSA and any of these laws, the OHSA takes precedence (see section 2 of the OHSA).[1]

> ## It's the law!
>
> Employers, supervisors, and school boards must disclose information about individuals, such as students or parents, who have a history of violent behaviours to workers who may encounter the individual in their work.

RISK ASSESSMENT IN EDUCATION

WHAT IS A RISK ASSESSMENT?

A risk assessment is a process of identifying potential hazards, evaluating the likelihood and severity of injury or harm they could cause, and taking steps to control or eliminate those risks. It's like a safety check-up that shows what's happening at your school or site.

Here's how risk assessment breaks down with the **RACE** approach:

- **R**ecognize Hazards: Look for anything in your school or site that could cause physical injury, illness, or property damage such as unlit areas, working in isolation, or a student with high needs.
- **A**ssess Risks: Consider how likely it is for someone to get hurt because of a hazard and how serious the physical injury, illness, or property damage could be.
- **C**ontrol Risks: Take action to reduce or eliminate the risk, whether it's installing panic buttons, enhancing communication processes, or providing training.

- **E**valuate Controls: Regularly check to see if the measures put in place are effective in preventing injury or harm. If not, adjust and try different approaches.

Quick Tip

Struggling to remember the steps of a risk assessment? Think RACE to safety!

R - Recognize hazards in your workplace.

A - Assess the risks associated with each hazard.

C - Control the hazards to prevent injury or harm.

E - Evaluate the effectiveness of your control measures.

Risk assessments are not a one-time activity but keep changing as circumstances happen (both non-hazardous or hazardous events or circumstances). Your comprehensive risk assessment should include:

- Reviewing incidents (including from the previous school year)
- Reviewing reports of claims and incidents [such as those reported to Ontario's Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB)]
- Surveying all workers and supervisors
- Examining the organization of work
- Assessing staffing levels and school population
- **Conducting a risk assessment of the workplace environment (discussed in the Workplace Violence Risk Assessment Tool section)**

Why Is It Important?

Hazardous situations, such as violent incidents, can often be prevented before they happen by spotting behaviours or situations that seem threatening or troubling. By being proactive, you can prevent and manage workplace violence effectively. The **Workplace Violence Risk Assessment Tool for Education** is one resource to help you identify these warning signs early on so you can take action to keep your workplace safe and comply with legislation. It is one tool that you can include in your workplace risk assessment toolbox.

Remember!

A violence risk assessment is about assessing behaviour, not individual students. To learn more about privacy in a workplace violence situation, go to the *Privacy and Sharing Information* section.

Who Should Complete It?

The employer or supervisor must complete the violence risk assessment.[1] It's recommended that the supervisor, such as the Principal or designate of a school or site, lead the assessment with collaborative professional input from all education workers.[14]

Once completed, share the written results with the M/JHSC or HSR.[1]

Encouraging all workers to participate promotes a culture of safety.

When Should It Be Completed?

The employer or supervisor must conduct an **initial risk assessment** at each school or site. The timing of the assessment can be determined by the responsible person, such as the Principal or designate, but can be done at any time, such as at the start of the school year.

What About a Reassessment?

A reassessment of risk should be conducted whenever there are changes or events within a school or site that may impact the level of risk. Employers and supervisors must review existing measures and procedures to ensure ongoing protection when workers face potential risks, conducting reassessments as needed.[1] Changes in staff, student populations, or physical environments, as well as reported incidents of workplace violence, warrant a reassessment of risks.

It is also recommended to review the reassessment at least annually in consultation with the M/JHSC and/or the HSR.

Circumstances that may warrant a reassessment include, but are not limited to:

- Classroom changes due to new curriculum or environment.
- Classroom workers or students change (like occasional teachers, volunteers, or new students with specialized needs).
- The start of the school year or semester, or during other changes throughout the year.
- A new educational facility is opened.

Refer to Appendix D for sections of legislation relevant to workplace violence prevention and corresponding leading practices.

Leading Practice

Make sure your violence risk assessment:

- Is part of a complete Workplace Violence Prevention program, with clear procedures, information, risk assessment, training, communication, and evaluation.
- Fits easily into current or new violence prevention measures and procedures.
- Is shared with other education workers involved with the student or those showing potential for violence.
- Is used alongside student safety plans, especially if there's a history of violence or increased risk. The Principal or designate updates the student safety plan and informs the workers and school team about any changes.

Safety in Practice

Consider this scenario: a student is sent home for violent behaviour one day and returns to school the next without any team meetings or safety plan reviews. This situation highlights the potential for recurring risks.

According to Section 32.0.3(4) of the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA), employers and supervisors must review existing measures and procedures when workers face potential risks to ensure continuous protection.

Changes in staff, student populations, or physical environments, as well as reported incidents of workplace violence, signal the need for a reassessment of risks. Employers and supervisors should conduct these reassessments as necessary, as outlined in OHSA Section 32.0.3(5). Additionally, it's recommended to review the reassessment at least annually in consultation with the M/JHSC and/or health and safety representative.

THE WORKPLACE VIOLENCE RISK ASSESSMENT TOOL

The **Workplace Violence Risk Assessment Tool for Education** gives you a snapshot of the immediate risk of violence in your workplace. It can also help you identify individuals who may need extra support to prevent violent behaviour. Remember, the tool is just one part of a comprehensive risk assessment. **You'll find the tool on the PSHSA website.**

This tool is meant for use in all kinds of education settings, whether elementary or secondary schools, public or private, or in school board settings. Even if similar work happens at different schools or sites within the same board, each site has its own unique risks that need a separate assessment.

Try to involve as many workers as possible, including those who work with students or programs where violence is likely to occur.

Overview of the Tool

The Violence Risk Assessment Tool for Education is designed for use in Microsoft Excel, but it can be adapted for use on other platforms.

The tool consists of three (3) Excel sheets: 'Sheet 1' named **WPV Risk Assessment Tool**, 'Sheet 2' named **Tool Instructions**, and 'Sheet 3' named **Risk Assessment Matrix**.

The **WPV Risk Assessment Tool** sheet serves as the framework for the risk assessment, spanning columns A to O and rows 1 to 42. Following the RACE approach—Recognize, Assess, Control, and Evaluation—each row in the sheet corresponds to specific Work Conditions or Settings (column A), such as *parking lots, building interior, learning spaces*, and *student dysregulation*. Some cells are pre-populated with information that you may find helpful. But you have the flexibility to customize the tool by adding information that reflect with the unique circumstances of your school or site.

> To learn more about the RACE method, click the link to go to the 'What is a Risk Assessment?' section.

The **Tool Instructions** sheet includes the guidance needed to complete the tool properly. They are the same instructions listed in the Step-by-Step Instructions on How to Complete the Tool section below.

> Make sure the Workplace Violence Risk Assessment Tool for Education is:
>
> - Easy to access
> - Easy to use
> - Easy to put into action

The Risk Assessment Matrix sheet contains a visual representation of the risk assessment matrix. It also provides clear instructions on how to use the matrix to assess the level of risk for each Work Condition or Setting listed in **WPV Risk Assessment Tool** sheet.

Using the Risk Assessment Matrix

The risk assessment matrix helps you determine the level of risk associated with a hazard by considering both its **Probability** and **Severity**. The **Total Risk Rating** provides insight into the seriousness of the hazard and its probability of causing physical injury, illness, or property damage. This rating helps you prioritize which hazards require immediate attention. To calculate the **Total Risk Rating**, refer to the Risk Matrix to identify where the **Probability** and **Severity** of a hazard intersect. The rating categorizes the risk as **High**, **Medium**, or **Low**.

For example, if you assess that the likelihood of an unlit parking lot causing an injury is Medium and the severity of the any injury sustained is Moderate, then the total risk rating is Medium.

		Severity		
		Major	Moderate	Minor
Probability	High	High	High	Medium
	Medium	High	Medium	Low
	Low	Medium	Low	Low

Table 1. Risk Assessment Matrix

Step-by-Step Instructions on How to Complete the Tool

Step 1: Provide General Information

1. Enter the name of the school in the designated School Name field.
2. Specify whether the assessment is an initial assessment or a reassessment by selecting from the options in the This is a: field.
3. Input the date of the assessment in the Date field.
4. Enter the name of the person completing the assessment in the Person Completing Assessment field

Step 2: Recognize the Risk (Columns B, C, D)

5. Choose the **Work Condition or Setting** that you will assess.
6. Note the **Area of Risk** (column B) to which the Work Condition or Setting belongs. This can be either **Location** (physical area where potential hazards exist, or incidents may occur) or **Circumstance** (situations or conditions that might lead to injury or harm).
7. Note the potential hazards associated with the Work Condition or Setting. Refer to the examples provided in the **Consider** column for further understanding.
8. Recognize individuals who may be affected by hazards under the **Those Potentially Affected** pre-populated column.

		RECOGNIZE	
		Recognize Hazards: Look for anything in your school or site that could cause physical injury, illness, or property damage such as unlit areas, working in isolation, or a student with high needs.	
Work Condition or Setting	**Area of Risk**	**Consider**	**Those Potentially Affected**
Exterior Settings			
Building Exterior	Location	• Exterior shape and design of the building • Physical features (for example, landscaping around the building, overgrown vegetation, pathways, alcoves, lighting, sight lines, security cameras) • Small hidden areas where perpetrators could hide • Daylight saving hours (darkness and lighting) • Differences in nature of activities during the day versus evening (for example, criminal activities occurring after hours) • Time of day for bus duty • Possible conflict during student drop off	• All Workers

Step 3: Assess the Risk (Columns E, F, G)

9. Rate the likelihood of the risk will cause physical injury, illness, or property damage in the **Probability of Occurrence** column by rating it as High, Medium, or Low. Click on the down arrow in the cell and choose the appropriate level.
10. Rate the severity of the potential physical injury, illness, or property damage in the **Severity of Outcome** column by selecting a rating of Major, Moderate, or Minor. Click on the down arrow in the cell and choose the appropriate level.
11. The Total Risk Rating is automatically calculated based on the severity and probability ratings entered. Use this rating to prioritize which Work Condition or Setting requires immediate attention, especially if assessing multiple conditions.

	ASSESS	
	Assess Risks: Consider how likely it is for someone to get hurt because of a hazard and how serious the injury could be.	
Probability of Occurrence	**Severity of Outcome**	**Total Risk Rating**
Medium	Moderate	**Medium**

Step 4: Identify Current and New Controls (Columns H, I, J, K, L, M)

12. Review the list of common controls for the corresponding Work Condition of Setting in the **Examples of Controls** column.
13. List controls already in place at your school or site in the **Controls Already in Place** column, using either the examples of controls provided or controls specific to your workplace.
14. Identify new controls that could be implemented to mitigate the risk in the **Potential New Controls** column.
15. Specify the actions required to eliminate or control the risk associated with the hazard and provide details on how the action plan will be implemented in the **Action Items** column.
16. Set a target date for implementing the new controls and action items in the **Target Date** column.
17. Identify the person(s) responsible for implementing the new controls.

Step 5: Evaluate the Action Plan (columns N and O)

18. When returning to the risk assessment at a later date, document the status of the action items column in the **Action Plan Status Update** column by selecting, Not Started, In Progress, or Completed. Click on the down arrow in the cell and choose the appropriate level.
19. Set target date(s) for completing the action items in the **Target Date** column.
20. Record the completion date once the action items are resolved in the **Completed Date** column.

EVALUATE

Evaluate Controls: Regularly check to see if the measures put in place are effective in preventing injury or harm. If not, adjust and try different approaches.

Action Plan Status Update	Completed Date

Post-Assessment Actions

After completing the risk assessment tool and implementing necessary controls and action items, it's crucial to communicate findings and action plans effectively to all relevant stakeholders—workers, supervisors, JHSC members, or HSR. This transparent communication fosters awareness of potential risks and clarifies everyone's roles and responsibilities in maintaining a safe environment.

However, there's often a lack of clarity about the next steps following the completion of a risk assessment. This absence of clear guidance leaves workers perplexed about quality measures and the parties who should be involved in creating solutions. To address this issue, it's essential to establish clear procedures and protocols outlining the steps to be taken after completing the assessment, along with a robust communication plan to ensure that all stakeholders are informed and involved in the process.

CONCLUSION

Workplace safety is a fundamental right of all workers, and preventing workplace violence is a shared responsibility among all employees. Conducting violence risk assessments in the education sector is crucial for identifying potential hazards and implementing effective preventive measures. This toolkit bridges the gap between the responsibility for workplace safety and the practical tools needed for effective violence risk assessment. It provides education employees and school boards with a comprehensive yet user-friendly guide informed by the latest evidence, to help them conduct thorough risk assessments and actively manage risks.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Behaviour Support Plan: A written plan designed to target the underlying reason for behaviour, replace the inappropriate behaviour with an appropriate behaviour that serves the same function, and reduce or eliminate the challenging behaviour.[15]

Behaviour Management Systems (BMS) Training: A course developed to ensure a respectful learning environment at school. It provides training and support systems for enhancing desirable behaviour and for understanding, preventing,[16] and coping with undesirable behaviour.

Collaborative Professionalism: Workers, at all levels of the education system, working together, sharing knowledge, skills, and experience to improve student achievement and well-being of both students and staff. It presents the shared commitment of all workplace parties in the education system to work together towards improving the learning and well-being of both students and staff populations while transforming the workplace culture.

Communication Procedures: The structured methods and protocols used to exchange information and messages between school boards, employers, supervisors, and workers (teaching and non-teaching) whether permanent or occasional. These procedures are designed to ensure that communication is effective, clear, consistent, and efficient.

Controls: Designed to eliminate or reduce hazards or hazardous exposures. The categories of controls are engineering, administrative, and personal protective equipment (PPE).

Control Measures: See *Controls*.

Critical Injury: An injury of a serious nature that, (a) places life in jeopardy, (b) produces unconsciousness, (c) results in substantial loss of blood, (d) involves the fracture of a leg or arm but not a finger or toe, (e) involves the amputation of a leg, arm, hand or foot but not a finger or toe, (f) consists of burns to a major portion of the body, or (g) causes the loss of sight in an eye.[17]

Culture of Safety: see *Safety Culture.*

Designate: A person who has been officially chosen to perform a role and/or specific tasks.

Domestic Violence: Situations where an individual with a personal relationship with a member of the school community—such as a parent, spouse, former spouse, former intimate partner, or family member—poses a threat of physical harm or attempts to cause physical harm against a member(s) of the school. When such incidents occur within the school environment, they are categorized as workplace violence.

EDU: An acronym for the Ontario Ministry of Education. This is the provincial entity responsible for government policy, funding, planning, and direction in all levels of public education.

Elopement Protocol: Measures in place to prevent and respond to unsupervised student departures. It includes identifying at-risk students, training staff, establishing communication systems, and setting immediate response actions. The protocol should also cover notifying relevant parties, conducting post-incident reviews, and maintaining proper documentation.

Emergency Communication Procedures: Specific protocols used to disseminate information and instructions during emergencies to all workers. They outline how to alert individuals, what information to communicate, and the channels to use. These procedures aim to ensure rapid, clear, and accurate communication to safeguard health, safety, and security; minimize confusion and panic; and coordinate response efforts. Examples include alarms, public address systems, digital alerts, and direct communication.

Emergency Response Procedures: Actions designed to address critical situations and crises effectively. These procedures must outline the steps all workers should follow to minimize harm and ensure safety during emergencies.

Employer: A person who employs one or more workers or contracts for the services of one or more workers and includes a contractor or subcontractor who performs work or supplies services and a contractor or

subcontractor who undertakes with an owner, constructor, contractor, or subcontractor to perform work or supply services [OHSA section 1(1)].[1]

Harm: Physical injury or damage to health.[18]

Hazard: A potential source of harm to a worker.[18]

Health and Safety Representative (HSR): A representative selected by fellow workers to help identify potential health and safety issues and to bring them to the employer's attention.

Incident Reporting Procedures: Incident reporting procedures refer to the methods and guidelines used by school boards to report and document incidents that occur within the workplace.

Individual Education Plan (IEP): A written plan that describes special education programs, accommodations, and services that a school board will provide for a student. IEPs are based on a thorough assessment of a student's strengths, needs and ability to learn and demonstrate learning.[19]

Incident: An unwanted event, which, in different circumstances, could have resulted in harm to people, damage to property, or loss to a process.

Injury: See *Critical Injury*.

Internal Responsibility System (IRS): A system within a workplace where everyone has a direct responsibility for health and safety. The IRS is known as the principle underlying the Occupational Health and Safety Act; and it means that everyone is working together to solve health and safety concerns. It places the responsibility of working safely on all workplace parties such as employers, supervisors, workers, and the Joint Health and Safety Committee or Health and Safety Representative has a role to play by monitoring and supporting the IRS.

Intervention: An action or process that has the effect of modifying behaviour, thinking, or emotions.

Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC): Regulation 181/98[20] requires that all school boards set up an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee. An Identification, Placement, and Review Committee is composed of at least three persons, one of whom must be a Principal or supervisory officer of the board.[21]

Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC): A forum or group consisting of worker and management members who meet on a regular basis to deal with health and safety issues. Together they should be mutually committed to improving health and safety conditions in the workplace. Committees identify potential health and safety issues and bring them to the employer`s attention. The JHSC is to be kept informed of health and safety developments by the employer. As well, a designated worker member of the JHSC inspects the workplace at least once a month.

Working Alone Training: Lone worker training for a school setting refers to specialized instruction designed for workers working alone in a school environment, such as after hours or in isolated areas of the building. Examples include Working Alone by the Ontario Public Service Employees Union/Syndicat des employés de la fonction publique do l'Ontario (OPSEU/SEFPO) OPSEU[22] and Working Alone by Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and safety (CCOHS).[23]

MLITSD: An acronym for the Ontario Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development. The MLITSD is a government entity that sets, communicates, and enforces workplace standards and occupational health and safety law.

Multi-Workplace Joint Health and Safety Committee (M/JHSC): School boards have more than one site with each site being a workplace. School boards may have one multisite committee for each bargaining unit which represents all school workplace locations. As per OHSA section 9(3.1), the MLITSD may require the employer (school board) to establish and maintain one or more JHSC for a workplace or parts of a workplace. The Teachers Regulation 857 [section 3(2)] allows for teachers to have one JHSC representing teachers which meets the OHSA section 9(2) requirement while allowing the school board to use sections 9(2) or 9(3) to form multiple committees.

Mitigating Factors: Facts that can be used to decrease the severity of an incident or the consequences faced by an individual. The mitigating factors to be considered by the Principal or designate are:[24]

1. Whether the student has the ability to control their behaviour;
2. Whether the student has the ability to understand the foreseeable consequences of their behaviour; and
3. Whether the student's continuing presence in the school does or does not create an unacceptable risk to the safety of any other individual at the school.

Notification of Risk: Disclosure of personal information related to the risk of workplace violence from a person with a history of violent behaviour.

Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA): The legislation for health and safety in Ontario workplaces. The main purpose of the Act is to protect workers from health and safety hazards on the job. The Act sets out duties for all workplace parties and rights for workers. It establishes procedures for dealing with workplace hazards and provides enforcement of the law when there is non-compliance.

Personal Care: Activities such as feeding, toileting, daily hygiene, and administering medication.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): Any device worn or used by a worker to protect against hazards. Some examples are dust masks, gloves, earplugs, hard hats, and safety goggles.

Personal Space: Physical boundary of an individual. Important to maintain personal boundaries to keep individual feeling safe and non-threatened.

Policy/Program Memoranda (PPM): Numbered policy directives are issued to district school boards and school authorities to outline the Ministry of Education's expectations regarding the implementation of ministry policies and programs.[21,26]

Reasonable Precaution: The care or effort taken that is appropriate for a particular situation.

Regulation: A specific rule. It states how the law will be applied to uphold the Act. A regulation is enforceable under the Act.

Risk Assessment: The process of determining those risks to be prioritized for risk management by a combination of risk identification, risk analysis, and evaluation of risk level. A risk assessment includes a review of the technical characteristics of hazards, analysis of exposures and vulnerability, and evaluation of the effectiveness of existing coping capacities.[21]

Risk Notification: See *Notification of Risk*.

Safety Culture: A health and safety culture that requires all workplace parties to pay constant, appropriate attention to workplace health and safety. It is a part of organizational culture – "it is the way we do things here".

Safety Plan: See *Student Safety Plan*.

School Team: A group consisting of teachers and support staff for the school. The team's purpose is to plan for students with identified special needs within each school and conduct meetings that include the parent(s). These teams have various names in different school boards (for example, Program Development Team, In-School Team, and School Based Support Team).

Student Dysregulation: A student's emotional response that is poorly regulated and does not fall within the traditionally accepted range of emotional reactions given the specific context and knowledge of baseline behaviour.[27]

Student Safety Plan: A plan developed for a student whose behaviour is known to pose an ongoing risk to themselves, other students, workers, or other people in general. It can serve as a crisis-response plan that outlines the roles and responsibilities of the workers in dealing with specific risk of injury behaviours. The development of a student safety plan involves all workers who work on an ongoing basis with a student, as well as parents and the representatives from any community agencies working with the student/family.[15]

Supervisor: A person who has charge of a workplace or authority over a worker [OHSA section 1(1)]. In the education sector, the supervisor is most often the Principal or designate (for example, an interim Vice-Principal).[1]

Threat: Any verbal or physical action indicating an intent to inflict injury on a worker, the worker's family, or property.[28]

Transportation: A service that includes travel to-and-from school and between schools and travel in and around school buildings to services. For special education, transportation includes specialized equipment such as special or adapted buses, lifts, and ramps, if required, to provide special transportation for a child with exceptionalities.

Transition: movement or change from one location, program, or service to another.

Transition Plan: A movement plan that must include the following components:

- Specific goals for the student's transition
- The actions required, now and in the future, to achieve the stated goals
- The person or agency responsible for or involved in completing or providing assistance in the completion of each of the identified actions
- Timelines for the implementation of each of the identified actions[21]

Trigger: An event or action that initiates a response of some type.

Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA): A process to determine how best to support a student so their behaviour does not become violent or self-injurious. The VTRA Protocol outlines how a school responds immediately to threatening incidents, including but not limited to, possession of a weapon or replica weapon, bomb threat or plan, verbal or written (including electronic) threats to harm oneself or others, and fire setting. The initial response team may include the Principal or Vice-Principal, police services, certified board staff. Other community partners and additional board staff may be included as necessary.[29]

Worker: A person who is defined as any of the following:[1]

- A person who performs work or supplies services for monetary compensation
- A secondary school student who performs work or supplies services for no monetary compensation under a work experience program authorized by the School Board that operates the school in which the student is enrolled
- A person who performs work or supplies services for no monetary compensation under a program approved by a college of applied arts and technology, university or other post- secondary institution
- Such other persons as may be prescribed who perform work or supply services to an employer for no monetary compensation

Workplace: Any land, premises, location, or thing, upon, in or near which a worker works [OHSA section 1(1)]. This may include a school, a classroom, a school board office, a field trip location, a school bus, a non-traditional learning setting, or any other place a worker performs work for the school board.

Workplace Parties: Those working in provincially publicly funded school board workplaces, including all workers of the school board as well as union and education association representatives.

Work Refusal: Right of a worker to refuse work when the worker has reason to believe that he or she would be endangered by performing that work [OHSA section 43(3)].[1]

Workplace Violence: OHSA defines workplace violence as:

a. The exercise of physical force by a person (worker, supervisor, student, or non-board employee) 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, which could cause physical injury to the worker,

c. A statement or behaviour that 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 [ohsa section 1(1)].[1]

Examples of workplace violence may include but are not limited to a worker, supervisor, student, or non-board employee:

- Assault/attempted assault,
- Verbal or written threats to physically attack a worker,
- Wielding a weapon in the workplace and/or at a worker,
- Throwing an object at a worker, and
- Non-workers fighting in the workplace in which a worker could be injured (source: greater essex county district school board).

Workplace Violence Policy: A statement of intent or a commitment from management to coordinate action in the workplace to prevent violence. According to the OHSA, the workplace violence policy should:[1]

- Show an employer's commitment to protecting workers from workplace violence;
- Address violence from all possible sources (customers, clients, employers, supervisors, workers, strangers and domestic/intimate partners);
- Outline the roles and responsibilities of the workplace parties in supporting the policy and program; and be dated and signed by the highest level of management of the employer or at the workplace as appropriate (examples may include, but are not limited to, the president, chief executive officer, senior human resources professional or uppermost member of management at the workplace).[1]

Workplace Violence Program: A systematic combination of activities, procedures and facilities designed to prevent workplace violence and to ensure and maintain a healthy and safe workplace. As per OHSA, the workplace violence program must include:

- Measures and procedures to control the risks identified in the assessment required under the OHSA;
- Section 32.0.3(1) as likely to expose a worker to physical injury;
- Measures and procedures for summoning immediate assistance when workplace violence occurs or is likely to occur;
- Measures and procedures for workers to report incidents of workplace violence to the employer or supervisor;
- How the employer will investigate and deal with incidents or complaints of workplace violence; and
- Any other elements prescribed in regulation.[1]

The workplace violence program may incorporate, or reference existing programs, procedures, or protocols related to workplace violence. For example, there could be existing procedures for emergency situations, incident reporting, or personal safety.[30]

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APPENDIX A

UNDERSTANDING THE INTERNAL RESPONSIBILITY SYSTEM

What is the Internal Responsibility System (IRS)?

The IRS is a principle that emphasizes shared responsibility for safety in the workplace. It means that everyone, from the school board to the Principal to the education worker, plays a role in preventing and addressing workplace violence.

Why is understanding IRS important for violence risk assessments?

The IRS is essential for violence risk assessments because it underscores shared responsibility for workplace safety. By recognizing the IRS, all stakeholders understand their roles in identifying and addressing potential risks of workplace violence, ensuring a collaborative and proactive approach to safety.

What are the key elements of the IRS?

Under the IRS, legal duties and responsibilities overlap among employers, supervisors, and workers. Together, they form a chain of responsibility and accountability to ensure workplace safety.

What are the responsibilities of workers under the IRS?

If a worker identifies a safety concern, they must report it to management. This ensures that hazards are addressed promptly to prevent injuries.

**What are the responsibilities of employers and supervisors under the IRS?**

Employers and supervisors have a duty to address and eliminate hazards once they have been identified. This proactive approach helps create a safe work environment.

How is the effectiveness of the IRS monitored?

The Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) monitors the effectiveness of the IRS internally. External support comes from organizations like the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD), Ministry of Education (EDU), unions, and Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB).

What happens if the IRS is not effective?

When the IRS is not effective, the MLITSD may enforce compliance through progressive enforcement measures, including issuing orders or prosecution. This ensures that workplace safety standards are upheld.

Safe Environments.
Healthy Workers.
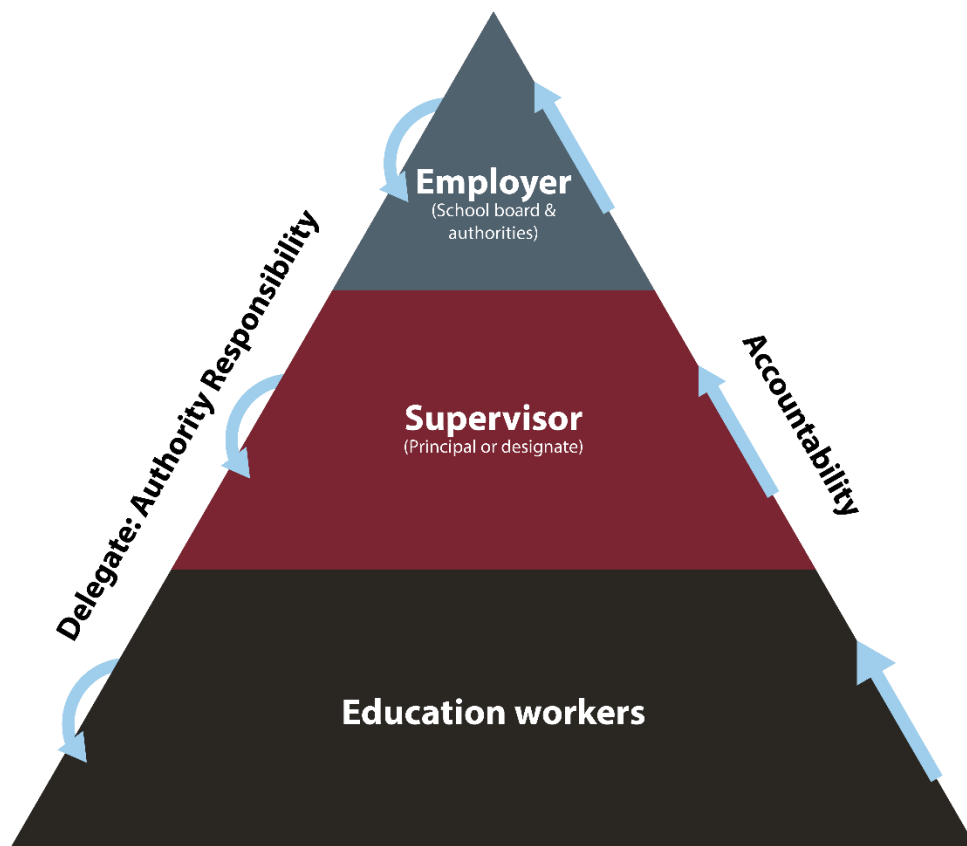
Internal contributions

- Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC)
- Health and Safety Professionals
- Unions

External contributions

- Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (LMITSD)
- Safe Workplace Associations
- Workplace Safety and Insurance Board
- Unions

APPENDIX B

RELEVANT LEGISLATION FOR WORKPLACE VIOLENCE IN EDUCATION

The Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)[1]

The OHSA defines workplace violence and harassment and sets out required workplace violence prevention programs and duties.

Sections 32.0.1, 32.0.2, 32.0.3, 32.0.5, 32.0.6, 32.0.7, and 32.0.8

- Employers (school boards) must prepare, develop, and maintain policies and programs pertaining to violence and harassment.

Section 32.0.3(1) – Assessing Risks of Violence

- Employers are responsible for assessing the potential risks of workplace violence, considering factors such as the workplace environment, the nature of the work, and the conditions in which the work is performed.

Section 32.0.3(4) – Reassessment of Risks of Violence

- Employers must reassess workplace violence risks as often as needed to ensure that workplace policies and programs adequately protect workers from potential harm.

Section 32.0.3(4) – Domestic Violence

- If someone with a personal relationship to a member of the school community, like a parent, spouse, ex-partner, or family member, poses a threat of physical harm, it's classified as domestic violence which is workplace violence. In such cases, if an education worker is likely to face physical harm or threats on their job due to their personal relationships, the employer must take steps to protect he worker.

Section 32.0.5(3) – Provision Information

- An employer's duty to provide information to a worker [OHSA s. 25(2)(a)] and supervisor's duty to advise a worker [OHSA s. 27(2)(a)], encompasses sharing information, including personal information related to a risk of workplace violence from a person with a history of violent behaviour, if:
  - o The worker can be expected to encounter that person during their work, or
  - o The risk of workplace violence is likely to expose the worker to physical injury.
- No employer or supervisor shall share more personal information than needed to keep the worker safe.

Duties of the workplace parties and their rights in school settings are set out in the OHSA, and include:

- **Section 8** – Health and safety representative
- **Section 9** – Joint Health and Safety Committee
- **Sections 25 & 26** – Duty of employer (school board)
- **Section 27** – Duty of supervisor (Principal)
- **Section 28(1)(d)** – Duty of worker to report
- **Section 43(3)(b.1)** – Worker's right to refuse unsafe work, including the reason to believe that workplace violence is likely to endanger

Ontario Regulation 857 under OHSA - Teachers[31]

This Regulation ensures that the OHSA applies to teachers in a manner consistent with the Education Act. Section 3(3) specifies: "Part V of OHSA does not apply to a teacher where the circumstances are such that the life, health, or safety of a pupil is in imminent jeopardy." This means that teachers, when exercising a work refusal, must ensure that the life, health, and safety of their students are not endangered or in jeopardy. Other school board staff, such as custodians, office workers, and educational assistants, still retain the full right to refuse work they believe is likely to endanger them.

Ontario Education Act Regulation 298[32]

Under the Education Act, teachers have a special duty of care towards students. They must maintain and protect the safety of their students. The teacher must carry out supervisory duties and instructional programs assigned by the Principal, ensuring all reasonable safety procedures in their courses and activities.

Other sections pertaining to violence risk assessment and notice of harm include:

- **Section 170(1)7.2** – Programs, interventions, and other supports
- **Sections 264 & 264.1** – Duties of teachers and designated early childhood educators
- **Section 265** – Duties of the Principal
- **Section 300.2** – Reporting to the Principal
- **Sections 306-314** – Suspension, investigation, and possible expulsion

Amendments to the Education Act applicable to a workplace violence program include:

- Accepting Schools Act, 2012, c. 5 – Bill 13[33]
- Safe Schools Act, 2000 c. 12 – Bill 81[34]
  - Safe Schools Incident Reporting (SSIR) Forms (2012)[35]
- Keeping Our Kids Safe at School Act, 2009, c. – Bill 157[36]

Ministry of Education Policy/Procedure Memoranda (PPM)[26]

PPMs outline the expectations of the EDU about implementation and compliance. The following directives address workplace violence and harassment:

- PPM #120 – Reporting Violent Incidents to the Ministry of Education
- PPM #128 – The Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct
- PPM #141 – School Board Programs for Students on Long-Term Suspension
- PPM #142 – School Board Programs for Expelled Students
- PPM #144 – Bullying Prevention and Intervention
- PPM #145 – Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour
- PPM #159 – Collaborative Professionalism

Workplace Safety Insurance Board (WSIB)[37]

The WSIB regards an injury resulting from an act of violence as it would any other workplace injury. Injured employees who require medical attention or who have lost work time because of a violent incident in the workplace have the right to claim WSIB benefits.

APPENDIX C

<u>DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES</u>

The Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)1 outlines general duties for employers (section 25), supervisors (section 27), and workers (section 28) concerning workplace violence (section 32.0.5).

Shared Responsibility

It is the duty of employers, supervisors, and workers to:

- Create and maintain a non-violent, safe work environment.
- Address issues and work toward a resolution.
- Immediately inform the supervisor of any identified hazard(s) and participate in the investigation.

Employers

Board and School Level (Director of Education, Board of Trustees)

To provide and promote a non-violent, safe work environment, employers must:

- Ensure duty of care to prevent foreseeable harm from violent or potentially violent individuals, including co-workers, contractors, parents, and students.
- Develop and maintain a program to implement policies regarding workplace violence [section 32.0.2(1)].
- Provide workers with the necessary information, instruction, and supervision to ensure their health and safety according to relevant policies and procedures [section 25.2(a)].
- Inform workers or their supervisors of any hazard in the workplace [section 25.2(d)].
- Notify the MLITSD, M/JHSC, and applicable unions of workplace violent incidents that cause a critical injury [section 51(1)].
- Assess the risks of workplace violence that may arise from the:
    1. The nature of the workplace,
    2. Type of work, or
    3. Conditions of work [section 32.0.3(1)].
- Inform the JHSC or HSR, or if none, inform the workers of the results of the risk assessment, and if written, give copies upon request [section 32.0.3(3)].
- Repeat the risk assessment to confirm that the workplace violence prevention policy and program continue to protect workers from workplace violence [section 32.0.3.(4)].
- Inform the M/JHSC, HSR, or workers of the reassessment results [section 32.0.3(5)].
- Ensure the workplace violence program includes [section 32.0.2.(2)]:
    a. Measures and procedures to control the risks identified in the assessment [section 32.0.3(1)] as likely to expose a worker to physical injury;

> **Leading Practices**
>
> ✓ Create a Risk Notification based on developing information from the school team.
> ✓ Repeat a risk assessment after each violent incident and as often as necessary.

b. Measures and procedures for summoning immediate assistance when workplace violence occurs or is likely to occur;
c. Measures and procedures for workers to report incidents of workplace violence to the employer or supervisor; and
d. How the employer will investigate and deal with incidents or complaints of workplace violence.

> Encouraging communication between all workplace parties and their M/JHSC or HSRs will help the employer fulfill their legislated obligations while supporting each school's IRS.

Supervisors

Board and School Level (Principals or Designates)

Whenever a supervisor becomes aware (directly or indirectly) of a threat, attempt, or incident of workplace violence, they are responsible for ensuring compliance with reporting, investigative, and information-sharing requirements, as well as implementing their school board's policies.

- Supervisors must ensure that workers [section 27(1)]:

    o Work in the manner and with the protective devices, measures, and procedures required by the OHSA and the regulations; and [section 27(1)(a)]

    o Use or wear the equipment, protective devices, or clothing that the workers' employer requires to be used or worn [section 27(1)(b)].

- Supervisors must inform workers of any potential or actual danger to their health or safety of which supervisors are aware [section 27.2(a)].

- Where required, supervisors must provide written instructions to workers regarding the specific measures and procedures to be followed for the workers' protection [section 27.2(b)].

- Supervisors must share information about potential or actual hazards with workers when they receive it, discussing how to address the risk or potential for violence [section 27(2)(a)].

- Supervisors must take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of workers [section 27.2(c)].

> **Leading Practices**
> ✓ Create a Risk Notification based on developing information from the school team.
> ✓ Provide and promote a non-violent, safe work environment.

Workers

Classroom Staff Level (Teachers, EAs, ECEs, and other staff) and School Level (Administrative, Support Staff, Custodial, and other staff)

This includes Principals and Vice Principals who are workers, as well as supervisors.

Workers must:

- Inform their Principal (supervisor) of any known hazards [section 28(d)].

Leading Practices:

- ✓ Document hazard details and provide improvement suggestions to the Principal (supervisor) following the school board's policy.
- ✓ Review, understand, and comply with workplace violence and harassment programs, including internal and external incident reporting obligations.
- ✓ Participate in incident investigations and provide recommendations as requested.
- ✓ Escalate hazards by discussing with the Principal (supervisor) or contacting the M/JHSC worker member or HSR for advice and to discuss their options, including the right to call a work refusal.
- ✓ Participate in continuous improvement of safety plans with school team.
- ✓ Participate in applicable training and awareness.
- ✓ **Exercise the right to refuse unsafe work, taking into account their duty of care for their assigned student(s).**

Multi-Workplace Joint Health and Safety Committees (M/JHSC) and Health and Safety Representatives (HSR)

The M/JHSC Worker Member or HSR must:

- Identify potential or real risk of violence [section 9(18)(a)].
- Ensure they are appropriately consulted about and receive in writing the workplace violence risk assessment and report of corrective actions [section 32.0.3(3)(a)].
- Ensure they are appropriately consulted about a written program with respect to workplace harassment [section 32.0.6(1)].
- Make recommendations to the supervisor and employer for developing, establishing, and providing training [section s. 9(18)(b)].

Leading Practices

- ✓ Comply with the organization's Workplace Violence and Harassment policy and programs.
- ✓ Comply with the organization's internal and external incident reporting obligations.
- ✓ Ensure they communicate with and support workers who may receive information, including personal information, related to the risk of workplace violence from a person with a history of violent behaviour.

Teachers

Teachers have the right to refuse unsafe work but must also consider their "Duty of Care" requirement [Teachers Regulation 857 section 3(3)].[31] This means that while teachers can refuse work they believe to be unsafe for themselves, they must ensure the safety of their students before doing so. If a teacher feels personally endangered, they should immediately report their concerns to their Principal while keeping their students safe.

In practical terms, this means that teachers must ensure their students are safe and supervised before refusing unsafe work. They cannot delegate their duty of care to non-teachers. For example, if the classroom isn't safe, the teacher must move their students to another safe location like an empty classroom, library, or office, while still watching over them. Employers, on the other hand, are obligated to take all reasonable precautions to protect workers and provide a safe working environment.

APPENDIX D

LEADING PRACTICES FOR PREVENTING WORKPLACE VIOLENCE IN EDUCATION

This tables includes leading practices, recommendations, and tips to prevent or reduce workplace violence risks.

Issue/task	Relevant legislation	Leading practice
Hazard Notification	Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) section 25(2)(d)	• Supervisor (Principal or designate) gathers the school team before the first week of school, semester, or start of the job and provides a "safety talk" to ensure everyone is briefed on safety procedures.
Risk Notification	OHSA section 25(2)(a) OHSA section 32.0.5(3)	• Supervisor (Principal or designate) provides to workers relevant information about a person with a history of violent behaviour, such as providing a student's files containing violence-related information [for example, Transition Plan or Independent Education Plan (IEP)]. • Use information-sharing documents such as the Notification of Risk Forms found on the PSHSA website. This document is used to inform workers who may encounter the individual who has a history of violent behaviours (source: Greater Essex County District School Board, Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board). • Use an information-sharing document such as the Student Transition Checklist. This document facilitates transitional planning and provides critical information for students transferring between schools internally or graduating from elementary to secondary programs (source: Greater Essex County District School Board).
Information Sharing	OHSA section 25(2)(a) OHSA section 32.0.3(3)(b) OHSA section 32.0.5(3)	• Notify casual staff, temporary staff, and those returning from absence who missed information/training sessions of the risk of violence. • Implement a system to readily identify students with a history of violent behaviours, such as using the same-coloured binders throughout the school board. • Share completed Violence Risk Assessments with the Multi-Workplace Joint Health and Safety Committee (M/JHSC), Health and Safety Representative (HSR), and all workers. • Use information-sharing documents such as the Notification of Risk Form. This document is used to inform workers who may come in contact with the

		individual who has a history of violent behaviours (source: Greater Essex County District School Board).
		• Use an information-sharing document such as the Student Transition Checklist. This document facilitates transitional planning and provides critical information for students transferring between schools internally or graduating from elementary to secondary programs (source: Greater Essex County District School Board).
		• Workers record details of workplace violence hazard and suggestions for improvements and provides to supervisor, as per school board policy [for example, Behaviours Observed Checklist (source: PSHSA), Incident Report, Violence Hazard Reporting Form)].
		• Use the Safety Alert Summary document as a sign-in requirement for workers not directly working with identified students upon school arrival. Include a school map on the back for easy orientation (source: PSHSA).
Measures and Procedures	OHSA section 32.0.2(2)(a) OHSA section 32.0.5(2)	• Use the Short-Term Assessment Response Team (START) to identify violence risks for new and existing employees dealing with new student needs or behavioural issues until the school can control risks, starting in at the beginning of the school year or semester.
		• Use local school or site response teams.
		• Workers directly working with a student who poses a risk of violence participate in the Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC), support, or transition meetings.
		• Distribute a note to all workers involved with a student who poses a risk of violence, allowing them to provide comments or ask questions if unable to attend the meeting.
		• Distribute note to all workers during the meeting, allowing them to offer comments or post questions.
		• Distribute the completed note to all involved parties after the meeting.
Risk Assessment	OHSA section 32.0.3(1) Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) 159	• Part of a comprehensive risk assessment system that includes policies and procedures, training, communication, and evaluation.
		• Fits easily into current or new violence prevention measures and procedures.
		• Share with other education workers involved with the student or those showing potential for violence (for example, workers involved in completing the assessment, M/JHSC debriefs with the worker).

		• Conduct for every student with a safety plan, including when the safety plan is modified.
		• Principal or designate conducts the assessment with collaborative input from all education workers.
		• Conduct the assessment with:
		    o Changes to the classroom with curriculum and/or environment
		    o Changes to classroom staff and/or students (i.e. occasional teacher, volunteers, transfer of new student/behaviours observed in student)
		    o Start of the school year/semester and at other transitions throughout the school year (more than once or when there is an incident to report)
		• New educational facility
		• Supervisor (Principal or designate) updates the student safety plan and informs workers about any changes.
		• Include any known risks based on previous workplace incidents, such as:
		    o A student with a history of violence incidents
		    o The nature of interactions with parents
		    o Significant change in student population
		• All workers, including bus drivers, share training tips and provide feedback on effectively implementing interventions or supporting the process during "safety talks" or at all-staff meetings.

Risk Reassessment	OHSA section 32.0.3(4) OHSA section 32.0.3(5)	• Reassess the risks of violence as often as necessary, such as in response to changes or events, to ensure that the workplace violence policies and program continue to protect workers.
Collaborate	PPM 159	• Supervisors (Principal or designate) and workers debrief together to determine the measures and procedures that should be put into place to control the identified risks. • Workers and the M/JHSC or HSR collaborate to develop controls tailored to local school circumstances and student needs. • Employers and supervisors encourage open communication between workers and their M/JHSC or HSR. • Employers provide M/JHSC or HSR with completed Violence Risk Assessment and consult on recommended actions to be taken.

		• Supervisors (Principal or designate) updates existing Safety Plan or develops new Safety Plans as needed based on the most current Violence Risk Assessment. • Communicate changes to the Safety Plans to impacted workers and school team depending on the level of risk.