

FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE AND AGGRESSION

It is the intent of the Beautiful Plains School Division that the working and learning environment should be a safe, secure place that supports intellectual and emotional growth. Therefore, the school environment should be free from violence or threats of violence, physical harassment, hazing, verbal abuse or obscene gestures, intimidation, racial abuse, sexual abuse or sexual harassment, or any other acts of aggression.

It is the position of the Board that employees shall have the responsibility and authority to take appropriate action, so that as much as possible, an environment that is free from aggression or violence is maintained. The Public Schools' Act (Section 96C) states that teachers and administrators "*shall maintain order and discipline in the school*".

Employees Responsibilities

- Employees are responsible for working together in a professional manner and resolving issues in a non-violent manner.
- Employees are to bring issues to their supervisor, if they cannot be mutually resolved.
- Employees must report incidents of violence to their supervisor. They must also cooperate in the investigation of a violent incident. Anyone who gives evidence or information in an investigation or is involved in the process must keep this information confidential, except when it is necessary to deal effectively with the issue.
- Employees should take all reasonable steps to protect their personal safety and remove themselves from a violent situation.
- Employees should summon help by using an appropriate means.

Employers' Responsibilities

- Beautiful Plains School Division must ensure, as much as reasonably practical, that no employees are subjected to violence in the workplace.
- Supervisors will take corrective action with anyone under their direction who subjects an employee to violence.
- Supervisors will ensure employees are aware of the risks of violence in their workplace. This information will be shared on a limited basis to protect the privacy of the people involved
- Beautiful Plains School Division, its senior administration team and supervisors are responsible for creating a safe working environment. Anyone aware of violence in their workplace must bring it to the attention of their direct supervisor so that the issue can be addressed immediately.

Steps to eliminate or minimize the risk of violence

Safe work procedures have been reviewed with all employees. Documented safe-work procedures on violence prevention include:

- Working alone
- Emergency Response Plans
- Threat Assessments

Less serious incidents could be dealt with by individual teachers through procedures which provide:

- Fairness;
 - a system of appropriate progressive consequences that involves wherever possible a learning experience for the offender;
 - notification of parents (or guardians) and their involvement in dealing with the problem when appropriate; and reporting and documentation when appropriate.

How to Report Serious Incidents of Violence

1. Report all incidents or threats, and attempted or actual violence, to your immediate supervisor.
2. The employee and the supervisor will assess the risk associated with the situation and complete the violence incident report form. The form must be completed for all incidents, whether they are actual violence or a threatening situation where there is a reasonable expectation that it may become violent.
3. The supervisor will report all incidents of violence (including situations where there is a reasonable expectation that the threat may become violent), to the Superintendent as soon as possible.

Notification of Workers at Risk

When an actual incident of violence has occurred or when it is reasonably expected to become violent, Beautiful Plains School Division will take the following steps to ensure the safety of all employees:

1. The supervisor will advise the employees who are at risk. They will discuss procedures to minimize risk.
2. All relevant information about the source of violence will be provided to the employees who are at risk and their supervisors.
3. Depending on the circumstances, appropriate steps will be taken to protect employees.

Recommendation to Get Medical Help

- Employees who have been the victim of violence will be:
 - encouraged to get medical help
 - given the opportunity to be examined by a physician
- Employees can obtain crisis counselling through the EAP program
- If an employee gets medical help or misses work, both the employer and worker must file a report of injury with the Workers Compensation Board and the employer.
- The superintendent and supervisor will review the incident and its effects and take reasonable steps to help prevent future occurrences.

Investigating Violent Incidents

1. The violent incident report must be completed for all violent incidents, including situations where there is a reasonable expectation that the incident or threat may become violent in the future.
2. The supervisor will review all incidents that are reasonably expected to become violent. The current procedures will be reviewed and additional steps may be taken to prevent future violence.
3. The supervisor will investigate all reported incidents of actual violence. Investigations may include Workplace, Safety and Health representatives or necessary agencies if the incident is deemed serious in nature.
4. All violent incident reports will be sent to the Superintendent and may be reviewed with the Workplace, Safety and Health committee.

COMPLAINT RESOLUTION GUIDE

General Guidelines

Employers will:

- treat all claims seriously
- investigate in a timely fashion
- keep the investigation as confidential as possible and only advise those who truly need to know of the details
- reserve judgment until all the facts are in
- document the incident

How to Start the Investigation

- It is important to try to obtain, if possible, the complainant's allegations in writing. This ensures that you are clear on what she/he is saying happened.
- Determine who should do the investigation.
- Prepare a list of people to interview and revise it as needed.
- Take steps to minimize potential contact between the complainant and the person alleged to have committed the harassment or violence until the issue is investigated and resolved.
- Prepare a general outline of what to ask each individual who will be interviewed.

Conducting the Interview of the Complainant

- Inform the complainant of the steps the company will be taking in the investigation and confirm that Beautiful Plains School Division takes the complaint seriously.
- Explain that Beautiful Plains School Division will not permit any retaliation against the complainant and that if that occurs, she/he should let the company know right away.
- Get the complainant to tell his/her story and ask for specific details.
- Some of the questions you will likely want to ask include:
 1. When did the incident or conduct occur? Where did it occur?
 2. What was said/done?
 3. Were there previous incidents or similar behavior toward this complainant or another employee?
 4. What did the complainant say or do to indicate to the person alleged to have committed harassment or violence that the conduct was unwelcome?
 5. Did the complainant tell any other workers about what happened?
 6. Did the complainant make any notes about what happened?
 7. Were there any witnesses and if so, who?

Interviewing the Person Alleged to Have Committed Harassment or Violence

- Explain the allegations in detail.
- Inform the person against whom the allegations were made of the steps Beautiful Plains School Division will be taking in the investigation and confirm that the complaint will be taken seriously.
- Explain that Beautiful Plains School Division will not permit any retaliation against the complainant and that if there are attempts to do so, there will be disciplinary action.
- Ask the person alleged of harassment or violence to reply to the allegations, preferably in writing.
- Determine the nature of the relationship between the complainant and the person against whom the allegations are made (ex: dating, sexual, social, working).
- Determine whether the complainant ever complained about any of the alleged actions and how the person alleged of harassment responded.
- Ask for names of all witnesses the person alleged to have committed harassment or violence thinks should be interviewed as part of the investigation.

Conducting Witness Interviews

- Interview all witnesses identified by the complainant and alleged harasser to ensure the appearance of an unbiased investigation.
- Explain:
 - why the interview is taking place
 - how the information may be used
 - importance of complete and accurate facts
 - importance of the names of all possible witnesses
 - Beautiful Plains School Divisions position on retaliation
- Take detailed notes, including:
 - name of witness
 - date and time of interview
 - who was present
 - questions asked
 - what witness said
 - ask the witnesses to explain what they might have seen or heard. Get the details:
 - what, when and where did it happen?
 - who was present?
 - who did and said what to whom?
 - was the incident an isolated event or part of a pattern?

Concluding the Investigation

- The investigator should prepare a report of the investigation and determine whether the complainant's allegations were proven.
- If the report finds that harassment or violence has taken place, the employer should determine reasonable steps to be taken to end the harassment or violence and prevent a repeat.
- The employer must meet separately with the complainant and the person who has been alleged of harassment or violence to explain the investigation process, conclusions and any disciplinary action taken or other steps put in place to stop and avoid a repeat of the offensive conduct. If the results of the investigation are inconclusive, the employer should explain that the investigation was unable to determine the events that occurred and that the company will monitor the situation to ensure no further offensive conduct occurs.

It is also the position of the Division that it supports in-service training which prepares its staff to deal with aggressive actions in a safe and appropriate manner and it supports and encourages programs which will prevent or reduce the possibility of violence or aggression.

Approved June 15, 1993
Reviewed October 18, 1994
Revised October 20, 1998
Revised June 19, 2012