

# **Workplace Violence Prevention Handbook**

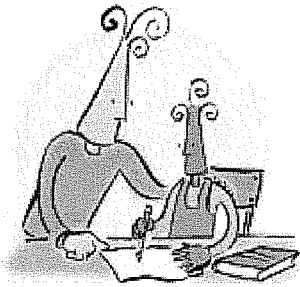
**For**

**Educational Assistants**

**and**

**Special Program Assistants**

**Designed by: Workplace Violence Prevention  
Committee, District 18 OSSTF  
2009**



## The School “tEAm”

The School Team is your support system. Team members may include:

- ▶ Educational Assistant/Special Program Assistant
- ▶ Classroom Teacher
- ▶ Special Education Resource Teacher
- ▶ Child and Youth Counselor
- ▶ Vice Principal / Principal

And any other specialists that are involved with the student, such as:

- ▶ Speech Therapist
- ▶ Occupational Therapist
- ▶ Physiotherapist

The team collaboratively develops IEPs (Individual Education Plans), Behaviour Plans, Physical Intervention Plans and participates in Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) meetings.

Each member of the team should be trained in BMS (Behaviour Management Systems), to allow members to confidently support each other when needed.

Not only is this “tEA” a support to the EA/SPA, it can also be used as a chain of command, in that, if there is a problem, the EA/SPA should be able to approach the Teacher, who can then talk to the Principal / Vice Principal and so on. If there is no resolution, the EA/SPA should contact the Union Executive. The Union Executive can be reached via First Class email.

## **There is an EA in every tEAm!**

Educational Assistants / Special Program Assistants (EA/SPA) are unique, highly qualified professionals who have valuable knowledge and experience in dealing with and supporting students.

You need Educational Assistants / Special Program Assistants on your team.

Educational Assistants / Special Program Assistants have the skills to address the needs of different exceptionalities (behavioural developmental, physical, blind, intellectual, deaf/hard of hearing, gifted and autism...). EA/SPAs have the ability to adapt to a variety of educational settings and have taken many upgraded courses/workshops to help their students succeed.

Beyond their post secondary education, EA/SPAs are educated in and are an invaluable resource in numerous areas including:

- ▶ Lifting / Positioning Training
- ▶ Behaviour Management Systems Training (BMS)
- ▶ Autism Spectrum Disorders
- ▶ Behaviour Management Training
- ▶ Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy
- ▶ First Aid / CPR Certification
- ▶ Pharmacology (administering medication) & meeting other medical needs
- ▶ Visual Impairment; knowledge of Braille
- ▶ Deaf/Hard of hearing; knowledge of American Sign Language
- ▶ Conflict Resolution Training
- ▶ Augmentative Communication
- ▶ Computer Skills
- ▶ Keen Observation Skills
- ▶ Oral and Written Communication Skills
- ▶ Contribute valuable information to the: Individual Education Plan (IEP), Behaviour Plan, Physical Intervention Plans and Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC)

## **DEFINITIONS OF VIOLENT INCIDENTS**

**A violent incident may be defined as but is not limited to the following:**

Grab (on any body part)	Verbal or physical threat
Kick	Throwing of any object
Punch (fist)	Assault
Slap (open handed)	Robbery
Bite	Extortion
Pinch	Bullying
Poke or stab with any object	Physical, emotional, sexual abuse or harassment
Spit	Racial or Ethno-cultural harassment
Hair pull or cut	
Scratch	

These incidents may be intentional or unintentional, but they are still defined as violent incidents.

If any of these incidents occur during the school day to an Educational Assistant/ Special Program Assistant a Violent Incident Report (206-1) and Employee Accident/Incident Report (406-1) **MUST** be completed.

All violent incidents **MUST** be reported to the Principal or designate.

Reporting violent incidents and completing the necessary reports is UGDSB Policy and your responsibility as an EA/SPA.

Completing this report(s) does not reflect your actions or abilities but instead demonstrates professionalism, accountability and responsibility.

If you have any questions regarding a violent incident, please contact your Violence Prevention Representative or your Union Executive.

### **How to “Debrief” after an Incident:**

The following information is taken from the Behaviour Management Systems Practitioner’s Handbook.

**Who:** The people discussing events or issues surrounding students should be members of the school team.

**Where:** Debriefing should occur with the team members in privacy to ensure confidentiality and freedom of expression.

**Underlying Beliefs:** The team should be supportive of its members to be successful. It is important to realize that we all have our own way of responding to different situations and regardless of anyone else’s point of view; we can only grow in an environment that supports self-determination and acceptance. A non-judgmental attitude from others gives us the most opportunity for change.

**How:** How we listen as support staff on a school team is crucial to our understanding of a situation, and our ability to support and make plans for avoiding and/or dealing with another incident.

**Behaviour Management Systems** sees debriefing as an essential process and states this need twice in the Practitioners Workbook (pg. 41). It also states that any incident could require debriefing. It says, “It is important to understand that all behaviour incidents place stress on educators and students,” (pg. 17).

#### **The components in a debriefing process should include the following:**

1. Take time to calm down immediately following an incident.
2. Has the proper paper work been done?
3. Has debriefing occurred with the student?
4. Staff will need to verbally re-enact the facts of what happened without interruption, accept encouragement to speak further. Try to “become” that staff member and see his/her perspective.
5. Ask questions: Is there anything familiar? Has the same sequence of events happened before? What antecedents or precipitating factors surround the incident?
6. Isolate the factors surrounding the incident. Give possible alternatives to your reaction. This is not a blame game. Staff could invite creativity and a multitude of different reactions and problem solving techniques from the debriefing staff member who makes choices to predetermine outcomes before another similar incident occurs.
7. **Discuss the positive outcomes**, feelings and new things that were tried. It is important that anything good is acknowledged. Even if the situation was surprising, traumatizing or just not ideal. The act of debriefing itself is a positive. Keep a confidential journal.

## **Helpful Hints for the Workplace Violence Prevention Support Team**

- ▶ Know your rights and responsibilities.
- ▶ Keep an open line of communication with all interested parties (Principal, Teacher, EA/SPA, family, Child and Youth Worker (CYW), Union, etc.).
- ▶ Keep a supply of all necessary forms ready and available; designate a specific time and form faxing person; this helps to speed up the paperwork process.
- ▶ Plan regular team meetings; allow for periodic “emergency” meetings as issues rise.
- ▶ Keep the entire team informed of any changes or updates
- ▶ Read/research specific student illness or disability.
- ▶ Take available professional development training; keep current with Board required training, i.e. Behaviour Management System (BMS).
- ▶ Share your knowledge.
- ▶ Be organized.
- ▶ Decrease clutter and distractions.
- ▶ Make a schedule and follow it.
- ▶ Use praise and approval; Everyone likes positive compliments.
- ▶ Try a variety of educators with each child.
- ▶ Keep it simple.
- ▶ Debrief with your team after an incident.
- ▶ Don’t be afraid to ask for support—you do not have to do this alone.
- ▶ Keep a positive attitude.
- ▶ Be flexible.
- ▶ Use and try all the supports available: Other EA/SPAs, Child and Youth Worker, Resource Teacher, Specialized Support Team, Special Education Consultants.

## **For the Student**

- ▶ Set clear expectations and guidelines.
- ▶ Define what and where the student’s space is.
- ▶ Use reinforcement / reward system; change rewards as needed.
- ▶ Use praise and approval; Everyone likes positive compliments.
- ▶ Plan for transition and ask for support.
- ▶ Choose your battles.
- ▶ Choose your goals.

## **FORM FLOW CHART**

What form(s) do I fill out when an Incident occurs?

### **ALL VIOLENT INCIDENTS AND ACCIDENTS MUST BE REPORTED TO THE PRINCIPAL OR DESIGNATE.**

#### **Required forms for violent incidents**

Complete the following in the event of:

#### **1. Violent Incident:**

##### **1a. Violent Incident – No First Aid required**

A) Violent Incident Report (206-1) to be completed by EA/SPA

##### **Send to:**

- 1) OSR & Superintendent (Principal's responsibility).

**AND**

B) Employee Accident/Incident Report (406-1) to be completed by EA/SPA (as injury may become apparent at a later time).

##### **Send to:**

- 1) Health and Safety Office (Guelph Board Office), (original copy-EA/SPA responsibility).
- 2) One copy to: Health & Safety Rep., OSSTF District 18 Office, Fergus (via the intra – mail courier). This copy ensures that the incident has been reported to the proper offices (EA/SPA responsibility).

##### **1b. Violent Incident – First Aid required**

A) Violent Incident Report (206-1).

B) Employee Incident /Accident Report (406-1).

C) Workers' Compensation Form Incident *Must* be reported within 48 hours to the Health and Safety Office (Guelph Board Office, (519-822-4420 ext. 879 or 779).

D) After seeking medical attention, contact Alba Lowery (Guelph Board Office) (519) 822-4420 ext. 783.

## **2. Physical Intervention (Board Policy 419)**

- A) A Physical Intervention Plan must exist and trained staff must be listed on the document before intervention takes place.
- B) When Physical Intervention has been used, Physical Intervention Report (413-4) must be completed by EA/SPA(s) and placed in the OSR.
- Send to:** 1) Parent/Guardian, Superintendent of Education, Superintendent of Program, & the Health and Safety Officer (Principal's responsibility).
- C) Complete Violent Incident Report (206-1) and Employee Incident/Accident Report ((406-1) as necessary. (Follow above procedures).

Ensure that all documentation is completed in a professional, objective manner and as required—remember signatures, dates and times.

All forms can be found:

- 1) Online: in First Class, Office-Forms Conference.
- 2) Hard copies can be found in the EA/SPA General Resource Binder or contact a Union Executive member.



## **Who, What, Where, When and How to Access UGDSB Policies, Procedures and Forms**

### **UGDSB Policies and Procedures are available:**

- 1) **Online** via First Class intra-mail system:
  - a) Open *First Class*
  - b) Go to *Public Conferences*
  - c) Click on *Board Policies*
  
- 2) **Hard copies** of policies and procedures available in the UGDSB Employee Handbook

### **UGDSB Forms are available:**

- 1) **Online** via First Class intra-mail system:
  - a) Open *First Class*
  - b) Click on *Public Conferences*
  - c) Click on *Office- Forms*; in search box type in requested form or scroll down list until requested form is found
  
- 2) **Hard copy** of forms available in EA/SPA General Information Binder (each school to have an available and accessible copy)
  
- 3) **Contact any Executive Union member** and a copy of the form can be made available. Executive Union members can be reached via First Class email.

## **EA/SPA Responsibilities and Rights**

### **EA/SPA Responsibilities**

1. Know, understand and follow Upper Grand District School Board (UGDSB) procedures, policies and philosophies: **Violence Free Schools** (206), **Health and Safety** (406), **Educational Assistant Staffing for Special Education** (407), **Student Safety (Physical Intervention) Plan** (413A), **Child Abuse** (502), **Health Support Services** (509), the **School Code of Conduct** and **The Supportive Role of the EA Document**.
2. Conduct yourself in a professional and respectful manner with all staff and students.
3. Maintain confidentiality regarding student and school related issues.
4. Participate in professional development; ensure certification training is current and in agreement with UGDSB requirements.
5. Be a team player; actively participate with colleagues within a Professional Learning Community.
6. Regard all students with the greatest respect and dignity.
7. Assist and provide students with all necessary aspects of support (medical, behavioural, personal and educational support) to encourage and promote (student) self reliance and independence.
8. The EA/SPA is responsible to the Principal or designate and works under the direction of the teaching staff.
9. EA/SPAs should be aware of workplace hazards and know how to perform the job safely, practice safe work procedures, and report any workplace hazards.

### **EA/SPA Rights**

1. Know your rights under the law:
  - a. The Right to Know about hazards in the workplace.
  - b. The Right to Participate in identifying and resolving workplace hazards.
  - c. The Right to Refuse Unsafe Work that the worker deems to be legitimately dangerous and harmful to either her/him self or another worker.
2. Be familiar with the current Union contract.
3. Notify the Union Executive when issues of concern arise.
4. Communicate with other EA/SPAs for support and advice.