



Elements of a Workplace Violence Prevention Program K-12 Schools

Management Leadership:

- 1) Set a clear organizational value that school staff should not be injured by student behavior.
- 2) Develop a written safety and health program to prevent injury to school staff caused by student behavior. Include participation of school staff in development of the program.
- 3) Evaluate program areas and school staff titles that may be at risk for injury caused by student behavior. Review past injury logs and first aid reports to identify these areas.
- 4) Provide facilities, equipment, work practices and staff training to reduce the risk of injury caused by student behavior.
- 5) Provide support to assist school staff with classroom management such as student mental health resources, student support services, or social-emotional learning strategies.
- 6) Track incidents of student behavior that threaten or cause injury to school staff. Conduct an incident evaluation to identify prevention strategies.
- 7) Use a continuous improvement approach of plan-do-check-act to evaluate and improve staff safety.

Building Facility:

- 8) Assess building facility and classroom layout to determine if physical features contribute to student behavior towards staff.
- 9) Evaluate furniture and other objects in the classroom that could be used as a weapon against staff. Remove or redesign based on the potential for injury in that particular classroom.
- 10) Keep classroom exits and aisles clear.
- 11) Provide a method for school staff to communicate with the office when the staff need help due to injury or threat of injury.

Work Practices for Administration and Staff:

- 12) Define and communicate classroom rules and expected behavior from all students.
- 13) Use consistent behavior management and student discipline procedures.
- 14) Evaluate behavioral cues that could prompt a change of behavior during tasks assignments, change or transitioning from task to task, transition from teacher to teacher, change of classrooms, working in groups versus working alone, lunch breaks, snack breaks, etc. Monitor student behavior to track triggers, behaviors, and consequences so that escalating behavior can be redirected.
- 15) Use the school climate and social emotional learning strategies provided by the district.
- 16) Provide and use personal protective equipment when indicated, such as kevlar sleeves or gloves to protect from bites or scratches. Encourage staff to wear closed-toe shoes.

Training for School Staff:

- 17) Provide training in classroom management techniques.
- 18) Provide training to redirect and de-escalate agitated student behavior. Training may need to be customized for specific students.
- 19) Provide training to school staff on expectations for intervening in student-to-student fights so that the risk of staff injury is reduced.
- 20) Provide training on the process to report verbal threats, incidents of agitated behavior, and incidents that result in an injury to staff that requires first-aid or medical treatment.

Post-Incident Investigation:

- 21) Investigate all adverse student behavior incidents which threaten or result in injury to school staff.
- 22) Involve employees in the incident investigations and identify root causes for correction.
- 23) Evaluate root causes behind the student behavior. Post-incident investigations are most successful when the strategies are developed to address the root cause of the student behavior instead of telling school staff to be more careful.
- 24) Communicate results of the post-incident evaluation to other school staff who work with the student.

Evaluation for Program Effectiveness:

- 25) Conduct labor-management safety committee meetings to evaluate gaps and successes in preventing staff injury caused by student behavior.
- 26) Compare incident data and the success of post-incident investigations to identify root cause and reduce adverse behavior against staff.

Note:

These elements are a guide for the employer. The employer must perform an evaluation of the workplace to develop a program that ensures the safety and health of the workers. This document is not a requirement of enforcement.

References

- 1- OSHA General Duty Clause:** OSHA does not have a regulation for the prevention of employee injury from student behavior. The *Massachusetts State Plan* can issue a General Duty Clause violation when an employer has not taken any steps to prevent an injury from a recognized hazard. This worksheet contains feasible strategies. Implementation of each item on this worksheet is not required. The employer can also develop their own strategies that are not on this worksheet.
- 2- OSHA Directive.** "Enforcement Procedures for Occupational Exposure to Workplace Violence" CPL 02-01-058 (01/10/2017). [osha.gov/sites/default/files/enforcement/directives/CPL_02-01-058.pdf](https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/enforcement/directives/CPL_02-01-058.pdf)
- 3 - Guidelines for Preventing Workplace Violence for Healthcare and Social Service Workers.** OSHA 3148-06R 2016. [osha.gov](https://www.osha.gov)

For additional resources or to contact DLS, visit: mass.gov/info-details/safetyworks-resources.