

**Subject: Workplace Safety – Violence in the Workplace Policy**

**Effective Date: September 12, 2008**

**Approved by: Board of Directors**

**Policy:** It is the Governing Board’s policy that workplace safety and prevention of workplace violence is a vital commitment of the school. This policy will address the responsibility, compliance, communication, hazard assessment, incident investigation, hazard correction, training / instruction and record keeping components which will aide in the prevention of workplace violence.

Workplace violence is defined as any violence against employees, that takes place within the work place, is committed by persons who have an employment related connection with the organization, or are outsiders and involves:

1. Physical acts against person or employer property, or
2. Verbal threats, or vicious statements that are meant to harm, discriminate, bully, or cause a hostile environment, or
3. Written threats, vicious cartoons or notes and other written conduct of intense distortion that is meant to threaten or create a hostile environment or
4. Visual acts that are threatening or intended to convey injury or hostility.

## **Procedure:**

1. All steps must be taken to prevent workplace violence. To achieve this goal, combined efforts of all employees are unified to prevent and control workplace violence as a priority. Four keys ways to prevent workplace violence is to observe and communicate the following principles:
  - a. Understand what violence is.
  - b. Assist employees to understand themselves, attitudes, motivations, and decision-making styles so that they will not resort to violence.
  - c. Report any person who may be perceived to be a potential threat or who have committed a violent act.
  - d. Recognize that all employees are entitled to perform their work regardless of location whether on the organization’s premises or in the field experience an environment free from violence.
2. The Executive Director and director of human resources will conduct educational training regarding the early warning signs of potentially violent behavior, the steps to follow to

de-escalate violent situations, and the methods to investigate and respond to violence in the workplace. This will include these key practical approaches to the elimination of violence in the workplace:

- a. All incidents will have a thorough and prompt investigation.
  - b. Reporting employees will not be subjected to retaliation.
  - c. All affirming steps will be made to control the situation.
  - d. Communication of the organization's commitment that employees perform work practices, which promote safety and security in the workplace
  - e. Implementation of a system for immediate and safe communication of a warning to law enforcement authorities, management, and other employees about an imminent act of violence or threat of imminent violence.
3. The school will develop a cooperative relationship with local law enforcement authorities to assist as a resource while identifying precautionary methods. When necessary, court orders may be used to restrict access to potential victims.
  4. Unacceptable behavior will be identified, with expectations and policy statements communicated. Recurring incidents of unacceptable behaviors will not be tolerated.
  5. The school administrative team will be encouraged to openly discuss and reinforce components stated within this policy. During staff meetings they will review workplace safety, implement suggestions to insure a safe environment, review threats and incidents, and submit recommendations to assist in the evaluation, training, and counseling of employees.
  6. Hazard assessment, workplace safety and security hazards and changes in employee work practices may require assessing for more than one type of workplace violence. Our school performs inspections for each type of workplace violence by using the methods specified below to identify and evaluate workplace security hazards.

Inspections for Type I hazards include assessing:

- a. The exterior and interior of the workplace for attractiveness to discourage criminal activity.
- b. The need for security surveillance measures such as mirrors or cameras
- c. Postings signs notifying the public that no cash is kept on the premises.
- d. Procedures of employee response during a robbery or other criminal act
- e. Procedure for reporting suspicious persons or activities.
- f. Posting of emergency telephone numbers for law enforcement, fire and medical services.

Type II workplace safety and security hazards include assessing:

- a. Access to, freedom of movement within, the workplace
- b. Adequacy of security systems, such as door locks, security windows, and alarm systems.
- c. Frequency and severity of threatening or hostile situations that may lead to violent acts by internal and external contacts.
- d. Employees' skill in safely handling threatening or hostile service recipients.
- e. Effectiveness of systems to warn others of a security danger or to summon assistance.
- f. Use of work practices such as the "buddy" system for specified emergency events.
- g. The availability of employee escape routes.

Type III workplace hazards:

- a. Effectively communicating our school's anti-violence policy to all employees, supervisors or managers, teachers, and students.
- b. Improving how well our school administration, employees, and students communicate with each other.
- c. Increasing awareness by employees, supervisors and managers, teachers and students, of the warning signs of potential workplace violence.
- d. Controlling access to, and freedom of movement within the workplace by non-employees, including recently discharged employees or persons with whom one of our employees is having a dispute.
- e. Providing counseling to employees, supervisors or managers, teachers or students who exhibit behavior that represents strain or pressure which may lead to physical or verbal abuse of co-employees.
- f. Ensuring that all reports of violent acts, threats of physical violence, verbal abuse, property damage or other signs of strain or pressure in the workplace are handled effectively by management and that the person making the report is not subject to retaliation by the person making the threat.
- g. Ensure that employee disciplinary and discharge procedures address the potential for workplace violence.

For more detailed information on Workplace Safety, please refer to the Injury and Illness Prevention Program binder.

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