Policy Name:	**Addressing Violence in the Workplace**
Policy Type:	**Human Resource**
Policy Number:	**HR-08**
Original Adoption Date:	**November 2008**
Current Approval:	**May 2025**
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Motion:	**2026:43**

Addressing Violence in the Workplace

1. Purpose:

This policy addresses the prevention of workplace violence as part of the Orillia Public Library Board's responsibility for worker health and safety under the ***Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act.***

The OPL is committed to building and preserving a safe, productive, and healthy working environment based on mutual respect. This policy is intended to:

- Create and foster a work environment that is free from workplace violence
- Establish and detail the responsibilities of all persons of the Library to maintain a workplace free of actual, attempted or threatened violence
- Establish a process for assessing risk, reporting, investigating and responding to complaints of violence in an effective and timely manner
- Raise awareness amongst all employees about the process for dealing with and reporting incidents of violence

2. Policy:

Violent behaviour in the workplace is unacceptable from anyone including staff, members of the Board, volunteers, members of the public, and others who do business with the Library. Individuals who violate this policy may be removed from Library property, and in the case of employees, are subject to disciplinary action including termination.

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3. Definitions

"Workplace violence" includes actions, conduct, threats or gestures that can be reasonably expected to cause harm, injury or illness. Violence can include but is not limited to the following acts or attempted acts:

- verbal threats or intimidation
- verbal abuse, including swearing or shouting offensively at a person
- contact of a sexual nature
- kicking, spitting, punching, scratching, biting, squeezing, pinching, battering, hitting or wounding a person in any way
- attacking or threatening to attack someone

"Intimate Partner Violence" means any physical, psychological, sexual, economic, and emotional abuse perpetrated by one person against a partner, with the goal of establishing and maintaining power and control over the victim.

"Domestic Violence" means any physical, psychological, sexual, economic, and emotional abuse perpetrated by a family member with the goal of establishing and maintaining power and control over the victim.

"Workplace" means any place where business or work-related activities are conducted. Includes but is not limited to the work premises, work assignments outside the OPL's outreach locations, work-related travel or training sessions.

4. Responsibilities

a. The Board

i. Supports the policy and reviews it annually.

ii. The Board Chair is responsible for initiating an expeditious and confidential investigation into any workplace violence complaint by an employee where the alleged perpetrator is the CEO or member of the Board. Board members will be investigated and disciplined as directed by the ***City of Orillia Policy Manual***, *ch. 27, article 14.*

iii. Reviews incidents monthly via the OPL Board Package.

b. The CEO or designate(s) will develop and maintain a workplace violence plan which will set out:

i. a process for assessing the risk of violence in the workplace

ii. measures to control risk including those from domestic and intimate partner violence

iii. procedures for reporting incidents of violence

iv. the process for dealing with and investigating violent incidents and complaints.

v. A process for communicating information and instruction regarding and incident of violence to employees.

c. Each employee, Board member, and volunteer

i. Treats others with respect in the workplace.

ii. Ensures the working environment is free from workplace violence by complying with this policy.

iii. Is knowledgeable about workplace policies and procedures relating to workplace violence.

iv. Report and document incidents in which they have experienced workplace violence without reprisal or the threat of reprisal.

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5. Procedure

Section 1 – Awareness and Training

a. The Library will provide staff with information on the risk of violence in the Library and relevant training workshops addressing these concerns. Training will also be provided based on staff feedback and/or library needs.
b. Training will occur during onboarding and on a refresher basis.
c. A training log will be kept for documentation purposes.
d. Leadership will receive training adequate training regarding reporting and responding to incidents, as well as how to support affected employees.
e. A copy of this policy will be posted in the Staff Room.
f. Staff will be required to review this policy annually.
g. Emergency response procedures will be drilled at least once a year.
h. Workplace risk will be evaluated as per HR-09 Health and Safety.

Section 2 – Domestic/Intimate Partner Violence

a. The OPL recognizes that employees experiencing domestic/intimate partner violence may be reluctant to disclose the problem to a supervisor. The OPL encourages disclosure in order to protect the safety of the employee and others in the workplace. Disclosure also enables the OPL to support the employee and provide links to appropriate services. Although the OPL respects the employee's need for confidentiality, an employee is responsible for:
    i. Disclosing any situation that threatens the safety of the workplace
    ii. Informing the supervisor/CEO if they have applied for, or obtained, a restraining order that includes the workplace as a protected area.
b. Employees who are witnesses to domestic/intimate partner violence in the workplace are required to:

i. Take action to ensure their own immediate safety in the event of a domestic/intimate partner violence incident
ii. Report any such incident immediately to a supervisor or CEO
iii. Report to their supervisor any information that indicates the safety of any employee in the workplace is at risk as a result of domestic/intimate partner violence
iv. Apart from these situations, maintain confidentiality regarding a co-worker experiencing domestic/intimate partner violence

c. Leadership will:
   i. Be aware of observable signs or behaviours that may suggest domestic/intimate partner abuse
   ii. Take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for worker protection if they become aware, or ought reasonably to be aware, that domestic/intimate partner violence that would likely expose a worker to physical injury may occur in the workplace
   iii. Provide informed and supportive responses to employees experiencing or witnessing domestic/intimate partner violence in the workplace. Make these employees aware of resources (internal and external to OPL) that are available to assist victims of domestic/intimate partner violence.
   iv. Work with employees who report being the victims of domestic/intimate partner violence that may pose a threat in the workplace in developing a workplace safety plan to protect them and others in the workplace. This plan will be individualized to the circumstances reported but may include elements such as:
      - Resource and referral information

- Call screening, new phone number, e-mail blocking, removal of employee contact information from public directories
- Additional security and/or security measures at the workplace
- Work schedule adjustment to enable domestic/intimate partner violence victim to obtain medical, counselling or legal assistance
- Workplace relocation

v. Consult confidentially with other OPL and City of Orillia staff (e.g. Human Resources, Employee Assistance Program) in developing the workplace safety plan

vi. Properly document any report of domestic/intimate partner violence

vii. Protect the confidentiality of employees who report domestic/intimate partner violence within the limits needed for safety, recognizing that information may need to be shared on a strictly need-to-know basis if an employee's safety at work is jeopardized

viii. Take all reasonable and practical measures to protect workers, acting in good faith, who report domestic/intimate partner violence in the workplace or act as witnesses, from reprisals (acts of retaliation, direct or indirect) or further violence

ix. Take appropriate corrective and/or disciplinary actions to address instances in which an employee uses workplace resources to perpetrate domestic/intimate partner violence

Section 3 - Reporting an Incident

a. Employees are encouraged to immediately report behaviour that they reasonably believe poses a potential for violence as described above to the most senior staff member available.

b. Anyone experiencing or witnessing imminent danger or occurring violence involving weapons or personal injury should call the police.
c. Physical or sexual assault or threat of physical violence will be reported to the police.
d. If reporting an incident after the fact, staff also have the option to report anonymously via the online Incident Reporting Form located on Teams General Drive.
e. Upon reporting an incident, verbally or in writing, a member from the Leadership Team will undergo debriefing with the reporting employee.
f. All reports will be investigated by the CEO or designate.
    - The report should include a brief statement of the incident, when it occurred, where it occurred, date and time it occurred, the person(s) involved and the names of any witnesses.
    - If this is a complaint against a staff member or Board member a copy of Appendix E, Orillia Public Library Workplace Violence, Workplace Harassment, and Workplace Sexual Harassment Report and Investigation Form, should be filled out by the complainant. Alternatively, should the staff member wish to remain anonymous, they may submit an online Incident Report form.
    - For complaints against members of the public, an incident report should be filled out.
    - No employee shall be subject to reprisal, retaliation, or adverse treatment for reporting workplace violence, participating in an investigation, or seeking assistance under this policy, provided the report is made in good faith.

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Section 4 – Investigating and Dealing with Incidents and Complaints

a. After receiving a report, the CEO or designate will complete an investigation as quickly as possible. This may include interviews with the employee, the alleged perpetrator, if a staff member, and any witnesses.
b. The Library recognizes and acknowledges that, under ***Bill 132***, an inspector from the Ontario Ministry of Labour has the power to order the Library Board, as employer, to have an impartial third party conduct an investigation at the Library's expense and report the outcome of their findings to the complainant.
c. The results of the investigation will be discussed with the employee and recommended preventative actions and/or resolutions presented. Any accommodations the employee may require will be discussed.
d. A separate meeting will be held with the alleged perpetrator, if a staff member.
e. All investigations will be conducted in strict confidence to the extent possible. Documents will be stored in a locked cabinet and access to these records will be restricted.
f. If the findings do not support the allegations the CEO will recommend that no further action is necessary and that the matter be closed.
g. Should the investigation conclude that there is evidence of misconduct the CEO will prescribe a resolution that may include police intervention. In cases where the perpetrator is a member of the public, a Suspension Letter or Letter of Trespass will be served.
h. Employees who are found to have made false or malicious complaints will be subject to disciplinary action.

i. The Orillia Public Library, at the direction of an employee, or at its own discretion, may prohibit members of the public, including family members, from engaging with an employee on library property in cases where the employee suspects that an act of violence, will result from an encounter with said individual(s). These actions may continue after the threat of violence is no longer imminent to accommodate psychological well-being.

j. As part of its response to workplace violence, the Library will provide post-incident support measures that may include access to the Employee Assistance Program or counselling services, structured follow-up check-ins, and return-to-work planning following traumatic events.

Related Documents:

- Appendix E, Orillia Public Library Workplace Violence, Workplace Harassment, and Workplace Sexual Harassment Report and Investigation Form
- Bill 132: An Act to amend various statutes with respect to sexual violence, sexual harassment, domestic violence and related matters
- Canadian Human Rights Commission
- City of Orillia: Code of Conduct – Members of Council, Committees and Local Boards, Chapter 27
- ***City of Orillia Policy Manual***
- ***Occupational Health and Safety Act,*** *R.S.O. 1990*
- Orillia Public Library: Incident Report
- Orillia Public Library: Hold and Secure Emergency Response
- Orillia Public Library: Letter of Suspension
- Orillia Public Library: Letter of Trespass
- Orillia Public Library: Lockdown Emergency Response

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- Orillia Public Library: Workplace Harassment and Discrimination (HR-07)
- Orillia Public Library: Workplace Violence, Harassment, and Discrimination Plan
- Orillia Public Library: Safety, Security, and Emergencies (OP-02)