

Policy and Protocol



Policy Title:	Respectful Workplace- Violence	
Applies To:	All IWK Health Employees, Physicians, Associates, Board Members & Franchise Employees	
Location Applicability:	IWK Health	
Approved:	Effective:	Next Review:
November 21, 2023	November 22, 2023	November, 2027
Sponsor:	Manager, Occupational Health, Safety and Wellness	
Approval Authority:	VP, People and Organization Development	
Number: 1071.1	Manual:	Administrative

Note: This policy aligns with IWK Health Policy # 822 – Cultivating Belonging through a Respectful Workplace- Bullying and Harassment to support IWK Health’s commitment to a healthy respectful workplace culture.

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PURPOSE

This policy supports IWK Health's responsibilities for education, and approach to, prevention and management of violence in the workplace.

For the purpose of this policy, violence may include one or more of the following: aggressive behavior, physical, sexual, verbal and threats of violence.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. IWK Health must provide an inclusive respectful workplace and a safe, secure work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity.
2. IWK Health must not tolerate any violence as per this policy. Violence is unacceptable and will not be tolerated within the IWK Health as per this policy.
3. [The IWK Health Respectful Workplace- Violence, Harassment and Bully Prevention Statement](#) must be posted in each department or unit in a location accessible to all team members.
4. All incidences of violence must be responded to promptly and appropriate steps taken to ensure the safety and security of employees, physicians, associates, patients/clients, families and visitors as per the protocols in this policy.
5. Any IWK Health Team Member that violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. Disciplinary action must reflect the seriousness of the breach and will take any relevant previous discipline into account.
 - 5.1. Appropriate steps must be taken to protect the safety and security of employees, physicians, associates, patients/clients, families and visitors from an aggressor. The steps may include issuance of a warning letter, barring the aggressor from the premises, removal from the premises, removal/suspension of privileges, complaint to regulatory body, education, supervised visits, initiation of criminal or civil proceedings, or other consequences as deemed appropriate.
 - 5.2. In such instances, Human Resources (HR) and/or Risk and Quality must prepare and review the written notice and forward copies to the manager and/or director of the unit/department, as well as, Protection Services, as required.

6. Acts of retaliation must be reported to the director or manager of the unit/department where the incident occurred. Anyone who retaliates in any way against a person who has reported violence, given evidence in an investigation, or been named as an aggressor, will be in violation of this policy and disciplined accordingly.
7. All documentation relating to incidences of violence must be factual, clear and concise and completed in a timely manner.
8. All investigation records relating to incidence of violence will be maintained by Occupational Health Safety and Wellness (OHSW) and HR Departments through IWK Health's confidential reporting system Clearview Connects System (CCS).

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

1. IWK Health recognizes the potential for violence in the workplace and is committed to providing a safe and secure environment. [Respectful Workplace – Violence, Harassment and Bully Prevention Statement](#) (included in *Appendix B* of the [Respectful Workplace Program Manual](#))
2. IWK Health has adopted **Principles of Trauma Informed Care**, which are essential to the development of equity, belonging and workplace safety. These principles include:
 - Safety
 - Trustworthiness
 - Choice
 - Collaboration
 - Empowerment (IWK Health, 2021)
3. IWK Health will not tolerate behaviors and/or actions which are contrary to its [Mission, Vision, and Values](#).

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

IWK Health Executive Leadership Team (ELT) will ensure:

1. All reasonable steps are taken to provide a safe workplace for all IWK Health team members, patients/clients, families and visitors.
2. All IWK Health employees, physicians and associates that have identified in a risk assessment as being exposed to a significant risk of violence, receive necessary education and training to mitigate risk.

3. All IWK Health employees, physicians and associates are familiar with and adhere to this policy and the [Respectful Workplace Program](#).
4. Resources are made available to support violence prevention initiatives and activities.
5. Resources are available to respond to incidents of violence and to mitigate risks of violence that are identified.

IWK Health Directors and Managers will ensure that:

1. All reasonable steps are taken to provide a safe workplace for all IWK Health team members, patients/clients, families and visitors.
2. A Violence Prevention Plan is created, implemented and reviewed as required for their units/departments as per the [Respectful Workplace Program Manual](#).
 - 2.1. A Violence Prevention Plan will be reviewed at least every five years for their units/departments.
3. All IWK Health employees, physicians and associates that have identified in a risk assessment as being exposed to a significant risk of violence receive necessary education and training to mitigate risk.
 - 3.1. All IWK Health employees, physicians and associates are familiar with and adhere to the [Respectful Workplace Program](#), the unit/department-specific workplace Violence Prevention Program/Plan and the related IWK policies.
4. Employees, physicians and associates are informed about their obligation to report violence in the workplace.
5. Employees, physicians and associates are educated and aware of processes for reporting incidents of violence in the workplace
6. Violence reported in the IWK safety system [i.e.: Safety Improvement Management System (SIMS)] or the confidential reporting system (i.e.: CCS) is investigated in accordance with this policy and [IWK Health Policy #1015.3-Reporting and Investigating Workplace Injuries/Incidents and Safety Concerns](#).

7. Incidents of violence are documented and promptly investigated to determine their causes and the actions needed to prevent reoccurrence.

7.1. A safety system report (i.e.: SIMS) is completed and the process, as outlined in [IWK Health Policy #1015.3-Reporting and Investigating Workplace Injuries/Incidents and Safety Concerns](#), is followed.

8. That counseling support is offered to an employee, physician or associate who has been exposed to or affected by violence in the workplace (example: through the Employee Family Assistance Program (EFAP)).

IWK Health Employees, Physicians and Associates will:

1. Be aware of, and adhere to, this policy.
2. Participate in violence prevention initiatives and activities as required.
3. Report incidents of violence they have experienced or have witnessed.
4. Attend or complete required training.
5. Cooperate in investigation process.
6. Participate in risk assessments.
7. Follow workplace procedures and guidelines to ensure their own personal safety and the safety of others'.
8. Maintain confidentiality.

PROTOCOL

Responding to Violence

1. IWK Health employees, physicians and associates involved in, or witnessing, violence may, based on their assessment of the situation, activate a [Code White Response](#).

Reporting Violence

1. IWK Health employees, physicians and associates report all incidents of violence to their immediate manager/supervisor.as soon as possible.

1.1. After hours, report injuries/incidents of violence to the Director On-call.

2. Complete an IWK safety system report (i.e.: SIMS) following the process as outlined in [IWK Health Policy # 1015.3 - Reporting and Investigating Workplace Injury/Incident and Safety Concerns](#).

Workplace Injury/Incident Investigation

1. In addition to the Workplace Injury/Incident Investigation, an Administrative Investigation may also be undertaken by OHSW and HR in situations where an employee, physician or associate is named as the aggressor.

Record Keeping

1. A copy of the Workplace Injury/Incident Investigation Report and supporting documentation will be maintained by OHSW and HR Departments through the IWK confidential reporting system (i.e.: CCS).
2. At the conclusion of an Administrative Investigation, documentation will be maintained in a confidential file by HR.
3. Disciplinary actions will be maintained by HR in the employee file as per the relevant collective agreement or terms and conditions of employment.

Monitoring

1. OHSW will prepare a Quarterly Report of incidents of violence at IWK Health for managers and directors of units/departments where incidents of violence were reported.
2. The Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC) will review the quarterly reported incidents of violence and make formal recommendations to improve safety and reduce the incidents of violence. Formal recommendations are submitted to ELT.
3. THE IWK Health Behavioral Response Committee meets monthly to review all reports of aggression or violence involving IWK Team Members and/or patients.

REFERENCES

Legislative Acts/References

Criminal Code of Canada, Statutes of Canada. (1985, c. C-46). Retrieved from the Justice Laws website: <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/PDF/C-46.pdf>

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, Statutes of Nova Scotia. (1993, c. 5). Retrieved from the Nova Scotia Legislature website: <http://nslegislature.ca/legc/statutes/freedom%20of%20information%20and%20protection%20of%20privacy.pdf>

Human Rights Act, Revised Statutes of Nova Scotia. (1989, c. 214). Retrieved from the Nova Scotia Legislature website: <http://nslegislature.ca/legc/statutes/human%20rights.pdf>

Occupational Health and Safety Act, Statutes of Nova Scotia. (1996, c. 7). Retrieved from the Nova Scotia Legislature website: <http://nslegislature.ca/legc/statutes/occupational%20health%20and%20safety.pdf>

Protecting Access to Health Services Act, Statutes of Nova Scotia. (2021, c.24). Retrieved from the Nova Scotia Legislature website: [https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/legc/statutes/protecting%20access%20to%](https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/legc/statutes/protecting%20access%20to%20health%20services.pdf)

Violence in the Workplace Regulations: made under Section 82 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act SNS (1996, c. 7 O.I.C. 2007-2008 (April 4, 2007, effective April 1, 2008). Retrieved from the Nova Scotia Office of the Registrar of Regulations Website: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/just/regulations/reg/ohsviolence.htm>

Other

Accreditation Canada(2020). *Accreditation Canada Qmentum Program Standard Leadership*. Retrieved from Accreditation Canada Website: [Leadership - HSO Health Standards Organization](#)

AWARE-Nova Scotia (2011). *Staying Safe While Providing Community-based Care and Support in Nova Scotia: A Workplace Manual*

British Columbia Provincial Health Services Authority. (2022). *Preventing Violence in the Workplace Policy*

British Columbia Provincial Health Services Authority. (2022). *Workplace Health and Safety Policy*

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health & Safety (2007). *Violence in the Workplace Prevention Guide*

Dalhousie University. (2021). *Sexualized Violence Policy*

Nova Scotia Health (2023). *Violence in the Workplace Policy*

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Policies

[IWK Health Policy # 116.0 - Discipline](#)

[IWK Health Policy # 302.1 – Reporting, Managing and Conducting Quality Review of Patient Safety Events Reporting](#)

[IWK Health Policy # 822.0 –Cultivating Belonging through a Respectful Workplace – Bullying and Harassment](#)

[IWK Health Policy # 1003.1 - Right to Refuse Unsafe Work](#)

[IWK Health Policy # 1010.2 - Workplace Hazard Identification and Workplace Safety Inspections](#)

[IWK Health Policy # 1015.3 - Reporting and Investigating Workplace Injuries/Incidents and Safety Concerns](#)

[IWK Health Policy # 1070.0 - First Aid](#)

Brochures

Other

[Respectful Workplace Manual \(Risk Assessment Tool\)](#) Found in Appendix C in the IWK Health Respectful Workplace Program Manual

[IWK Health Respectful Workplace Program Manual \(Workplace Violence, Harassment & Bullying Prevention\)](#)

[IWK Health Emergency Response Manual: Code White Response \(Violent Person\) Procedures](#)

Appendices

Appendix A – Definitions

APPENDIX A: DEFINITIONS

Administrative Investigation: a structured process followed in order to determine all relevant factors and establish a documented basis upon which to establish the validity of an alleged misconduct. It is a distinct exercise, entirely separate from the Workplace Injury/Incident Investigation.

Safety Improvement Management System (SIMS): An online reporting system used by IWK Health to report and records adverse events (workplace injuries/incidents and good catches (near misses, safety concerns) as a means to assess and improve processes and systems within IWK Health and provide a safe environment.

Aggressor: The person who committed the act of violence.

Associate: An individual or a company who provides services to, or on behalf of, IWK Health including, but not limited to, researchers, volunteers, learners, students, contractors, etc.

Employee: Is a person employed by IWK Health.

Family: As defined by the Patient/Client.

Patient/Client: Any individual receiving care at IWK Health, the IWK Health off-site locations or programs.

Physician: Refers to any medical, dental, surgical or scientific staff that provides services to, or on behalf of, IWK Health.

Significant Risk of Violence: As identified through a risk assessment rating (impact categories). High: A1, A2, B1 or Medium: A3, B2, C1 as per Risk Assessment Tool in Appendix C of the [Respectful Workplace Program Manual](#).

Team Member: For the purpose of this policy team member refers to all IWK Health Staff, Associates, Board Members and Franchise Employees.

Violence: Means any of the following:

Threats, including a threatening statement or threatening behavior that gives an individual reasonable cause to believe that they are at risk of physical injury, and /or conduct or

attempted conduct of a person that endangers the physical health or physical safety of an individual.

Violence includes but is not limited to, threats of physical conduct or physical conduct that cause or will likely cause psychological or physical injury or harm, that can be immediate or delayed.

Violence does not include appropriate use of force or restraint required for the protection of personal safety of others or of IWK Health property.

Violence Prevention Plan: Plan that identifies and documents reasonable control measures to minimize or eliminate a Significant Risk of Violence.

Visitor: Any individual who is not an employee, physician or associate, patient/client or family who is on IWK Health property or is in contact with an employee, physician, associate, patient/client while they are on IWK Health property.

Workplace: Any place where an employee, physician or associate is or is likely to be engaged in IWK Health business which includes, but is not limited to, the physical work site, patient's/client's home, washrooms, cafeterias, training sessions, business travel, conferences, etc.

Workplace Injury/Incident Investigation: An inquiry into or examination of the circumstances surrounding a reported workplace injury/incident and/or safety concerns to prevent the occurrence or re-occurrence of work-related injury or illness, and to protect others from harm.

Version History

(To Be Completed by the Policy Office)

Major Revisions (e.g. Standard 4 year review)	Minor Revisions (e.g. spelling correction, wording changes, etc.)
February 15, 2017	