



AFTERMATH OF A VIOLENT INCIDENT – VICTIM/WITNESS SUPPORT

Responsibility:	<i>Superintendent, Student Achievement & Well-Being</i>
Legal References:	<i>Criminal Code of Canada</i>
Related References:	<i>Administrative Procedure 1400 – Families Seeking Shelter from Abuse; Administrative Procedure 1490 – Child Abuse; Administrative Procedure 3720 – Racial, Religious and Ethnocultural Harassment; Administrative Procedure 3730 – Sexual Harassment Guidelines; Family and Children's Services Protocol; School Board Police Protocol; Guidelines to Assist School Personnel in Dealing with Death, Loss and Grief</i>
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1. Preamble

The following procedures provide guidelines and expectations regarding the required support needing to be offered to the victim/witnesses following an assault of a student or staff member, or an incident involving harassment, slurs, threats and intimidation.

2. Waterloo Region District School Board Policy on Victim Support

The Waterloo Region District School Board will support victims of violence, their families and school communities. Such assistance may involve school staff such as school administrators, guidance counsellors, social workers, and psychologists and/or referrals to appropriate community services.

3. Procedures to Respond to Assault of a Student

Definition

- 3.1 Under **The Criminal Code of Canada**, an assault occurs not just when someone intentionally applies force to another person without that person's consent, but also when a person attempts or threatens to apply force.
- 3.2 If a student or students are assaulted by another student, the following actions will take place:
- 3.2.1 The Teacher or other school staff will:
- remain with the student (s) and try to calm and support;
 - obtain first aid/medical treatment if required;
 - identify witnesses, if any;
 - report details to the Principal or immediate supervisor;
 - document details of the incident.
- 3.2.2 The Principal or Principal's designate will:
- confirm the safety and well-being of the victim(s);
 - call emergency services if ambulance required;
 - gather pertinent medical data (health card number, doctor's name, etc.) if student(s) must be taken to the hospital(office files);
 - notify parents/guardian as soon as possible;

- notify the appropriate Superintendent, Student Achievement & Well-Being, in the case of serious injury;
- notify Risk Management personnel in case of serious injury;
- confirm and document facts of the assault with the assistance of staff and student witnesses, if any;
- interview victim(s) about the incident as soon as is appropriate to the condition of the victim(s);
- provide the victim's(s') parents/guardians with the details of the incident and the consequences of the incident regarding the student(s) who committed the assault including whether police have been contacted;
- seek out appropriate support for the victim(s) and witness(es) via Traumatic Events Lead.

4. Procedures to Respond to Assault of a Staff Member

4.1 If a teacher or other staff member is assaulted by a student or adult, the following actions will take place:

4.1.1 The teacher/staff member (or colleague on behalf of the victim) will:

- obtain medical assistance;
- identify witnesses, if any;
- report details to the Principal or immediate supervisor;
- document details of the incident;
- complete the necessary Workers' Safety and Insurance Board form;
- contact Federation or Association;
- consult with Principal about the consequences of the incident for the offender and the possible involvement of the police.

4.1.2 The principal will:

- remove the student or adult from the classroom;
- ensure the health and safety of the victim;
- notify the appropriate Superintendent, Student Achievement & Well-Being, if injuries are serious;
- confirm and document the facts;
- inform the offending student's parents/guardians of the incident and the action being taken by the school as a consequence;
- interview the victim as soon as appropriate and review the consequences assigned to the offending student by the school. Consequences will include: notification of the police, suspension (possible expulsion), required counselling, possible re-assignment of student to another class or school;
- ensure ongoing support of the teacher which is visible and meaningful, including making the staff member aware, through the appropriate supervisory officer, of the availability and possibility of legal counsel for legal action;
- endeavour to provide appropriate support for the victim.

4.2 If the assault is committed by a parent or non-student while the teacher/staff member is carrying out his/her responsibility, the teacher will receive the full support of the Board's administration and legal counsel in the laying of charges against the assailant.

5. Support for Victims/Witnesses of an Incident Involving Harassment, Slurs, Threats, Intimidation

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 During the investigation of an incident that involves harassment, slurs of any type, threats of violence or retribution, and/or any form of intimidation, it is important that the Principal or Vice-Principal assess the emotional state of the victim(s) and/or witness(es) and after reviewing the details of the incident, contact the student's(s') parents and then appropriate school or resource personnel. The principal, guidance counselor or resource person will attempt first to assure the victim or witness that he or she is safe. If necessary, he or she will explain the consequences for the offending student.

5.1.2 The staff person will also attempt to establish a safe environment for the student and, with follow-up activities and contact, will attempt to get to the root causes of the incident and to

help the victim/witness develop effective strategies to deal safely and successfully with any further such occurrences. The principal shall endeavour to contact appropriately trained personnel to assist the student(s).

- 5.1.3 In order to assist the victim/witness and to determine the root causes of the incident, the principal, vice-principal, guidance counselor or resource person will wish to speak to the offending student(s). Care must be taken by staff to assure that none of their actions will cause a recurrence of the incident between the offender and the victim/witness.
- 5.1.4 Several strategies may be used to ensure that the victim again feels comfortable in the school; however, school personnel must be mindful of the rights of the offending student who, after completing the required consequences, returns to his/her original status in the school. Only the most serious situations would require the transfer of either the offending student(s) or the victim(s)/witness(es).
- 5.1.5 It is important that school personnel are proactive in contacting the parents of victim(s)/witness(es) and in giving them the information about the incident and about the support that the student(s) will receive from the school. Where appropriate, school personnel will recommend to the parents community resources that may assist in the recovery of the victim(s)/witness(es) and may offer to make the initial contact if the family so wish.
- 5.1.6 Principals should refer to available procedures and protocols. For example:
 - AP3720 Racial, Religious and Ethnocultural Harassment
 - AP3730 Sexual Harassment Guidelines;
 - AP1400 Families Seeking Shelter from Abuse;
 - AP1490 Child Abuse;
 - Family and Children's Services Protocol;
 - School Board Police Protocol.

5.2 School-wide Trauma

- 5.2.1 When an incident occurs that has a serious effect on a large number of students, such as a fight, an intruder in the school or an event that did not occur on school property but affects a number of students (i.e., an accident, a death of a student, a parent, etc.), school personnel need to be very sensitive to the emotional state of the student body or groups of students. Time needs to be taken in small groups organized with the classroom teachers or guidance counsellors to allow the students to talk. The principal should refer immediately to the "Guidelines to Assist School Personnel in Dealing with Death, Loss and Grief" and call the appropriate Trauma Team leader to give direct and immediate assistance to school personnel. A copy is available on the WRDSB Website, Staff Login/Procedures.