



# Policy and Program regarding violence in the workplace

## Policy 1.5

<b>Section:</b>	Administration		
<b>Approved By:</b>	Council	<b>Public:</b>	Yes
<b>Approved Date:</b>	March 27, 2015	<b>Review Schedule:</b>	Annually
<b>Effective Date:</b>	March 27, 2015	<b>Last Reviewed:</b>	September 2021
<b>Amended Date(s):</b>		<b>Next Review Date:</b>	September 2022

### Policy and Program regarding violence in the workplace

#### Statement of philosophy

The College is committed to the prevention of violence in the workplace, and to maintaining a work environment in which all people are treated with respect and dignity. The College will not tolerate any acts of violence by its employees, Councillors, Non-Council Committee Members or non-employees who interact with the College which may include but are not limited to members of the public or a member of the College ("non-employees"). As employees, Councillors and Non-Council Committee Members, we share a common responsibility for keeping our environment safe and free of violence. The College will take reasonable steps to protect employees and to prevent workplace violence.

A copy of this Policy and Program is included in the Employee Handbook, a copy of which is provided to all employees and is available online through the Human Resources Portal and posted in the staff area. Procedures to address workplace violence such as measures to protect College employees from workplace violence, ways to summon immediate assistance and reporting procedures are also contained in the Employee Handbook.

#### Definitions and interpretation

For the purposes of this Policy and Program, "workplace violence" means the threat, attempt or exercising of physical force against an employee by an employee of the College, a Councillor, a Non-Council Committee Member or a non-employee, which may include but is not limited to members of the public or a member of the College, which occurs in the working environment or anywhere else as a result of employment responsibilities or employment relationships.

For the purposes of this Policy and Program “violence” means statements or conduct against a worker in the workplace that includes:

- a. the exercise of physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker, or
- b. an attempt to exercise physical force against a worker in the workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker, or
- c. a statement or behaviour that is reasonable for a worker to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against the worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker.

For the purposes of this Policy and Program, the term “worker” includes any person who performs work or supplies services to College for monetary compensation.

A person who has a personal relationship with a worker (such as a spouse or former spouse, a current or former intimate partner or a family member) may physically harm, or attempt or threaten to harm, that worker at work. In these situations, domestic violence is considered workplace violence.

Wherever the Staff Relations Committee is referred to in this policy, it shall mean the Executive Committee of the College in its capacity as the Staff Relations Committee.

### **People covered under the Policy and Program**

All employees, Councillors, Non-Council Committee Members and non-employees are required to act in a manner consistent with this Policy and Program. The violence may be caused by an employee who is in a position of authority, a fellow co-worker, a Councillor, a Non-Council Committee Member or a non-employee. Behaviour may constitute workplace violence even if it does not occur on the College’s premises if it has a negative impact on employment relationships.

Workplace violence may occur:

- at the office
- outside the office
- at office related social functions
- in the course of work assignments outside the office
- at work related conferences or training sessions
- during work related travel

- over the telephone

## **1. Roles and responsibilities**

### **Employees**

No employee of the College shall subject any person or persons to workplace violence.

Every employee of the College is expected to review and to comply with this Policy and Program. Compliance includes participation in workplace violence educational and training programs.

The College encourages reporting of all incidents of workplace violence regardless of who the alleged offender may be.

### **The College**

The Registrar & CEO or designated director will ensure that this Policy and Program is implemented and maintained and that all employees have appropriate information and instruction on this Policy and Program.

The Registrar & CEO or designated director will, in consultation with the Staff Relations Committee, conduct regular risk assessments for workplace violence. If necessary, the College will develop, establish and implement new workplace violence prevention measures and procedures.

The Registrar & CEO or designated director will take every reasonable precaution to protect an employee from physical injury if they become aware or believes that domestic violence may occur in the workplace.

The Registrar & CEO or designated director will take all steps that are necessary to respond to workplace violence, including summoning police and/or emergency medical assistance if warranted.

The Registrar & CEO or designated director will also provide employees with support and assistance in dealing with and remedying workplace violence.

The Registrar & CEO or designated director will maintain permanent records of reports and investigations of workplace violence.

### **Information about a person with a history of violent behaviour**

Under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, the employer must provide workers with information, including personal information, related to a risk of workplace violence from a person with a history of violent behaviour. This information will be provided to staff of the College if the worker can be expected to encounter that person in the course of their work and the risk of workplace violence is likely to expose the worker to physical injury. The Registrar & CEO or

designated director will only disclose as much information as is reasonably necessary to protect the worker from physical injury. Privacy interests will be respected as much as possible.

### **Domestic violence**

College staff should report their concerns if they believe domestic violence will occur in the workplace. The Registrar & CEO or designated director will investigate and deal with these concerns on a case-by-case basis. The measures or procedures may include creating an individual workplace safety plan in consultation with the staff member, determining how existing measures and procedures can support the employee and developing reasonable precautions for the worker in the circumstances. The Registrar & CEO or designated director will assess whether any further precaution is reasonably required in the circumstances with respect to the protection of the targeted worker and other workers.

### **Reporting and investigating workplace violence**

If an employee feels that workplace violence or the threat of workplace violence has occurred, they should report the incident. Verbal or written complaints can be made to the Registrar & CEO or designated director or, in the event the Registrar & CEO is allegedly responsible for the workplace violence, to the Staff Liaison Representative, who is appointed each year by the Staff Relations Committee to serve as a contact for staff members.

All complaints and incidents of workplace violence will be investigated and dealt with in a timely and fair manner. Privacy and confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigation to the extent reasonably possible in the circumstances. The exact nature of the College's investigation will depend on the particulars of the allegation brought to its attention. During the course of an investigation, the College may seek the assistance of legal counsel and/or the police.

## **2. Measures and procedures to control risks identified in workplace violence risk assessment**

The College assessed the risk of workplace violence, having regard to:

- circumstances specific to its workplace, including existing security measures, its physical layout, and the fact that there are no reported incidents of workplace violence on file, and
- circumstances that are common to similar workplaces.

This risk assessment (which took into account anonymous questionnaires completed by various College employees) indicates that there is a low risk of violence in the workplace. In light of this risk assessment, the following safety measures and procedures should be followed in the event that workplace violence occurs or is likely to occur:

- a. All visitors are required to sign in at reception, and

- b. If an employee suspects that an unidentified person is an intruder, the Registrar & CEO or a designated director should be notified immediately.

### **3. Sanctions**

The purpose of this Policy and Program is preventative and remedial. Although this Policy and Program is not punitive in nature, violations will result in appropriate remedial, disciplinary (up to and including termination of employment) and/or legal action. In this context, appropriate action will be determined by the Registrar & CEO, with two exceptions. Firstly, if the person responsible for the workplace violence is a Councillor or a Non-Council Committee Member, the Staff Relations Committee shall determine the appropriate action in consultation with the Registrar & CEO. Secondly, if the person responsible for the workplace violence is the Registrar & CEO, the Staff Relations Committee shall determine the appropriate action.

The Registrar & CEO, or if applicable, the Staff Relations Committee, shall communicate the decision, including any sanction(s), in writing to the complainant (if applicable) and to the person with respect to whom an allegation regarding responsibility for workplace violence or threat of workplace violence has been made. This will be done by delivery, if practicable, or by registered mail, if delivery is not practicable. For the purposes of any appeal referred to in the Policy and Program, the decision will be deemed to have been received three days after the decision has been delivered, or seven days after it has been sent by registered mail.

### **4. Appeals**

Only a decision of the Staff Relations Committee is subject to appeal. The complainant (if applicable) or the person with respect to whom a determination regarding responsibility for workplace violence or threat of workplace violence has been made, may appeal the Staff Relations Committee's decision regarding responsibility for workplace violence or a threat of workplace violence, or its decision regarding the appropriate sanction(s), to Council in accordance with procedures established from time to time by Council.

### **5. Protection against Retaliation**

Reprisals, retaliation or threats of reprisals against anyone pursuing their rights under this Policy and Program, for having participated or cooperated in an investigation, or for having associated with someone involved in these procedures, are themselves violations of this Policy and Program and will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

### **6. Policy and Program review**

This Policy and Program will be reviewed as often as necessary, but at least annually to foster the College's commitment to protecting its employees from workplace violence.