

PREVENTION OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE POLICY

Approving Authority: President & Chief Executive Officer

Administrative Responsibility: Director, Policy Research & Advocacy

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Related Policies, Procedures, and Documents:

- Executive Limitation #1 – Global Executive Constraint
 - Executive Limitation #2b – Treatment of Staff
 - Conflict of Interest Policy
 - Employee Standards and Performance Policy
 - Health and Safety Policy
 - Prevention of Workplace Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct Policy
 - Safe Disclosure Policy
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1. Purpose

- 1.1. This policy outlines the Students' Union's commitment to ensure a safe, healthy environment and protect employees from workplace violence.

2. Definitions

- 2.1. **Domestic Violence:** Domestic Violence is considered Workplace Violence when a person has a personal relationship with an employee that results in physically harm, or an attempt or a threat to physically harm that employee at work.
 - 2.1.1. Personal relationships may include:
 - 2.1.1.1. Current or former spouse.
 - 2.1.1.2. Current or former intimate partner.
 - 2.1.1.3. Family member.
- 2.2. **Employee:** A paid worker of the Students' Union.
- 2.3. **Intimate Partner Violence:** Occurs between two people involved in a intimate relationship.
 - 2.3.1. Intimate Partner Violence is non-gendered, is inclusive of all forms of relationships, and acknowledges the interchangeable roles of aggressor and victim.
- 2.4. **Supervisor:** The individual to whom an employee directly reports, or their designate.
- 2.5. **Workplace:** Any site at which the employee works, including any property or building utilized by

the Students' Union and any other place an employee is located while performing work for the Students' Union or representing the organization.

2.5.1. Workplace includes operating Students' Union equipment or a personal vehicle while the employee is on duty.

2.6. **Workplace Violence:** The Occupational Health and Safety Act defines workplace violence as the exercise of physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker.

2.6.1. Workplace Violence includes:

2.6.1.1. An attempt to exercise physical force against a worker in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker.

2.6.1.2. A statement or behaviour that a worker could reasonably interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against the worker, in a workplace, that could cause injury to the worker.

2.6.2. Examples of Workplace Violence include, but are not limited to:

2.6.2.1. Verbally threatening to attack a worker.

2.6.2.2. Leaving threatening notes at or sending threatening e-mails or messages to a workplace.

2.6.2.3. Shaking a fist in a worker's face.

2.6.2.4. Wielding a weapon at work.

2.6.2.5. Hitting or trying to hit a worker.

2.6.2.6. Throwing an object at a worker.

2.6.2.7. Sexual violence against a worker.

2.6.2.8. Kicking an object the worker is standing on such as a ladder.

2.6.2.9. Trying to run down a worker using a vehicle or equipment such as a forklift.

3. Jurisdiction/Scope

3.1. This policy applies to all Students' Union employees.

4. Policy

4.1. It is the responsibility of all Students' Union employees to create and maintain a safe and supportive environment that prevents physical or emotional harm to others.

4.2. No employee may engage in violent conduct or make threats of violence, implied or direct, in the workplace or while representing the Students' Union.

4.3. An employee has the right to refuse work if there is a reasonable belief that they may be endangered by workplace violence.

4.4. Any Students' Union employee who becomes aware that violence or the threat of violence has taken place or has reason to believe that violence may take place towards another employee must report the incident immediately to their supervisor, as outlined in the **Safe Disclosure Policy**, and in applicable situations contact Wilfrid Laurier University Special Constable Services or the local police service.

4.5. The Students' Union will take appropriate steps to fairly investigate all reports of violence or threatening behaviour as outlined in the **Workplace Violence Prevention Program** outlined

below, and in accordance with the **Employee Standards and Performance Policy**.

- 4.6. All employees involved in a workplace violence investigation will be treated fairly and impartially.
- 4.7. Employees who are found to have engaged in threats, intimidation, or violence will be subject to the conduct procedures outlined in the **Employee Standards and Performance Policy**.
- 4.8. Employees will not be penalized for reporting an incident or participating in a workplace violence investigation.
- 4.9. This policy will be reviewed by the Joint Health & Safety Committee on an annual basis.

5. Workplace Violence Prevention Program

- 5.1. The Students' Union, through the Joint Health and Safety Committee, will maintain the Workplace Violence Prevention Program.

Workplace Violence Risk Assessment

- 5.2. The Joint Health and Safety Committee will proactively assess the risk of potential violence that may arise from the nature of the workplace, the type of work, or the conditions of work and subsequently develop measures and procedures to control the risk identified.
- 5.3. Workplace violence assessments include at minimum the following risk factors:
 - 5.3.1. Dealing with sensitive or controversial personal matters.
 - 5.3.2. Making decisions that impact employment status.
 - 5.3.3. Handling, securing, or protecting cash or other tangible values.
 - 5.3.4. Providing services directly to undergraduate students.
 - 5.3.5. Facilitating community-based events.
 - 5.3.6. Working alone.
- 5.4. Workplace violence assessments will consider:
 - 5.4.1. Employee perceptions of risk.
 - 5.4.2. Employee understandings of personal safety.
 - 5.4.3. Any past occurrences of workplace violence.
 - 5.4.4. The layout and design of the workplace.
 - 5.4.5. The Geographic location of the workplace.
 - 5.4.6. Conditions of work, including activities or circumstances associated with a higher risk of violence.

Controlling Risks Identified in the Risk Assessment

- 5.5. Supervisors, in consultation with the employee, will determine the application of appropriate risk controls or adopt additional control measures to reduce or eliminate the present risk.
- 5.6. Risk controls could include the following:
 - 5.6.1. Standard operating procedures.
 - 5.6.2. Work along procedures.
 - 5.6.3. Physical barriers.

- 5.6.4. Panic buttons.
 - 5.6.5. Training.
 - 5.6.6. Clear sightlines for windows and doors.
 - 5.6.7. Security cameras.
 - 5.6.8. Security patrols provided by the Wilfrid Laurier University Special Constable Services.
- 5.7. The Students' Union does not have the ability to address the physical environment of a personal dwelling or residence if an employee is working remotely.
- 5.7.1. If there is a reported threat of violence related to an employee's remote working environment, the Students' Union will confirm the existence of adequate safety planning procedures and ensure the employee is connected to community safety resources.
 - 5.7.2. Any threats of domestic violence should be reported to the local police service.

Reporting Workplace Violence

- 5.8. Employees must contact Wilfrid Laurier University Special Constable Service or the local police force when there is a threat of violence, violence in progress, or violence that is imminent.
- 5.8.1. An employee who is reporting violence or a threat of violence must also immediately notify their supervisor.
 - 5.8.1.1. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to report the incident to Human Resources.
- 5.9. Supervisors are required to complete an incident report that addresses the following:
- 5.9.1. Was there an exercise of physical force that cause, or could have caused, physical injury to an employee?
 - 5.9.2. Was a statement made, or behaviour observed, that could be reasonably interpreted as a threat to injure an employee?
- 5.10. In certain circumstances as directed by the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development will be notified.

Investigating Workplace Violence and Safety Planning

- 5.11. After an incident report or Safe Disclosure has been made, the Students' Union will confidentially investigate the incident according to the guidelines outlined in the **Employee Standards and Performance Policy**.
- 5.12. When an investigation is ongoing, the employee who has allegedly experienced workplace violence, the employee allegedly responsible for the violent act or threat of violence (if applicable), and any witnesses will be instructed not to discuss the complaint, incident, or the investigation with other employees or witnesses unless necessary to obtain advice about their rights.
- 5.13. If an incident of workplace violence involves another employee, both the employee who allegedly experienced workplace violence, and the employee allegedly responsible for the violent act or threat of violence will be informed in writing of the results of the investigation and any corrective action in accordance with the conduct procedures within the **Employee Standards and Performance Policy** that has been taken or that will be taken.
- 5.14. The Students' Union retains the discretion to hire a qualified outside investigator to conduct a workplace violence investigation.
- 5.15. Following an investigation, the supervisor, the employee, a Human Resources representative,

and if required the Executive Director, will develop a Safety Plan.

- 5.16. The Supervisor and a Human Resources representative will follow-up with the employee to ensure the Safety Plan adequately addresses the identified risk, and if required incorporate an Accommodations Plan as outlined in the **Accommodations Policy**.
- 5.17. An employee may refuse to work if they have reason to believe that workplace violence is likely to endanger their safety.

Domestic Violence

- 5.18. The Students' Union will take every reasonable precaution in the circumstances to protect an employee who may be at risk of domestic violence, as soon as the organization becomes aware or ought reasonably to be aware.
- 5.19. The Students' Union recognizes that an employee experiencing domestic abuse may be reluctant to disclose the problem to their supervisor.
- 5.20. The Students' Union encourages disclosure in order to ensure the employee's safety, the safety of the workplace, and to connect the employee with the appropriate community resources.

Reprisals

- 5.21. As per the **Safe Disclosure Policy**, the Students' Union shall not impose any type of negative consequence on an employee who is acting in good faith to report workplace violence, domestic violence, or who elects to exercise their right to refuse unsafe work.

Training

- 5.22. The Students' Union will provide employees with information and instruction about the **Prevention of Workplace Violence Policy** and program.
- 5.23. Specific job training will be provided to employees who will be performing duties involving the risk of workplace violence.

Record Keeping

- 5.24. The Students' Union will keep records of all complaints or incidents of workplace violence, including:
 - 5.24.1. A copy of the complaint or details about the incident.
 - 5.24.2. A record of the investigation including notes.
 - 5.24.3. Copy of witness statements, if taken.
 - 5.24.4. A copy of the investigation report.
 - 5.24.5. A copy of the result of the investigation that were provided to the employee who reported the incident.
 - 5.24.6. A copy of any corrective action taken.
- 5.25. Records will be kept for at least one (1) year from the conclusion of the investigation.