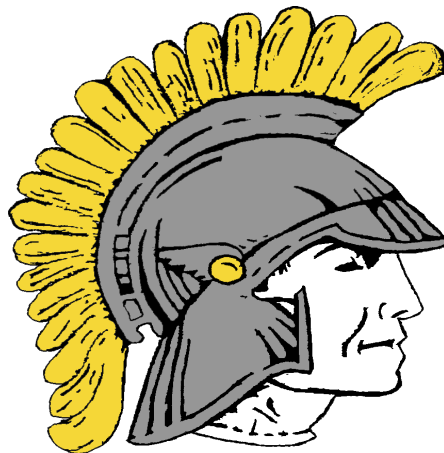


# Workplace Violence Prevention Program

South Jefferson Central School District  
2023-2024



<b>Section 1 - Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
What is Workplace Violence?	2
Overview of the New York State Workplace Violence Prevention Act	2
Policy Statement	2
Purpose	3
Statement of Program	3
Scope of Program	3
Application of Program	3
Access to this written program	3
<b>Section 2 - Response Actions</b>	<b>5</b>
During an incident	5
Post Incident	5
Dealing with Conflict	5
Do's and Don'ts for Dealing with Potentially Violent Individuals	6
<b>Section 3 - Training and Education</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Section 4 - Reporting and Recordkeeping</b>	<b>9</b>
Reporting an Incident	9
Recordkeeping	10
<b>Section 5 - Workplace Risk Evaluation</b>	<b>11</b>
Introduction	11
Risk Evaluation and Methods to Prevent Incidents	11
Program Review Plan	11
<b>Appendix A - South Jefferson Workplace Violence Prevention Plan</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Appendix B - Workplace Violence Incident Reporting Form</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Appendix C - District Site Survey</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Appendix D - Record Exam and Risk Evaluation</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Appendix E- NYS Acts</b>	<b>17</b>

# **Section 1 - Introduction**

## **What is Workplace Violence?**

Workplace violence is any act or threat of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or other threatening disruptive behavior that occurs at the work site. It ranges from threats and verbal abuse to physical assaults and even homicide. Examples of workplace violence include, but are not limited to:

- An attempt or threat, whether verbal or physical, to inflict physical injury upon an employee;
- Any intentional display of force which would give an employee reason to fear or expect bodily harm;
- Intentional and wrongful physical contact with a person without his or her consent that entails some injury; or
- Stalking an employee with the intent in causing fear or physical harm to the physical safety and health of such employee when such stalking has arisen through and in the course of employment.

## **Overview of the New York State Workplace Violence Prevention Act**

In 2006, New York State enacted legislation requiring employers to develop and implement programs to prevent and minimize workplace violence and help ensure the safety of public employees. On September 6th, 2023, the Governor signed legislation to extend this requirement to public schools, which was previously covered under the education law school safety plans.

Among other requirements, Section 27-b requires every public sector employer to:

1. Conduct a risk assessment of its worksites to identify and address any existing risk factors that may increase the possibility of workplace violence;
2. Provide training for all employees, which informs them of the risk factors that may be present in their workplace(s), measures they can take to protect themselves from these risks, and the steps the employer has implemented to protect employees, such as appropriate work practices, emergency procedures, and use of security alarms and other devices; and
3. For employers with 20 or more full-time employees, develop and implement a written workplace violence prevention program that lists the risk factors and the methods the employer is using to prevent violence and minimize or eliminate identified hazards.

## **Policy Statement**

The South Jefferson Central School District Workplace Violence Policy Statement will be posted in the district office, each school's main office and on our website. This policy statement can also be found in Appendix A.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this program is to address the issue of potential workplace violence, prevent workplace violence from occurring to the fullest extent possible, and set forth procedures to be followed when such violence has occurred.

## **Statement of Program**

Violence, threats of violence, harassment, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior in the workplace will not be tolerated by South Jefferson Central School District, hereinafter referred to as "District". Examples of workplace violence can include oral or written statements, gestures, or expressions that communicate a direct or indirect threat of physical violence. Such behavior will be taken seriously and will be dealt with appropriately.

## **Scope of Program**

All District employees are required to comply with this program while on District property or at off-campus events qualifying as an extension of school (i.e. athletic event). In addition, visitors of District owned property and facilities are required to conduct themselves in a non-violent manner in conformity with existing law, employees who observe or experience visitors of District property engaging in violent behavior should follow the procedures in our policy for reporting such behavior.

## **Application of Program**

Violence and other physical disruptive behavior by or against an employee of the District are unacceptable. Individuals who commit such acts may be removed from the premises and may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, including, where legally appropriate, termination of employment and/or criminal penalties. Behavioral expectations for all students, employees and visitors to the District are outlined in the District's Code of Conduct.

### **Access to this written program**

This program will be available to all employees in the District Office, each school's main office and on our website:

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## **Section 2 - Response Actions**

### **During an incident**

If a threatening situation arises:

- Try to remain calm.
- Remove yourself from the threat as quickly as possible.
- Immediately call or alert others to call appropriate help (e.g. police, supervisor, ambulance) to obtain immediate on-site assistance.
- In emergency situations, dial 911.
- Notify coworkers as soon as possible to enable them to also reach safety if danger is imminent and applicable to them

### **Post Incident**

Steps will be taken to review risks and determine whether additional security measures are needed to mitigate a threat or violent incident. An investigation will take place to determine what actions are appropriate to prevent a similar occurrence. The District will respect privacy and confidentiality rights of employees during investigations to the greatest extent possible.

If warranted, increased worksite protection, such as additional police or security patrols, will be provided when threats of violence have been made.

Anyone who might be affected if the threat-maker carries out their threat may be notified.

Counseling may be provided to victims.

### **Dealing with Conflict**

There is no sure way to tell whether someone will become violent; however, there are often warning signs before violence occurs. These warning signs do not mean that the individual will actually become violent but, in combination, they should be a cause for concern. Warning signs of potentially violent individuals:

- Written, oral, or implied threats or intimidation
- Fascination with weaponry or acts of violence
- Theft or sabotage of projects or equipment
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Expressions of hopelessness or heightened anxiety

- Intention to hurt themselves or others
- Lack of concern for the safety of others
- Externalization of blame
- Irrational beliefs and ideas
- Romantic obsession
- Displays of excessive or unwanted anger
- Feelings of victimization
- Inability to take criticism
- New or increased sources of stress at home or work
- Productivity and/or attendance problems

## **Do's and Don'ts for Dealing with Potentially Violent Individuals**

### Do's

1. Do project calmness. Move and speak slowly, quietly, and confidently.
2. Do listen attentively and encourage the person to talk.
3. Do let the speaker know that you are interested in what he or she is saying.
4. Do maintain a relaxed yet attentive posture.
5. Do acknowledge the person's feelings and indicate that you can see they are upset.
6. Do ask for small, specific favors such as asking the person to move to a quieter area.
7. Do establish ground rules. State the consequences of violent or threatening behavior.
8. Do employ delaying tactics that give the person time to calm down. For example, offer a cup of water.
9. Do be assuring and point out choices.
10. Do help the person break down big problems into smaller, more manageable problems.
11. Do accept criticism. When a complaint might be true, use statements such as, "You're probably right" or "It was my fault." If the criticism seems unwarranted, ask clarifying questions.
12. Do arrange yourself so that your exit is not blocked.
13. Do make sure there are three to six feet between you and the other person.

### Don'ts

1. Don't make sudden movements that may seem threatening.
2. Don't speak rapidly, raise your volume or use an accusatory tone.
3. Don't reject all demands.
4. Don't make physical contact, jab your finger at the other person, or use long periods of eye contact.
5. Don't pose in challenging stances: directly opposite someone, hands on hips, or with arms crossed.
6. Don't challenge, threaten or dare the individual. Never belittle the other person.

7. Don't criticize or act impatient.
8. Don't attempt to bargain with a threatening individual.
9. Don't try to make the situation seem less serious than it is.
10. Don't make false statements or promises you cannot keep.
11. Don't try to impart a lot of technical or complicated information when emotions are high.
12. Don't take sides or agree with distortions.
13. Don't evade the individual's personal space.

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## **Section 3 - Training and Education**

All employees will receive training and education on the risks of workplace violence and procedures for responding to and reporting incidents of workplace violence. Training will be provided upon completion of the Program and annually thereafter. Additional training may be required prior to starting a new job assignment, if new laws relating to workplace violence are enacted or there are changes in any current laws, or if the District makes significant changes to its Workplace Violence Prevention Program, risk factors or work controls.

District employee training and education will include, but not be limited to, the following areas:

- Overview of the New York State Workplace Violence Prevention Act and NYS Labor Law Section 27-b, and Regulations, 12 N.Y.C.R.R. Part 800.6.
- Description and details of the District's Workplace Violence Prevention Program and the procedures for obtaining a copy
- Definition of workplace violence
- Methods of recognizing and responding to workplace violence
- Standard response action plan for violent situations
- Procedures for reporting a workplace violence incident or imminent danger
- Risk factors identified by the District
- Measures employees can take to protect themselves from identified risks
- Procedures, policies, safety devices and/or work environment accommodations which have been implemented to protect employees based on the results of the risk evaluation
- Post-incident procedures, including medical follow-up and the availability of counseling for affected individuals

Specialized training and education may be provided to supervisors or employees who are at higher risk of workplace violence based on their job duties and/or work site location.

## Section 4 - Reporting and Recordkeeping

### Reporting an Incident

An effective reporting system: (1) protects District employees from harm in the workplace; (2) assists administration in its effort to maintain a safe and productive work environment; and (3) ensures administration the opportunity to investigate and determine the cause(s) and make recommendations to minimize recurrence. All workplace violence incident reports must be in writing.

Any employee who witnesses or encounters any act of violence should:

- Immediately notify their supervisor, administrator and/or the Superintendent, as appropriate
- As appropriate, notify building security or the School Safety Officer
- As appropriate, call 911
- Complete and submit the “Workplace Violence Incident Report”, see Appendix B. The District will take necessary action. Any employee who believes that an imminent danger exists should bring the matter to the District’s immediate attention.

Supervisors/administrators should approach such situations with caution, balancing the need to maintain an orderly workplace with personal safety. Following notification of an imminent threat, if the District's administration has been given reasonable time to take corrective action and no such action has been taken after thirty business days, the employee or his or her representative may inform the Commissioner of Labor of the danger and request that an inspection be conducted. Such a request must be in writing and include with a reasonable level of specificity the grounds of the notice.

The District is prohibited by law from taking any retaliatory action against any employee who: (1) has made management aware of what the employee deems to be an imminent danger; (2) has requested that the Commissioner of Labor conduct an inspection; or (3) accompanies the Commissioner during an inspection of the Agencies, pursuant to §27-b.6 of Article 2 of the State Labor Law.

**12 NYCRR Part 800.6(g)(2)(viii) Note:** Nothing in this part shall require the disclosure of information otherwise kept confidential for security reasons. Such information may include information which, if disclosed:

- Would interfere with law enforcement investigations or judicial proceedings;
- Would deprive a person of a right to a fair trial or impartial adjudication;
- Would identify a confidential source or disclose confidential information relating to a criminal investigation;
- Would reveal criminal investigative techniques or procedures, except routine techniques and procedures; or
- Would endanger the life or safety of any person.

## **Recordkeeping**

The District will maintain accurate records regarding all workplace violence incidents. The District will adhere to all of the requirements of 12 NYCRR Part 801, known as the Public Employee Recordkeeping Rule, which is implemented pursuant to Section 27-a of the Labor Law, for the recording of employee injuries or illnesses due to workplace violence incidents. All workplace violence incident forms will be kept according to the applicable retention and disposition schedules.

All Workplace Violence Incident Reports will be reviewed by the District on a regular basis. The forms will also be analyzed at least annually so that any trends of workplace violence can be identified and review the effectiveness of the mitigating actions taken.

The District is required to report employee workplace violence related fatalities and multiple hospitalizations to the New York State Department of Labor's Public Employee Safety and Health (PESH) Bureau within eight hours of the incident. (Refer to NYCRR Part 801 for complete information pertaining to employee recordkeeping and PESH reporting requirements).

# **Section 5 - Workplace Risk Evaluation**

## **Introduction**

Certain factors or situations may place employees at a greater risk of workplace violence. This workplace evaluation is based upon surveys of all District facilities, conducted by the Director of Facilities, Human Resources Administrator, the Superintendent, Union Reps and reviews of occupational injury and illness logs and incidents reports for violence-related injuries.

## **Risk Evaluation and Methods to Prevent Incidents**

Workplace violence can occur in any workplace setting. However, some settings or factors may pose a greater degree of workplace violence risk. Employment situations or factors that may pose higher risks for District employees include, but not limited to:

- Working in public settings
- Working alone in small numbers
- Having a mobile workplace assignment, and
- Worker on worker workplace violence

All District sites were surveyed, along with authorized employee representatives, and hazards were identified, [see Appendix C]. The Records Examination and Risk Evaluations conducted and the methods and means by which the hazards are being addressed are listed on [see Appendix D].

## **Program Review Plan**

The District and representatives from each of South Jefferson's Bargaining Units will review the Program on an annual basis. Reported incidents will be reviewed and used as a basis for any changes to the Program. Such review and update shall set forth any mitigating steps taken in response to any incident of workplace violence.

# **Appendix A - South Jefferson Workplace Violence Prevention Plan**

South Jefferson Central School District is committed to the safety and security of our employees. Workplace violence presents a serious occupational safety hazard to our agency, staff, and clients.

Workplace Violence is defined as any physical assault or act of aggressive behavior occurring where a public employee performs any work-related duty in the course of his or her employment including but not limited to an attempt or threat, whether verbal or physical, to inflict physical injury upon an employee; any intentional display of force which would give an employee reason to fear or expect bodily harm; intentional and wrongful physical contact with a person without his or her consent that entails some injury; or stalking an employee with the intent of causing fear of material harm to the physical safety and health of such employee when such stalking has arisen through and in the course of employment.

Acts of violence against any of our employees where any work related duty is performed will be thoroughly investigated and appropriate action will be taken, including involving law enforcement authorities when warranted. All employees are responsible for helping to create an environment of mutual respect for each other as well as clients and visitors, following all policies, procedures and practices, and for assisting in maintaining a safe and secure work environment.

This policy is designed to meet the requirements of New York State Labor Law Art. 2 §27-b and highlights some of the elements that are found within our Workplace Violence Prevention Plan. The process involved in complying with this law includes a workplace evaluation that is designed to identify the risks of workplace violence to which our employees could be exposed. Authorized Employee Representative(s) will, at a minimum, be involved in:

- Evaluating the physical environment;
- Developing the Workplace Violence Prevention Program; and
- Reviewing workplace violence incident reports at least annually to identify trends in the types of incidents reported, if any, and reviewing the effectiveness of the mitigating actions taken.

All employees will participate in the annual Workplace Violence Prevention Training Program. The goal of this policy is to promote the safety and well-being of all people in our workplace. All incidents of violence or threatening behavior will be responded to immediately upon notification. All personnel are responsible for notifying the contact person designated below of any violent incidents, threatening behavior, including threats they have witnessed, received, or have been told that another person has witnessed or received.

All Workplace Violence Incident Reporting forms will be turned in to and initially reviewed by: Rebecca Dalrymple. Phone: 315-583-6104 Email: [rdalrymple@spartanpride.org](mailto:rdalrymple@spartanpride.org)

# Appendix B - Workplace Violence Incident Reporting Form

This form is to be used to document any reportable workplace violence incident. This form is to be completed and immediately forwarded to Rebecca Dalrymple.

Employee Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Location Where Incident Occurred: \_\_\_\_\_

Date and Time of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Individual Completing This Report: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Incident Report Completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Incident Report Received: \_\_\_\_\_

List any individuals who may have witnessed this incident:

Witness Name, Job Title and Witness Phone Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please provide a detailed description of the incident including:

- Events leading up to the incident and how the incident ended
- Names and job title of involved employee(s);
- Name or other identifier of other individuals involved and;
- Nature and extent of injuries arising from the incident;

\_\_\_\_\_  
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## Appendix C - District Site Survey

Add Completed Survey Here

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## **Appendix D - Record Exam and Risk Evaluation**

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## Appendix D - Relevant Laws and Links

- January 9, 2024: [Recent Amendments To Workplace Violence Prevention Law Regarding Schools](#)
- January 5, 2024: NYS Senate Section 27-B: [Duty of public employers to develop and implement programs to prevent workplace violence](#)
- Department of Labor/NYSED: [Workplace Violence Prevention Regulations Employer Training](#)