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| Section: <i>Employee Management</i> | Policy Number: B-4.3 |
| Sub-section: <i>Human Rights</i> | Effective Date: September, 2011 |
| Subject: <i>WOMS Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy</i> | Revision Date: September, 2015 |
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White Oaks Montessori School Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy

Preamble

This document sets out the policy of **WHITE OAKS MONTESSORI SCHOOL** regarding workplace violence and harassment, as required by the Occupational Health and Safety Act. This policy is not intended to, nor could it ever possibly, address every potential incident of workplace violence or harassment at **WHITE OAKS MONTESSORI SCHOOL**. This policy is also not intended to address any other workplace health and safety issues, nor any other legal obligations required by any other federal, provincial, regional, or municipal legislation or regulation. This policy is effective and enforceable as of June 15th, 2010, and thereafter, until reviewed or repealed.

Commitment

WHITE OAKS MONTESSORI SCHOOL is committed to providing a school environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and with dignity, and in which all reasonable preventative and reactive actions are taken to prevent workplace violence and harassment, which will not be tolerated by any employer, supervisor or worker. Employers, supervisors and workers at **WHITE OAKS MONTESSORI SCHOOL** are dedicated to preventing workplace violence and harassment, are all expected to uphold this policy, and will all be held accountable for so doing.

Distribution

This written policy will be provided to all new workers at the commencement of or before their first day of work, and will also be continuously and conspicuously (for all employers, supervisors and workers) posted at **WHITE OAKS MONTESSORI SCHOOL**.

Background

Workers may face violence and harassment in any workplace and from any person in that workplace. There is a continuum of unwanted behaviours that can occur in a workplace, escalating from offensive remarks to physical violence. It is important for **WHITE OAKS MONTESSORI SCHOOL** to address any unwanted behaviours early, in order to minimize the potential for any workplace harassment to escalate into workplace violence. The harassing or violent person may be

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someone the worker comes into contact with, such as a student, a parent, or another family member. The harassing or violent person may also be a co-worker, supervisor, or employer. Or,

that person may be someone with no formal connection to the workplace, such as a stranger or a domestic/intimate partner, who brings violence or harassment into the workplace.

Workplace Harassment

The Occupational Health and Safety Act defines workplace harassment as engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker, in a workplace. This behaviour should be known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome. These comments or conduct typically occur more than once. They could occur over a relatively short period of time (for example, even during the course of just one day) or over a longer period of time (weeks, months or even years).

Workplace harassment can involve unwelcome words or actions that are known or should be known to be offensive, embarrassing, humiliating or demeaning to a worker or to a group of workers. Such harassment can also include behaviour that intimidates, isolates or even discriminates against a worker.

Reasonable work actions or conduct by a supervisor or employer are not workplace harassment, even if there are sometimes unpleasant consequences. Examples include reasonable changes in work assignments or scheduling, work assessments and evaluations, workplace inspections, implementation of dress codes, and reasonable disciplinary actions.

Differences of opinion or minor disagreements between co-workers are also not workplace harassment.

Workplace Violence

The Occupational Health and Safety Act defines workplace violence as the exercise of (or the attempt to exercise) physical force against a worker, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker. It also includes 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 physical injury to the worker.

Workplace violence also includes situations where two non-workers, such as students, are fighting and a worker could be injured when he or she intervenes. The non-workers need not have intended their violence to injure another.

A person who has a personal relationship with a worker (a spouse or former spouse, current or former intimate partner, or a family member) may physically harm, or attempt or threaten to physically harm, that worker at work. In such a situation, this domestic violence is also considered to be workplace violence. Domestic violence may also pose a threat to co-workers.

An employer, supervisor, or worker may become aware of domestic violence when an incident takes place at the workplace, when a concern is reported, or upon discovery of threatening

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e-mails or telephone calls received at work, or unwelcome domestic visits to the workplace. Even if a worker does not want any action taken, **WHITE OAKS MONTESSORI SCHOOL** will act to prevent such domestic violence, and to protect employers, supervisors, and co-workers.

Controlling, Reporting, and Investigating Workplace Violence and Harassment

To prevent workplace violence and harassment, **WHITE OAKS MONTESSORI SCHOOL** has controlled access to the school property and buildings, has advised employers, supervisors and workers of the prescribed school lock-down policy, and has provided appropriate levels of training in first aid, cardio-pulmonary resuscitation, crisis prevention, and the management of aggressive or violent behaviours. Employers, supervisors and staff unaware or unclear of any of these school controls should immediately advise the Principal, by dated and written notice.

Depending upon the levels of urgency and seriousness, immediate assistance should be summoned, in escalating order, from nearby staff, from office supervisors and staff, or from police or emergency medical responders (911).

All incidents of workplace violence and harassment must be immediately (as soon as practicable, immediately after the occurrence of the incident) reported in writing to the Principal or, in the absence of the Principal, to the Principal's designate.

Upon receipt of a dated and written report, the Principal or the Principal's designate will investigate, determine and resolve any complaint. The original report and all subsequent documentation will be retained by **WHITE OAKS MONTESSORI SCHOOL** as workplace violence and harassment records.

Where an incident of workplace violence occurs, the Principal or the Principal's designate may notify police or emergency medical responders. If a workplace violence incident results in a person being killed or critically injured, then **WHITE OAKS MONTESSORI SCHOOL** will immediately notify the Ontario Ministry of Labour. Such notice is not required for incidents of workplace harassment.

Work Refusals

Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, a worker can refuse to work if he or she has reason to believe he or she may be endangered by workplace violence. However, work cannot be refused on the grounds of workplace harassment. In addition, teachers cannot refuse work where the circumstances are such that the life, health or safety of a pupil is in imminent jeopardy.

A worker who refuses work must remain in a safe place as near as reasonably possible to his or her workstation, while waiting for the employer or supervisor to investigate. That location will depend on the circumstances that led to the work refusal.

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Re-Assessment and Review

The Occupational Health and Safety Act does not require **WHITE OAKS MONTESSORI SCHOOL** to assess the risk of workplace harassment.

WHITE OAKS MONTESSORI SCHOOL must assess the risk of workplace violence that may arise from the physical aspects of the school, from the type (including interactions with students and families) of work, and from the conditions (including regular or periodic staff isolation) of work. **WHITE OAKS MONTESSORI SCHOOL** must take into account the circumstances of the workplace and the circumstances common to similar workplaces, and must continue to develop measures and procedures to control identified risks that are likely to expose a worker to physical injury. These assessment results are already identified herein, and will be reviewed at least annually.

The risks of workplace violence should be re-assessed as often as is necessary to protect workers from workplace violence. For example, a reassessment should be undertaken if the workplace moves or the existing workplace is renovated or reconfigured, if there are significant changes in school student composition, or if a violent incident indicates a risk related to the nature of the workplace, type of work, or conditions of work that was not identified either initially or during an earlier assessment.

In any event, this policy will always be annually reviewed during our pre-school staff training at **WHITE OAKS MONTESSORI SCHOOL**. This annual review will focus on the effectiveness of the measures and procedures in this policy, in order to ensure effective use and continuing protection. Employers, supervisors and workers will also be concurrently consulted annually on the efficacy of the reporting, investigation, determination and resolution policies.