

## WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Identifying and preventing workplace incidents of actual or threatened violence is a priority of the School Board of Broward County, Florida. Zero tolerance toward workplace violence, or the threat of violence, by any of its employees, customers, the general public, and/or anyone who conducts business with the School District on School Board property will be followed. It is the intent of the School District to provide a workplace which is free from physical attacks, destructive acts, verbal abuse (harassment), property crimes, threats or any other violent acts. Employees who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Authority        F.S. 230.22 (1) (2)  
                       6B - 1.006 (5)  
 Adopted        5/1/01

## DEFINITIONS

Workplace violence is any act of physical aggression, destructive acts, threatening behavior or verbal abuse by an individual to self, others or property, that occurs on School Board property is threatened to occur on School Board Property, or is directed to School Board employees.

- a. Zero Tolerance – Means that any alleged violation will be reported as outlined above and will be investigated and appropriate action will be taken as expeditiously as possible. Workplace violence will not be permitted or tolerated.
- b. Physical Aggression (attacks) - This includes physical acts such as shoving, pushing, hitting or any other aggressive or unsolicited and unconsensual contact occurring between two or more parties or at one's self. By their nature, physical attacks may involve breaking criminal laws.
- c. Destructive Acts - Similar to Physical Aggression above, however, the acts are towards property of the District, others or the individual's own property. Examples include: damage to one's car in the District parking lots, throwing property, banging/hitting property, sabotage or theft. By their nature, destructive acts may involve breaking criminal laws.
- d. Threatening Behavior - A threat involves the statements, physical motions, manifestations or suggestions of a possible physical attack and will be taken seriously. Examples include: "If you make that decision, I will have to hurt (or kill) you," or "I am going to beat (or shoot/kill) you," or "I am going to beat (or shoot/kill) him/her." Threats are significant because they may precede actual acts of violence. There is also substantial evidence that threats can produce as much psychological damage as actual physical attacks. By their nature threats, which might include incidents of stalking, may involve breaking criminal laws.

- e. **Verbal Abuse** - Conduct that constitutes harassment. Examples include: unwanted e-mail, phone calls or acts/language designed to damage or harm another. Often this practice is initiated with the purpose of testing a person’s “boundaries” or “breaking point” but can evolve into more serious abuses. Such behavior causes emotional harm and stress to another. See also School Board Policy 4001.1 Policy Prohibiting Harassment. **Any jokes or innuendo suggesting threats or violence will be treated seriously and may be subject to investigation.**
  
- f. School Board property shall be defined as school grounds, building, school bus, or vehicle provided for transportation by the school system. School sponsored activities shall be defined as any approved School Board event or official School Board business, on or off School Board property.

## **RULES**

1. Any employee who becomes aware of another employee or person violating the District’s policies against acts of violence, weapons or both (Weapons Policy) has a duty and an obligation to properly report such violations. Any failure to report a violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.
2. Any employee who has become involved in personal disputes which has resulted in the issuance of a court injunction or “restraining order” shall notify their immediate supervisor and Special Investigative Unit so that appropriate protections may be put into place to protect students and staff in the event a situation occurs at the work site.
3. Any employee who acts in good faith by reporting real, threatened, or implied violent behavior will not be subject to any form of retaliation or harassment.
4. Any action of retaliation or harassment resulting from a report of violence must be reported and referred to the appropriate management staff (Special Investigative Unit and Professional Standards) for investigation and decision regarding proper action and sanction.
5. Deliberate, false or malicious reporting will also result in investigation and appropriate sanctions.
6. Any employee who acts in “justifiable self-defense” when in imminent danger in the workplace will not be subject to any disciplinary action.
7. Guidelines
  - a. Notify immediate supervisor/department head at once.
  - b. Supervisor will conduct preliminary review and determine appropriate course of action.
  - c. Depending on nature and seriousness of event, steps may include:
    1. call School Resource Officer or local law enforcement
    2. call emergency medical services or 911, if needed
    3. contact SIU 765-6202
  - d. Call area office
  - e. The employee’s fitness for duty will be assessed. (SB 4004)
  - f. Immediate (within 24 hours) and on-going counseling will be available to traumatized/affected individuals.

## **SANCTIONS**

1. All alleged violations of this policy will be reviewed and/or investigated.
2. It is a violation of this policy for any employee to fail to report an act or threat of violence. Failure to report shall result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.
3. It is a violation of this policy to engage in any act of workplace violence. Any conduct that is an act of violence or a threat of violence will subject an employee to disciplinary action up to and including termination. Depending upon the violent act or threat, the employee may be subject to criminal charges and penalties.

Adopted 5/1/01