



## Violence in the Workplace Procedure

For \_\_\_\_\_

This entire procedure including: the completed List of School Specific Serious Risks of Violence and, the completed School Violence Prevention Plans completes \_\_\_\_\_ conformance to the requirements with the Regulations Respecting Violence in the Workplace.

Completed by the Principal: \_\_\_\_\_ in consultation with  
(Signature)

the JOH&S Committee: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of JOH&S Committee Chairperson(s))

(date) \_\_\_\_\_.

### Summary:

This procedure provides the information necessary for the school to comply with the Nova Scotia Violence in the Workplace Regulation. Those familiar with schools have listed risks that are typical of most schools. They have developed best practices to mitigate those risks. In both the risk assessment and planning for the reduction of risks, allowances have been made for additions or amendments at the school level in order to make this plan appropriate for each school.

This procedure is in two sections, requiring the completion of a risk assessment of school specific serious risks of violence, Section A, by October 1, 2007 and a complete violence prevention plan, Section B, associated with each risk by April 1, 2008. The completion of Section A and Section B will ensure compliance with the Regulations respecting Violence in the Workplace

**To complete this Violence in the Workplace Procedure, the Principal in consultation with their JOH&S Committee will:**

#### Section A

1. review the listed risks on page 8 {to be completed by October 1, 2007};

2. *list additional risks on page 10 {to be completed by October 1, 2007} ;*

**Section B**

1. *make additions that they deem necessary to numbered Violence Prevention Plans in Appendix “A”; {to be completed by April 1, 2008} and*
2. *complete a Violence Prevention Plan(page (16) for each site specific risk listed on page 10 and add it to Appendix “A”. If personal privacy is involved keep the plan in a secure file for review by affected employees only {to be completed by April 1, 2008}.*

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## Contextual Documents

- Occupational Health & Safety Act of Nova Scotia (last amended 2004)
- Education Act
- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
- Regulations Respecting Violence in the Workplace as approved by order in council  
April 4, 2007
- Board Policy #790-Dignity in the Workplace
- Board Policy #912-Crisis Intervention
- Board Policy #560-Administration of Medication-Medical Treatment
- Emergency Response Plan (yet to be completed)

## Violence Risk Assessment

### ***Violence – Definition:***

The Nova Scotia Violence in the Workplace Regulation gives a very specific definition: “Violence” means any of the following:

- i) Threats, including a threatening statement or threatening behaviour that gives an employee reasonable cause to believe that the employee is at risk of physical injury,
- ii) Conduct or attempted conduct of a person that endangers the physical health or physical safety of an employee.

### ***Violence Risk Assessment and Report***

At least once every five years and by October 1, 2007, each school shall conduct a violence risk assessment and record it in a report. The Risk Assessment Report from page 8-10 of this document shall be completed under the direction of the supervisor at the site (the Principal) in consultation with the JOH&S Committee or the OH&S Employee Representative at the school. A copy of this entire document which includes the “Risk Assessment Report” and the “Violence Prevention Plan” shall be retained in an identifiable binder, in a secure yet accessible location whereby staff, the JOH&S Committee or Representative and other workplace parties may view the report and plan. The school shall conduct a new or revised violence risk assessment for a workplace in

any of the following circumstances: a) the Board or school administration becomes aware of a type of violence occurring in a similar school that was not taken into consideration when the previous risk assessment was conducted; b) there is a change in the circumstances in which work takes place, or the interactions that occur in the course of performing work; c) or the physical location or layout of the workplace change; d) the Board plans to construct a new facility or renovate an existing facility; e) the employer is ordered by a N. S. Dept of Environment & Labour officer.

### **Assessment Considerations:**

- a. Violence that has occurred in the workplace in the past (as provided by Board - Appendix “B”);
- b. Violence that is known to have occurred at other SSRSB workplaces (as provided by the Board - Appendix “B”);
- c. The circumstances in which work takes place;
- d. The interactions that occur in the course of performing work;
- e. The physical location and layout of the workplace.

### **Personal Privacy**

If the risk is associated with a specific individual, the protection of personal privacy must be considered (Freedom of Information Personal Privacy Act) and the “name of risk” (listed on page 10) shall not identify the individual. The named risk may refer to a file, which is kept in a secure location. There shall be a “Workplace Violence Prevention Plan” (page 16) completed for each individual who poses a specific risk. Alternatively, a Board developed form used to record a plan to control the risk through behaviour management may be used. The Principal shall judge which staff need to know about the risk and the violence prevention plan. The principal will direct those staff to become familiar with the plan.

### **Workplace Violence Prevention Plan**

Every SSRSB workplace must have a violence prevention plan completed by April 1<sup>st</sup> 2008. This document, the Violence Prevention Procedure, which includes the schools Violence Risk Assessment Report and the Violence Prevention Plans shall be maintained in the school’s “Workplace Violence Prevention Plan Binder” at the school. This binder shall be available for reading by any employer, contractor, supplier, employee, owner or self-employed person in the workplace.

### ***Review and Revision of Violence Prevention Plan***

If a new risk assessment indicates a significant change in the extent and nature of the risk of violence, then the Violence Prevention Plan shall be appropriately amended. If the school wants to make a change or addition to a “generic” plan then that plan shall be amended (written in) in the school binder. If the amendment is to a school specific plan, then the Principal in consultation with the committee shall amend the school’s plan. Both the generic plans and the school specific plans shall be review and revised as required, and at least every five years. Violence Prevention Plans addressing individuals should be reviewed yearly.

## **Workplace Violence Prevention Statement**

The South Shore Regional School Board recognizes with reference to the Violence in the Workplace Regulations under the Nova Scotia Occupational Health & Safety Act:

- ❑ That violence in the workplace is an occupational health and safety hazard in the workplace;
- ❑ That there can be physical and emotional harm resulting from violence;
- ❑ That any form of violence in the workplace is unacceptable;
- ❑ That the South Shore Regional School Board is committed to minimize and to the extent possible, eliminate the risk of violence in the workplace.

These responsibilities are recognized within the context of the Board's responsibilities under the Nova Scotia Education Act to:

- ❑ Promote schools as safe learning environments and community resources;
- ❑ Develop and implement educational programs for students with special needs within regular instructional settings with their peers in age;
- ❑ Recognize that students should have a right and a responsibility to participate fully in learning opportunities, contribute to an orderly and safe learning environment and,
- ❑ Recognize that, subject to the regulations, every resident of the Province over the age of five years and under the age of sixteen years shall attend school in accordance with the regulations.

## **Emergency Response Plan**

This booklet is a serious incident response plan developed by school educators and administrators and reviewed by the Regional Occupational Health & Safety Committee. Its purpose is to provide a school and Board response plan for the first thirty minutes of school emergencies. Some of these emergencies may involve violence at the school so to that extent it forms part of our Violence Prevention Plan as it considers how to respond, how to communicate, and how to record information in the event of a violent incident.

## **Providing information to Employees**

The Principal shall ensure that all staff are made aware of the existence of the Risk Assessment and the Workplace Violence Prevention Plan and make it available to them for their review. It is particularly important for the Principal to make an employee new to the worksite aware of generic and site-specific violence prevention plans that address risks the employee may face in their activities at the school.

## **Training and Supervision of Employees**

The numbered Workplace Violence Prevention Plans and the following are to be reviewed with all school staff by the Principal or their designate:

- Rights and responsibilities under the OH&S Act;
- The workplace violence prevention statement;
- What the Board has done to minimize the risk of violence;
- How to recognize and respond to potential violence;
- How to respond to a violent incident;
- How to get assistance;
- How to report, document and investigate incidents of violence.

## **Documentation and Investigation**

If there is an incident of Violence in the Workplace (see definition on page 2), it shall be investigated and documented by the Principal or their designate and this investigation and documentation shall be recorded on the SIP Incident Report form. If the violent act or threat of a violent act is from an employee then the employee's supervisor shall be informed. The supervisor must then inform the Human Resources Department.

The Principal shall, as soon as is practicable, determine the cause and take actions to prevent a re-occurrence. Incidents of workplace violence need to be addressed in a timely manner. The Principal will document the investigation and corrective/preventive actions that were taken and retain this documentation in a file relating to the incident. At the next JOH&S Committee meeting the incident, documentation, investigation and response will be reviewed. This review will be recorded in the minutes of the JOH&S Committee meeting. If the review of the incident determines that the existing violence prevention plan needs to be amended or that a new one needs to be created that will be done.

## **Debriefing and treatment**

Staff and students who have been exposed to violence (definition on page 2) shall receive appropriate debriefing and they (or their parents for students) will be advised to consult a health professional for treatment/or counselling. Board in house resources and/or employee assistance programs may be provided as decided by school and Board administration. The SSRSB Crisis Intervention policy and procedure #??? may need to be referenced and followed according to the nature of the incident.

# School Violence Risk Assessment Report

For «*school*»

Assessment Date \_\_\_\_\_

Assessors \_\_\_\_\_

*This risk assessment considers risks to all staff including teachers, educational assistants, clerical staff, custodians and any other individuals who are assigned to the school or serve in an itinerant capacity. This school specific violence risk assessment report includes the School Specific List of Risks of Violence on Page 10.*

## Generic Risks Associated with Employee Activities at Schools

The following is a list of questions that, if answered in the affirmative, will indicate the likelihood of a risk of violence in your workplace. For each of these there has been a generic Violence Prevention Plan Provided in Appendix “A.” Each of these plans may be added to or amended in order to reflect the conditions at your workplace (school). All risks and the violence prevention plans need to be reviewed by your JOH&S Committee and are used in staff training and new employee orientation.

| Question  | Yes | No | If Yes see Procedure # |
|---|-----|----|------------------------|
| When you are open to the public, are there times when only one employee is present?   |     |    | 1                      |
| Do your employees handle or collect cash or valuables?  |     |    | 2                      |
| Do your employees provide service where they may deal with troubled students (such as distraught students sent to office)?  |     |    | 3                      |
| Is there an individual student who’s temperament frequently leads to acts of violence (e.g. such as students with emotional or behavioural disabilities who’s condition involves acts of violence)      |     |    | 4                      |
| Are your employees involved in disciplining students (such as normal situations in classrooms)?   |     |    | 5                      |
| Is there a known family or custody dispute that creates a risk?   |     |    | 6                      |
| Do your employees exercise control over other employees (e.g. a Principal directing the activities of staff)?   |     |    | 7                      |
| Do your employees exercise security functions (e.g. monitor dance)?   |     |    | 8                      |
| Do your employees dispense medicines?   |     |    | 9                      |
| Do your employees work in community-based settings (home visits)?   |     |    | 10                     |
| Do your employees provide service where they may deal with troubled adults (e.g. parents or other members of the public who may include a factor of physical violence in threats, actions or stalking)? |     |    | 11                     |
| Is there a likelihood of groups organized around antisocial behaviours (e.g. drugs, violence)?  |     |    | 12                     |
| Review Appendix “B” for your history of violence at this school and at other SSRSB schools. Are there incidents of violence that are not characterized by those risks listed above?                     |     |    |                        |

Beyond the organizational factors listed in the table, the school should consider the following factors, which may increase the potential for violence:

- Late hours of the night or early hours of the morning
- Christmas (more robberies and break-ins)
- Fund raising days
- Report Card or parent Interviews
- Performance appraisals
- Being located near to buildings or businesses that are at risk of violent crime (e.g. bars and banks)
- Being located in areas isolated from other buildings or structures.

### ***School Subjective Risks of Violence***

Teachers and administrators previously have developed the generic risks listed. It is understood that there are likely to be other risks that are specific to an individual school. The principal in consultation with their staff should “brainstorm” to think about these other school specific risks and list them by name and number. These numbered risks shall be recorded on the “Report Listing School Specific Risks of Violence” on the next page.

If the risk is associated with a specific individual, the protection of personal privacy must be considered and the “name of risk” (listed on page 10) shall not identify the individual. The named risk may refer to a file that is kept in a secure location. For instance, if the risk is from a behaviourally challenged student then the listed risk shall not name the student but it will refer to the file for “Risks and Plans Associated with Individuals” that is kept in a secure location. There shall be a “School Specific Violence Prevention Plan” (page 16) completed for each individual who poses a specific risk. If the school board has an alternative document (e.g. Behaviour Modification Plan – BMP) for managing the risk from an individual student, then those may be used in a similar manner in lieu of the “School Specific Violence Prevention Plan.” The Principal shall determine which staff must know about the risk and violence prevention plan and the principal will direct those staff to review the plan.

## ***Report Listing School Specific Risks of Violence***

For «*school*»

| Number |  |
|--------|--|
| 13     |  |
| 14     |  |
| 15     |  |
| 16     |  |
| 17     |  |
| 18     |  |
| 19     |  |
| 20     |  |
| 21     |  |
| 22     |  |
| 23     |  |
| 24     |  |

## **Appendix “A”**

### **Workplace Violence Prevention Plan**

This provides plans for all numbered risks in the preceding Risk Assessment Report. Each plan is to be modified or added to as necessary at each school to reflect conditions at the school

#### ***Knowledge Tools for Preventing Violent Outcomes***

##### **Warning Signs of a Troubled Employee or Student**

Violent acts are often one consequence of the effects of stress in an individual. These stresses can be generated by changes due to the: maturation process (students); family situation; work environment. It can also follow conflicts in other areas such as: between employees, family members, workload and assignments.

The consequences of stress are often evident from other signs that may be evident prior to behaviours such as violent acts or threats. These indicators may manifest themselves in: quality of work, disruptive behaviour, inappropriate behaviour, and denial of problems, isolation, changes in behaviour, and other evidence of emotional turmoil.

##### **Warning Signs of Imminent Violence**

Immediately prior to violence, there may be physiological changes such as a flushed or pale face or perspiration. Facial expression may be distorted with grimacing, sneering, scowling, or glaring. They may be physically agitated and pace, clench their fists, and tremble. The voice may be loud, and language may become harsh and exaggerated.

##### **Effective Response**

In assessing a potentially violent individual, trust your instincts and do not ignore the signs. Be sure to monitor your behaviour, body language, facial expression, voice and language. Do not become emotional or agitated. Be calm; listen empathically. If there is no one in the area, try to talk the agitated individual into an area where you may have some assistance. Maintain your distance and try to keep a desk or counter between you and the agitated person. Acknowledge their concerns and it may be effective to write down their concerns and say that you will consider them or carry them forward to others. Listen without arguing and try to be polite and pleasant in spite of the disturbing behaviour.

##### ***Violence Prevention Plan for Risk #1***

*When you are open to the public, are there times when only one employee is present?*

- Lock exterior doors when school is closed to the public.
- If there is a public function such as an evening class, the individual who is responsible for the activity is to open one door when the first class member arrives, and is to lock the door after the last class member leaves the building.
- The employee working alone in a school needs to have access to a telephone.
- Look for loiterers when you enter the building

- Ask the police for a patrol check if suspicious loiters are seen around the school.
- Report suspicious loiterers to the Principal.
- At night check to see if outside lights are working – if they are not, ensure that a maintenance request is submitted.
- If working after dark or during unusual hours, make someone aware of your expected hour of return.
- Wear conservative clothing. Do not wear jewellery which could be a theft hazard
- Do not carry cash while working alone.
- Avoid areas of poor lighting
- Be aware of possible exit paths
- Consider keeping phone numbers of supervisor and local police department on your person.
- Become aware of the location of phones or assistance outside the school
- Report all violent acts to the principal, your supervisor and the police

**Additional precautions recommended by school staff:**

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### ***Violence Prevention Plan for Risk #2***

**Do your employees handle or collect cash or valuables?**

- Unless it is unavoidable, do not leave money in the school over night.
- Keep funds in the cash box to a minimum
- Keep cash secured when not actively adding or disbursing.
- Do not count or in other ways make visible significant amounts of cash where others can see it and become tempted.
- Ask those purchasing things like tickets or year books to bring exact change.
- If anyone is present when someone is attempting to rob the funds, do not interfere - leave the area and encourage others to leave the area – call 911

**Additional precautions recommended by school staff:**

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### ***Violence Prevention Plan for Risk #3***

**Do your employees provide service where they may deal with troubled students (such as distraught students sent to office)?**

- Do not discipline students in front of their peers.
- Implement any best professional practices involving strategies (e.g. Positive Effective Behaviours (PEB's))
- If students are agitated, allow them time to calm down.

- Arrange a talk with the student where the discussion can be confidential but help can be summoned (door open with someone outside but out of the line of sight and let that person know that there may be trouble).

**Additional precautions recommended by school staff:**

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### ***Violence Prevention Plan for Risk #4***

**Is there an individual student whose temperament frequently leads to acts of violence (such as students with emotional or behavioural disabilities whose condition involves acts of violence)?**

- For each behaviourally challenged individual, a Violence Risk Prevention Plan Shall be developed unless the Board has an equivalent system for addressing these risks.
- The plan should have input from student services resources familiar with and professionally involved in providing programs to this student and any other Board resource personnel who would be helpful in designing a violence prevention plan for the student.
- These plans can consider: avoiding triggering events, timing of program, available human resources, personal protective equipment and furniture or facilities features.
- Personal privacy must be respected. Violence prevention plans dealing with individuals must be stored in a secure file and be reviewed with those employees who may be exposed to the risk.
- Violence prevention plans and/or behavioural modification plans must identify and minimize the potential for incidents of physical harm.

**Additional precautions recommended by school staff:**

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### ***Violence Prevention Plan for Risk #5***

**Are your employees involved in disciplining others (such as normal situations in classrooms)?**

- Implement best practices for classroom management skills that have been developed and recognized by your Board
- Do not discipline a student in front of peers. Tell them to stop doing something or change seats. If discipline is unavoidable talk to them before or after class or in the hall
- Other staff should be within ear shoot but out of sight (in the next room with the doors open when discipline is being discussed.
- Be dispassionate; do not add to the emotions of the situation by adding your own.
- Criticize the behaviour and not the individual
- Be clear, factual and focused. Do not permit the discussion to escalate or broaden to other issues

- Be aware of escalating emotions evidenced by: change in facial color, voice level, voice quality, language, mannerisms or aberrant behaviour. It could be a precursor to a violent action.
- Make the consequences fair and appropriate for the situation and the individual.
- Record what was said and the tone of the discussion.
- If there is an incident involving physical violence or the threat of physical violence, notify the principal for the consideration of consequences. If it is serious violence summon help immediately and if justified call for police assistance.

**Additional precautions recommended by school staff:**

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***Violence Prevention Plan for Risk #6***

**Is there a known family or custody dispute?**

- If the school received a copy of a court order restricting access to a child, there may also be a photograph provided. The staff must be made aware of that information and the information and photograph must not be able to be viewed by the public. It does, however, need to be readily available for reference.
- Parents requesting contact with children are to go directly to the school office when entering the building and wait for the school office administration to summon the student to the office.
- The key to determining who has access and authority with respect to students is the student registration process. At that time if parents have different addresses, then there should be questions as to custody. Typically the parent accompanying the student will be anxious to provide information and provide evidence of custody arrangements at that time. That information must be provided to the student's teacher.

**Additional precautions recommended by school staff:**

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***Violence Prevention Plan for Risk#7***

**Do your employees exercise control over employees?**

- Communicate with employees about changes in the organization, and about anything that will affect their work assignment and employment.
- Provide opportunities for employees to vent their concerns and suggestions.
- Listen empathically to their concerns and problems
- Suggest accessing any supports that may be available for the problems expressed such as employee support programs, community or family services, or family and other resources.
- If there is to be discussion about work quality, it should not be in front of the employee's fellow workers. If it is likely that the employee may become agitated, then help should be available if called for but not within range of hearing the conversation

(i.e. in an adjacent room with the door open). It should be a two way conversation; the employee's complaints and concerns should be requested.

- Be aware of and consider the context of employee situations in making administrative decisions.

**Additional precautions recommended by school staff:**

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***Violence Prevention Plan for Risk #8***

**Do your employees exercise security functions (monitor dance)?**

- Alcohol is a risk factor. Make sure that it does not enter the school in a bottle or in a student. Watch for signs of drunkenness and ensure that affected individuals are not permitted to enter, or are asked to leave. This policy must be enunciated in the event's promotional literature.
- Make sure that entry to the school is adequately restricted both from outside and from the events location.
- Ensure that there is an adequate number of those providing security.
- It is a good idea to notify the local police of the function and invite them to visibly visit the venue during the function to make participants aware of their availability.

**Additional precautions recommended by school staff:**

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***Violence Prevention Plan for Risk #9***

**Do your employees dispense medicines?**

- Refer to SSRSB Board Policy #??? Administration of Medication to Students for details on procedures for administering medications
- Medications should be kept in a secure location in a room that is locked when not occupied.
- Minimum quantities should be stored to minimize the temptation of theft
- Do not attempt to restrain or stop someone intent on stealing the medications but report the incident and details immediately and summon help.

**Additional precautions recommended by school staff:**

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***Violence Prevention Plan for Risk #10***

**Do your employees work in community-based settings (home visits)?**

- Write up a School Violence Assessment Plan for each location using the provided template for each site which is to be visited on a regular basis. Plans for addressing other health & safety concerns in addition to violence may be part of this plan (such as poor condition of stairs, dogs or second hand smoke);

- Consider and address the threats such as dogs, or individuals of concern;
- Consider in the case of a child receiving educational services that another adult is present during instruction;
- Consider communication as part of the plan

**Additional precautions recommended by school staff:**

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***Violence Prevention Plan for Risk #11***

**Do your employees provide service where they may deal with troubled adults (parents)?**

- Prearrange with other staff a signal for “trouble – summon” help such as “We are out of carbon paper” when you don’t use carbon paper. That would be used if a threat entered the office and you wanted the other staff member to leave the office and summon help.
- Arrange a talk with the student where the discussion can be confidential but where help can be summoned (door open with someone outside but out of the line of sight and let that person know that there may be trouble).
- Arrange another verbal signal that you do not want another staff member to leave the area while you are talking with the visitor. The signal could be “could you find the file on Jimmie Caldon?.” The other staff member would then try to be out of sight but within “ear-shot” in case there was a need for help. This other staff member could periodically come back in the room to pretend to check where the file could be located.

**Additional precautions recommended by school staff:**

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***Violence Prevention Plan for Risk #12***

**Is there a likelihood of groups organized around antisocial behaviours (e.g. drugs, violence)?**

- If the Principal receives information that a group has been or is being formed then the Principal is to notify their supervisor. Law enforcement and other appropriate school board and community resources will be notified by School Board Administration in consultation with the Principal to develop plans to address the threat.
- Serious incidents such as student civil disobedience or intruders shall be responded to as planed in the Emergency Response Plan (which is not yet complete).

***School Specific Violence Prevention Plans (SVPP) template***

«*Company*» SSVPP’s list number: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

An employee or the Joint Occupational Health & Committee may identify a risk of violence. They may use this form to develop a plan to prevent and/or respond effectively to threat of violence. This plan may be developed with the guidance of the principal and the assistance of resources such as the Student Services Department but the plan must also be reviewed by the JOH&S committee.



## Appendix “B”

### Records of Violent Incidents at School and SSRSB

This includes records back to the 2004-2005 school year of violence incidents at \_\_\_\_\_ and violent incidents at all SSRSB schools.

#### ***Risk Table***

| <i>Considering the specific numbered risk; check data from the data base for an incident of a similar nature:</i> |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Incident occurrence</b>  | <b>Risk Level</b>                          |
| Record of Violent Incident at least twice in this school in the last four years                                   | Significant Risk of Recurrence             |
| Record of a Violent Incident at least twice in any SSRSB schools in the last four years                           | Significant to Marginal Risk of Recurrence |
| Record of Violent Incident once in any SSRSB schools in the last four years                                       | Marginal of occurrence at this school      |
| No Record of a Violent Incident of this nature in any SSRSB schools   | Low Risk of occurrence at this school      |

When the severity of a risk is in question, it is best practice to complete a Violence Prevention plan for the perceived risk.

See attached data: