

Frequently Asked Questions



What is workplace violence?

Workplace violence is any use or attempted use of physical force that could cause injury. It doesn't have to result in an injury to be considered workplace violence.

In a school setting, workplace violence may include:

- Hitting, kicking, biting or punching
- Throwing objects
- Pushing or shoving
- Physical intimidation
- Attempts to physically assault someone

Violence can come from students, parents or guardians, visitors, coworkers or anyone else in the workplace.

What is workplace harassment?

Workplace harassment is unwanted behaviour that creates an unsafe, intimidating or unhealthy work environment.

Harassment may include:

- Bullying
- Threats or intimidation
- Repeated insults or humiliation
- Offensive jokes or comments
- Discrimination based on protected characteristics
- Abuse of authority or power

Harassment is often repeated, but one serious incident can also be considered harassment.

Does workplace harassment include cyberbullying or online harassment?

Yes. Harassment is not limited to face-to-face interactions. Online behaviour may be considered workplace harassment when it is connected to the workplace and negatively affects a worker's health or safety. Examples include:

- Repeated abusive emails, text messages, or direct messages.
- Threatening or intimidating posts on social media and other digital platforms.
- Creating or distributing AI-generated sexually explicit images of a person without their consent.
- Sharing rumours, personal information, or humiliating content online.
- Harassing comments made during virtual meetings or through school communication platforms.

Do I have the right to a workplace free from violence and harassment?

Yes.

Every worker has the right to work in an environment that is as safe as reasonably possible and free from workplace violence and harassment.

No one should be expected to accept violence or harassment as “part of the job.”

What is my employer responsible for?

Under Manitoba law (The Workplace Safety and Health Act), employers must take reasonable steps to prevent workplace violence and harassment.

This includes:

- Having written policies on violence and harassment
- Reviewing those policies regularly
- Assessing workplace risks
- Providing information about reporting concerns
- Investigating complaints
- Taking action to stop violence or harassment
- Taking reasonable steps to protect workers

What should I do if I experience violence or harassment?

Your safety comes first. If there is an immediate risk of harm, contact emergency services.

Once it is safe to do so:

1. Report the incident as soon as possible.
2. Record what happened, including dates, times, locations and witnesses.
3. Follow your workplace reporting procedures.
4. Contact MTS if you need support.
5. Seek medical or psychological care if needed.

What should I do if I experience online harassment?

1. Save screenshots, emails, messages, or other evidence.
2. Report the incident according to your school division’s workplace harassment reporting process.
3. Notify your principal or designated contact as soon as possible.
4. Contact MTS if you need support.
5. If the behaviour involves threats of violence or immediate safety concerns, contact law enforcement and follow your workplace emergency procedures.

What if a student is violent?

Violence from a student should never be dismissed simply because of the student’s age or exceptional learning needs.

Incidents should be reported, documented and addressed according to workplace procedures.

Every reported incident helps identify risks and improve safety for everyone.

Can parents or visitors commit workplace violence?

Yes.

Threats, intimidation or physical violence from parents, guardians or visitors are workplace safety issues and should be reported.

Employers have a responsibility to respond and take reasonable steps to protect workers.

Can coworkers or supervisors harass someone?

Yes.

Workplace harassment can involve coworkers, supervisors or employers, as well as other people connected to the workplace.

Everyone has a responsibility to contribute to a respectful workplace.

What if the online harassment comes from a student or parent outside of school hours?

If the behaviour is connected to your work and affects your health, safety, or ability to perform your job, it may still be considered a workplace issue.

Report the behaviour through your employer's workplace violence and harassment procedures, even if it occurred outside regular working hours or on personal social media.

What if domestic violence affects someone's safety at work?

If an employer knows, or reasonably should know, that domestic violence may create a risk in the workplace, they must take reasonable steps to help protect workers.

This could include safety planning, security measures or other protective actions.

Can I refuse unsafe work?

In some situations, yes.

If workplace violence or harassment creates a serious risk to your health or safety or substantially interferes with your ability to do your work, Manitoba law provides workers with the right to refuse unsafe work under certain circumstances.

Follow your workplace procedures and notify your employer/supervisor/principal promptly if you believe you need to exercise this right.

What happens after I report an incident?

Your employer should:

- Take your concerns seriously
- Investigate the situation
- Take steps to stop the behaviour if necessary
- Help prevent future incidents
- Protect your privacy as much as possible during the process

Will my information remain confidential?

Employers should keep complaints as confidential as possible.

Information is shared only when it is necessary to investigate the complaint or take appropriate action.

Can I still make a complaint under other laws?

Yes.

Workplace safety laws do not replace your rights under other legislation, including human rights protections and criminal laws.

Depending on the situation, more than one reporting or complaint process may be available.

How does MTS support me?

MTS will support members with completing reporting forms, connecting with DBP if needed, advice before attending an investigation meeting, support during the investigation meeting, potentially connect with legal.

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Quick Reference Guide

Your Rights at a Glance

Every educator has the right to:

- Work in an environment free from violence and harassment.
- Be treated with dignity and respect.
- Report concerns without fear of reprisal.
- Have reports taken seriously and investigated.
- Know the workplace policies and reporting procedures.
- Receive information and training about workplace violence and harassment.
- Refuse unsafe work when the legal requirements are met.

What Should I Do After an Incident?

Step 1: Make sure everyone is safe.

If anyone is injured or in immediate danger, seek emergency assistance.

Step 2: Report the incident.

Follow your school's reporting procedures as soon as possible.

Step 3: Document what happened.

Record:

- Date and time
- Location
- Who was involved
- What happened
- Any witnesses
- Any injuries or damage

Write down the facts while they are fresh in your mind.

Step 4: Seek medical attention if needed.

Even minor injuries or emotional distress should be assessed if necessary.

Step 5: Access support.

Talk to your principal, union representative and/or KII.



What Counts as Workplace Violence?

Workplace violence may include:

- Hitting
- Kicking
- Biting
- Punching
- Spitting
- Throwing objects
- Pushing or shoving
- Physical restraint
- Attempts to physically assault someone

Violence can come from:

- Students
- Parents or guardians
- Visitors
- Coworkers
- Supervisors
- Members of the public

Violence does not have to cause an injury to be taken seriously.

What Counts as Harassment?

Harassment may include:

- Bullying
- Intimidation
- Threats
- Humiliation
- Yelling
- Offensive comments
- Racist or discriminatory remarks
- Sexual harassment
- Abuse of authority
- Repeated unwanted behaviour

One serious incident may also be considered harassment.

What counts as cyberbullying or online harassment?

Online harassment may include:

- Abusive emails, text messages, or direct messages.
- Threatening or intimidating social media posts.
- Creating or distributing AI-generated sexually explicit images.

- Sharing rumours, personal information, or humiliating content online.
- Harassing comments during virtual meetings or school communication platforms.

Harassment is not limited to face-to-face interactions.

What Is My Employer Responsible For?

Your employer is responsible for taking reasonable steps to keep workers safe.

This includes:

- Having written violence and harassment policies.
- Assessing workplace risks.
- Reviewing policies regularly.
- Providing information and training.
- Investigating concerns.
- Taking action to stop violence or harassment.
- Working to prevent future incidents.

Documentation Checklist

After an incident, record:

- Date
- Time
- Location
- What happened
- Who was involved
- Witnesses
- Injuries
- Property damage
- Actions taken
- Who was notified
- Follow-up required
- Photos of injuries/physical damages to surroundings

Accurate documentation can help ensure appropriate follow-up and improve workplace safety.

Can I Refuse Unsafe Work?

Workers may have the right to refuse unsafe work when workplace violence or harassment creates a serious risk to their health or safety.

If you believe your work is unsafe:

1. Tell your principal/supervisor/ employer immediately.
2. Contact MTS.
3. Follow your workplace reporting procedures.
4. Document your concerns.
5. Follow Manitoba's workplace safety process.