

TITLE: ALLEGED/SUSPECTED VIOLENCE WITHIN A STUDENT'S FAMILY

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1.0 OBJECTIVE

- 1.1 To recognize the responsibility and obligation of the board and its employees to provide support and assistance to students who are victims of or witnesses to family violence.
- 1.2 To ensure compliance where applicable with the mandatory reporting requirements under the *Child and Family Services Act (CFSA)*, as amended and Board Policy P.090.SCO: Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect – Student Under 16 Years of Age.

2.0 DEFINITION

- 2.1 Family violence is defined as physical, sexual or emotional abuse within a family and other forms of violence within a family relationship and includes:
 - a) child abuse;
 - b) spousal abuse (which is primarily directed against women);
 - c) other adult to adult violence; and
 - d) elder abuse.

The Board recognizes that family violence can have a serious negative impact on a child who is a victim of abuse, as well as on a child who is witness to family violence, including a serious negative impact on the child's physical well-being, learning, mental health and/or social functioning.

3.0 POLICY

- 3.1 The OCDSB supports the long-standing community partnership and protocol necessary to deal effectively with issues of family violence and their impact on child witnesses who are in our schools and community.
- 3.2 The Director of Education is authorized to issue such procedures as may be necessary

to implement this policy, including, procedures to:

- a) provide an effective follow-up procedure following a disclosure or suspicion of family violence;
- b) support students, families and, where involved, the Children's Aid Society of Ottawa, police and shelter in serving the child;
- c) increase staff abilities to identify and assist child witnesses of family violence;
- d) improve school-based responses in assisting child witnesses of family violence.

4.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS:

Board Policy P.090.SCO: Reporting Suspected Child Abuse - Student under 16 Years of Age
Board Procedure PR.605.SCO: Reporting Suspected Child Abuse - Student under 16 Years of Age
Board Procedure PR.606.SCO: Alleged/Suspected Violence Within a Student's Family