SUMMARY DOCUMENT OF THE PRACTICAL SUPPORT GUIDE ON
PREVENTING AND MANAGING VIOLENCE AGAINST SCHOOL STAFF

The importance of maintaining healthy and safe work environments goes far beyond ensuring simple well-being in the workplace.

Based on a proven approach to occupational health and safety and adapted to the reality of schools, the practical support guide promotes the following objectives:

- to take concrete action and commit to proactively addressing situations of violence against school staff by providing optimal support to those who are victims
- to provide all school staff with the necessary tools to help them deal with situations of violence
- to determine the actions that must be taken before, during and after a violent incident.

These actions are addressed in full detail in order to expand upon the existing practices of SSCs and SBs.

Employers and workers have obligations regarding occupational health and safety. They are a shared responsibility.
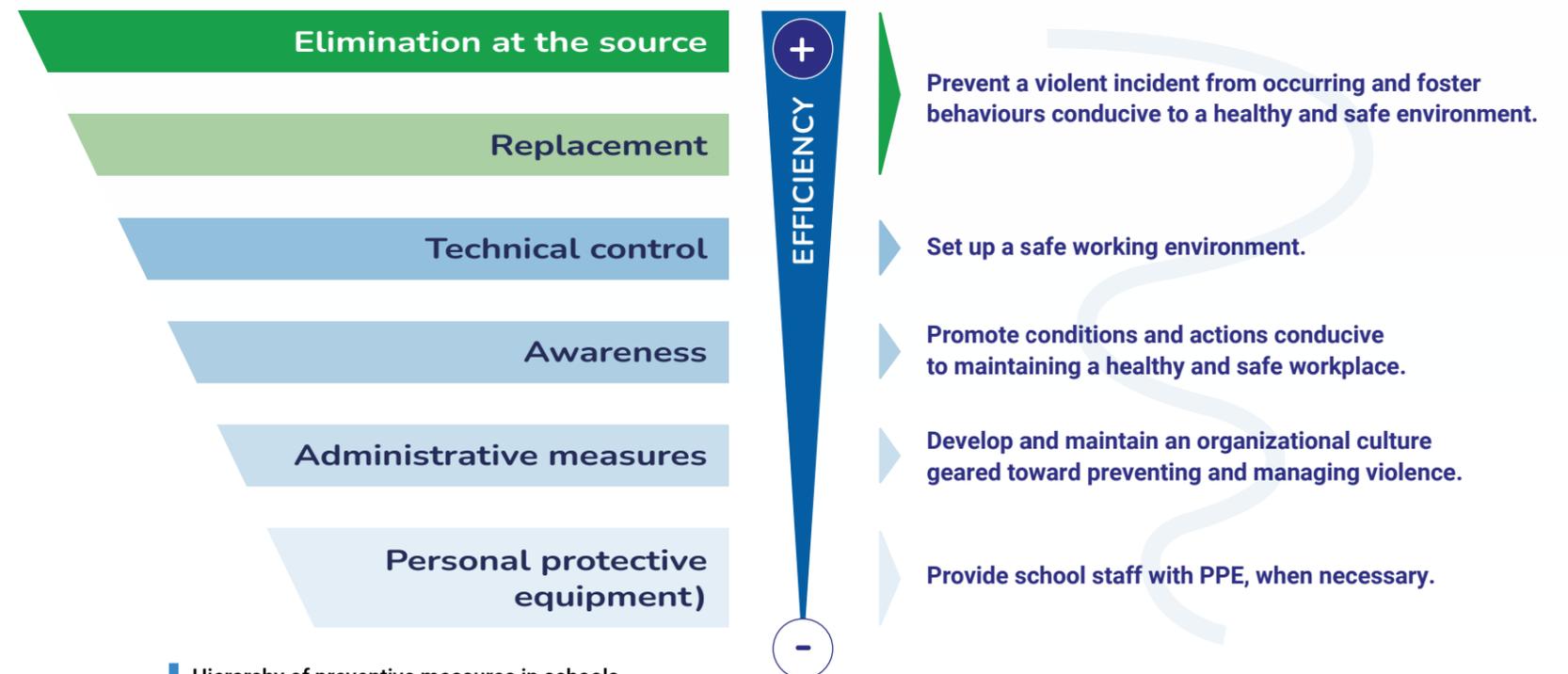
Whether this approach is successful depends on the commitment of not only the employers and workers, but also of all the stakeholders involved in preventing violence (parents, health network, community partners, etc.).

Employers, who are subject to the AROHS, must take steps to **identify, analyze and prioritize risks** in the workplace.

Measures must then be implemented to **eliminate, minimize or control risks** using the hierarchy of preventive measures. The diagram below summarizes the hierarchy of preventive measures, which is intended to be flexible.

It is believed that, when properly applied, it allows for a high level of efficiency in the search for measures that control violence against school staff.

	EFFICIENCY	
Elimination at the source	+	**Prevent a violent incident from occurring and foster behaviours conducive to a healthy and safe environment.**
Replacement		
Technical control		**Set up a safe working environment.**
Awareness		**Promote conditions and actions conducive to maintaining a healthy and safe workplace.**
Administrative measures		**Develop and maintain an organizational culture geared toward preventing and managing violence.**
Personal protective equipment)	−	**Provide school staff with PPE, when necessary.**

Hierarchy of preventive measures in schools

Adapted from: Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CNESST). *Outil d'identification des risques* (2022), 10. cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/sites/default/files/documents/outil-didentification-des-risques.pdf?cid=1661447411.

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Preventive measures (BEFORE)

Elimination at the source and replacement

- **Prevent** a violent incident from occurring and **foster** behaviours conducive to a healthy and safe environment.
- **Implement** educational and preventive interventions for all students (universal measures), workshops, instructional activities, reinforcement, preventive measures from the anti-bullying and anti-violence plan, and rules of conduct.*

Technical control

- **Set up** the work environment in a safe manner by, among other things, implementing an effective communications system and arranging the physical layout of classrooms, rooms and hallways according to the characteristics of individuals.

Awareness

- **Promote** expected behaviours in situations likely to turn into violent incidents.

Administrative measures

- **Support** the full understanding and integration of obligations, policies and procedures by all stakeholders.
- **Inform** staff to improve their knowledge of the risks of violence.
- **Implement** other measures necessary for the work situation.
- **Provide instruction** and **training** to staff members to enable them to acquire the knowledge required and develop the skills necessary to carry out their work safely.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

- **Provide** school staff with PPE, when necessary.

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* With regard to preventive measures, SSCs and SBs can receive support from regional support officers working on the school climate, bullying and violence file, regional support and expertise service agents, or centres of excellence for the English network.

Intervention measures (DURING)

Determine whether a safety risk is present.

Implement the interventions set out in the school emergency plans or protocols.

Adopt behaviours and use strategies aimed at restoring calm:

- **Defuse** a crisis situation.
- **Help** reduce tension.
- **Maintain** a safe distance and position.
- **Use** an appropriate tone and volume of voice, and project calmness.

Wear PPE, if necessary.

Determine whether help from colleagues is needed to manage the situation and, when necessary, apply the previously determined communication procedures.

Apply, when the situations calls for it, the safe physical intervention techniques learned in training.

> Applying the interventions set out in school emergency plans or protocols related to the *Reference Framework for Control Measures in Schools* promotes the safety of both students and school staff.
>
> It is therefore important to refer to the student protocol and the school protocol.

Follow-up measures (AFTER)

Provide staff with **immediate support**.

Quickly inform the school administration, and ensure that staff receive compassionate and empathetic support.

Ensure follow-up with the staff concerned over time.

Offer resources that can provide staff with support outside the workplace.

Document the work event, incident or accident as set out in the organizational procedures.

Inform the people concerned, if applicable.

Plan for **follow-up on the incident** in order to analyze the situation, then, if needed, **update the student's individualized education plan** or other documents that help identify the required interventions.

Plan the measures to be put in place to **promote a successful and sustainable return to work**.

Know how to **proceed** in the event of a right of refusal, a complaint or CNESST intervention by an inspector.

Links

- *Act respecting occupational health and safety.* CQLR, c. S-2.1. https://www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/fr/document/lc/s-2.1?langCont=en.
- *Act respecting industrial accidents and occupational diseases.* CQLR, c. A-3.001. https://www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/fr/document/lc/a-3.001?langCont=en.
- *Act respecting labour standards.* CQLR, c. N-1.1. https://www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/document/cs/N-1.1/20021125.
- *Education Act.* CQLR, c. I-13.3. https://www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/document/cs/i-13.3.
- *Charter of human rights and freedoms.* CQLR, c. C-12. https://www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/fr/document/lc/c-12?langCont=en.
- *Civil Code of Québec.* CQLR, c. CCQ-1991. https://www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/fr/document/lc/ccq-1991?langCont=en.
- Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CNESST). 2025a. *Physical or psychological violence, including spousal, family and sexual violence.* https://www.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/en/prevention-securite/identifier-corriger-risques/liste-informations-prevention/physical-or-psychological-violence-including.
- Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CNESST). 2025b. *Différentes formes de violence.* https://www.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/fr/prevention-securite/sante-psychologique/differentes-formes-violence.
- Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CNESST). 2025c. *Exposition à un événement potentiellement traumatique.* https://www.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/fr/prevention-securite/identifier-corriger-risques/liste-informations-prevention/exposition-un-evenement-potentiellement.
- Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CNESST). 2023. *Aide-mémoire – Violence en milieu de travail.* cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/fr/prevention-securite/identifier-corriger-risques/liste-informations-prevention/violence-en-milieu-travail.
- Québec. Ministère de l'Éducation. 2024. *Reference Framework for Control Measures in Schools.* Québec: Ministère de l'Éducation. https://cdn-contenu.quebec.ca/cdn-contenu/adm/min/education/publications-adm/soutien-etablissements/Cadre-reference_Mesures-controle-AN.pdf.
- Québec. Secrétariat du Conseil du trésor. 2020. *Politique-cadre en matière de prévention et de traitement des situations d'incivilité, de conflit et de harcèlement psychologique ou sexuel au travail.* Québec: Secrétariat du Conseil du trésor. https://www.tresor.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/PDF/publications/politique_cadre_prevention_traitement_incivilite_conflit_harcelement_psychologique_sexuel.pdf.

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