

Occupational Violence and Aggression in Schools Policy

Scope:

This Policy applies to all employees, students, visitors, volunteers and contractors in Department of Education and Training (the Department) workplaces and activities, and instances when performing work offsite.

The Policy outlines the risk management methodology for preventing, managing and responding to health, safety and wellbeing risks posed by occupational violence and aggression in schools.

Commitment and Principles:

The Department values and supports its people and is legally and morally committed to ensuring healthy and safe working and learning environments. The Department recognises that employee health, safety and wellbeing (HSW) is integral to achieving excellent educational and work performance outcomes and commits, so far as reasonably practicable.

Summary (critical information):

- The Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act 2004 requires the Department to provide or maintain systems of work and a working environment that are, so far as is reasonably practicable, safe and without risks to health – including in relation to occupational violence and aggression.
- WorkSafe defines occupational violence as ‘when a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in a situation related to their work.’ It can occur in person, over the phone or online, and be caused by the behaviour of other employees, clients or customers, or members of the public. Further information on types of occupational violence can be found on the WorkSafe Victoria site: [Occupational violence and aggression: Safety basics](#).
- The principal and / or their delegate have responsibilities under the OHS Act 2004 as the Department’s representative and site manager of their school. Principals are responsible for identifying and managing the risks associated with occupational violence and aggression, with expert assistance and support from the Department’s central and regional offices as required.
- Under the OHS Act 2004, employees must take reasonable care for their own health and safety and the safety of others who may be affected by their actions or omissions while at work.
- Central and regional offices provide a range of supports and services to assist principals and employees manage OHS risks, including access to the OHS Advisory Service and local OHS regional officers, who can provide advice about how to manage risks related to occupational violence and aggression.
- Principals must follow the Occupational Violence and Aggression Procedure (in the Procedure column), which sets out the practical step by step instructions for implementing this policy.

Policy:

As site manager, the principal or their delegate, in consultation with school employees and Health and Safety Representatives (HSR), must:

- enter “occupational violence and aggression” as a hazard in the school OHS Risk Register
- identify and record the workplace factor(s) that contribute to the occupational violence and aggression risk in the workplace
- assess the level of risk associated with workplace contributing factors, as per Section 3.0 of the Procedure
- complete a risk assessment if the risk level in the OHS Risk Register is rated ‘High’ or ‘Extreme’, and document the risk assessment using the Risk Assessment Template or equivalent (see specific requirements for student behaviours of concern at Section 5.0 of the Procedure)
- record the current risk controls in the OHS Risk Register, and in any documented risk assessment
- eliminate or reduce the level of risk associated with work-related risk factors that may cause an occupational violence and aggression related injury, so far as is reasonably practicable, by consider the workplace factors.

The principal or their delegate must:

- monitor and review the effectiveness of implemented risk controls on a regular and ongoing basis (e.g. quarterly) in consultation with relevant parties (including the HSR). Additional reviews are required when:
 - an incident or near miss is reported that indicates the risks and controls need updating
 - a new potential risk is identified (e.g. through a report on eduSafe)
- ensure all employees are provided with information, instruction and training about the risks and controls in place to manage occupational violence and aggression in the school
- ensure all hazards, incidents and injuries related to occupational violence and aggression are reported on eduSafe per the [Reporting and Managing School Related Emergencies and Incidents Policy](#).