



Occupational Violence and Aggression Policy

Policy

This 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.

Summary

- The Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic) 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 this 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.
- The principal and/or their delegate have responsibilities under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic) 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 Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic), 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 occupational health and safety risks, including access to the Occupational Health and Safety Advisory Service and local occupational health and safety 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 tab), which sets out the practical step by step instructions for implementing this policy.

Details

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 Occupational Health and Safety (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 3.1 and 3.2 of the Occupational Violence and Aggression 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 3 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 OVA related injury, so far as is reasonably practicable, by considering the workplace factors

The principal and/or their delegate must:

- monitor and review the effectiveness of implemented risk controls on a regular and ongoing basis (for example, 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 (for example, through a report on eduSafe Plus — login required)
- 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 Plus per the Reporting and Managing School Incidents (including emergencies) Policy

Definitions

Occupational violence and aggression

WorkSafe defines this 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 at Occupational violence and aggression: Safety basics.

Related policies

- Behaviour — Students
- Child Safe Standards
- Emergency and Critical Incident Planning
- OHS Risk Management
- Principal Health and Wellbeing

- Restraint and Seclusion
- Worker’s Compensation
- WorkSafe Victoria — Occupational Violence
- Values — Department and VPS Values for School Employees
- VPSC — Leading the Way: Occupational Health and Safety

Relevant legislation

- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006 (Vic)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)

Contacts

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Evaluation and Review cycle

This policy was ratified by School Council in March 2022

It is scheduled for review in August 2025