

OCCUPATIONAL VIOLENCE POLICY

RATIONALE:

To provide a safe and supportive work environment where diversity is valued and everyone is treated with respect, fairness and dignity. Discrimination, sexual and other forms of harassment, bullying, violence and threatening behaviour are unacceptable. All employees, students, parents and visitors are expected to act accordingly.

DEFINITIONS:

The Victorian WorkCover Authority defines occupational violence as: **“any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work. This definition covers a broad range of behaviours that can create a risk to the health and safety of workers.”**

- The term 'occupational violence' applies to all forms of attacks on employees, including:
 - striking, kicking, scratching, biting, spitting or any other type of direct physical contact
 - throwing objects
 - attacking with knives, guns, clubs or any other type of weapon
 - pushing, shoving, tripping
 - any form of indecent (sexual) physical contact
- Violent or threatening behaviour can include: physical acts, oral or written statements, harassing telephone calls, gestures and expressions or behaviours such as stalking, as well as the sending of threatening emails and SMS texting using mobile phones
- A wide range of injuries and illnesses can be caused by exposure to occupational violence
 - **Physical** injuries can include bruising, cuts, abrasions, fractures and sprains
 - **Psychological** injuries can include anxiety, depression, social phobia (withdrawal from usual social interaction), insomnia and stress conditions
- Occupational violence can occur in a number of settings, including
 - the usual workplace
 - off site work situations, such as at school camps, excursions and social functions
 - at the staff member's home or in public places or at community events as a result of a person's role as a DET employee

IMPLEMENTATION:

- If a DET workplace is exposed to the risk of occupational violence, the Principal/Nominee has a delegated duty under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* to institute measures to either eliminate the risk to employees or reduce that risk as far as is practicable i.e.
 - Identify hazards
 - Identify people at risk
 - Assess risks (low, medium or high)
 - Control the hazards
- Appropriate information, instruction or training should be given to provide employees with the awareness, knowledge and skills to deal with:
 - risk factors associated with occupational violence
 - motivation for aggression/violence
 - signs of impending violence
 - prevention measures in place to control risks
 - workplace policies and procedures
- Any incident of occupational violence should be reported to your Principal/Nominee and your Occupational Health and Safety representative. You should also report any threats or 'near misses'. The Principal/Nominee is then required to act in accordance with DET's policies and procedures in relation to critical incidents as set out in the Emergency and Security Management Branch's guidelines. Incidents will be documented and kept in accordance with DET process
- If you have been a victim of occupational violence or if you have witnessed occupational violence, you should report the matter to your Principal/Nominee who is required to act in accordance with DET policies and procedures as follows:

- Contact relevant Emergency Services e.g. Police/Ambulance on 000
- Contact DETs Emergency and Security Management (ESM) on **(03) 9589-6266**. ESM will assess the situation as to whether critical incident stress debriefing is necessary

EVALUATION:

This policy shall be reviewed as part of the ongoing policy and process review.

REFERENCES:

Victoria Police & Ambulance Emergency Telephone Number – 000

DET Occupational Violence Policy

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/management/Pages/occviolence.aspx>

WorkSafe Victoria's *Prevention of Bullying and Violence at Work – Guidance Note 2003*

<http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/safety-and-prevention/health-and-safety-topics/workplace-bullying>

DET Emergency and Security Management 24 Hr Emergency No. – 9589 6266

DET *Managing School Emergencies Manual*

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/health/Pages/emergencieschildren.aspx>

Parent Complaints Policy

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/community/pages/parentcomplaints.aspx>

DET Workplace Bullying Policy

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/management/Pages/workplacebullying.aspx>

DET Respectful Relationships

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/Pages/respectrel.aspx>