



Managing & Reporting School Incidents (Including Emergencies)

Policy

This policy describes the requirements for managing and reporting school incidents, including emergencies.

Summary

- This policy and associated guidelines and procedures apply to incidents that impact students and/or school operations that are brought to the attention of the school regardless of when and where they occurred, provided they impact on the student or other students within the school environment, including camps and excursions.
- Schools must manage and report incidents in accordance with the guidance and procedures described.

Details

This policy (including associated guidelines and procedures on the Guidance tab) applies to incidents that occur during or outside school hours at the following locations:

- at government schools
- services delivered by school councils within the school environment including:
 - outside school hours care
 - kindergartens delivered by school councils on school premises
 - VET programs delivered as part of a government school program
- during travel to and from school
- online school environments
- school camps, excursions, or outdoor adventure activities
- any other location where there is subsequent impact on students or the school community.

An incident is an actual or alleged event or situation that:

- causes harm or creates a risk of causing harm to a student's health, safety or wellbeing either directly or indirectly while under the care or supervision of the school, including international students (for more information about reporting international student related critical incidents, please refer to: Critical incident flowchart (PDF) (staff login required))
- impacts a student and is brought to the attention of the school, regardless of when or where it occurred, provided it is impacting on the student or other students within the school environment
- causes harm or creates a risk of causing harm to an employee's health, safety or wellbeing either directly or indirectly in the work setting
- affects or risks affecting the continuity of school operations, including matters of security (including cyber security), property damage and emergencies
- requires police notification or involves matters of serious conduct
- is a WorkSafe notifiable incident.

School management and reporting

Schools are required to manage incidents according to six stages of the department's management and reporting incidents (including emergencies) process. The Guidance tab provides detailed guidelines and procedures on the 6 stages, which are:

1. Identifying an incident and immediate response
2. Reporting an incident (Report for Support)
3. Ongoing support and recovery
4. Investigation
5. Incident review and closure
6. Analyse and learn

Stage 1: Identifying an incident and immediate response

The immediate safety of students, staff and the education community is paramount. The following actions may be required:

- provide first aid
- contact emergency services on 000
- enact the school's (or site's) emergency management plan
- capture and preserve evidence (such as 'notifiable incidents' to WorkSafe or for criminal investigations)
- contact nominated family or carers.

Stage 2: Reporting an incident (report for support)

Following the immediate response, the principal (or delegate) is responsible for assessing the severity of the incident, using the Severity rating decision-making matrix (PDF) – refer to Guidance tab for detailed advice.

Incidents are rated as either:

- Low
- Medium
- High
- Extreme

Incidents assessed as Low or Medium can be reported directly into eduSafe Plus (staff login required) by the principal (or delegate). The principal (or delegate) is to contact the Incident Support and Operations

Centre (ISOC) on 1800 126 126 to report 'High' or 'Extreme' severity incidents for support (report for support). ISOC provides immediate advice and connects schools to local or centralised services that can support response and recovery. ISOC will report incidents in eduSafe Plus on behalf of the school. This assessment indicates whether the incident is likely to reoccur. If so, then additional support can be sourced from relevant services to mitigate future risk. In addition, all identified hazards, minor injuries and near misses involving employees, volunteers, visitors, contractors and members of the public must be reported in eduSafe Plus. Refer to: OHS Management System Overview – eduSafe Plus.

Certain incidents require additional steps, including the following.

- Notifiable incidents must also be reported to WorkSafe on 13 23 60. The incident site may need to be preserved until a WorkSafe inspector arrives. A completed incident notification form must be submitted within 48 hours.
- Any child protection concerns must be reported to Child Protection for mandatory reports or Child FIRST for any other child protection concerns. Refer to: Protecting Children — Reporting and Other Legal Obligations.
- Any allegations of criminal conduct must be reported to Victoria Police. Refer to: Department Protocol on Reporting Criminal Activity.
- Any allegations of sexual offenses committed by an adult against a child under the age of sixteen must be reported to Victoria Police. Refer to: Police and Child Protection Interviews.
- Allegations of misconduct, unsatisfactory performance, sexual harassment and reportable conduct must be reported to the Employee Conduct Branch. Refer to: Complaints, Misconduct and Unsatisfactory Performance — Teaching Service and Reportable Conduct Scheme
- Any incidents of suspected fraud and/or corruption must be reported to the department's Fraud and Corruption Control Unit. Refer to: Fraud and Corruption Control.

Stage 3: Ongoing support and recovery

The school principal (or delegate) is responsible for providing immediate relief support to impacted students, staff and the education community. Where necessary and appropriate, additional support will be provided by school support staff and corporate office staff based in regional and central offices. When an incident is reported to ISOC, ISOC staff will ask the principal (or delegate) whether they require additional support (including recovery support) during the call. Support available to schools includes resources such as the Managing Trauma Guide (PDF) and Managing Trauma online modules (LearnED).

Stage 4: Investigation

Some incidents may trigger investigations under other department policies and legislative schemes (for example, privacy breaches should be reported in accordance with the Privacy and Information Sharing policy, mandatory reporting to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing). A preliminary investigation screening should be undertaken within 2 days of an incident being reported to the ISOC. For WorkSafe notifiable incidents, the principal and/or their delegate are to conduct a formal incident investigation within 24 hours of the notifiable incident, where possible, using the Hazard and incident investigation template (DOCX) or equivalent.

For the investigation, the principal and/or their delegate may decide to convene an incident investigation team, comprising school leadership staff, the school's health and safety representative (HSR), affected employee and other employees, depending on the nature of the incident. The investigation should seek to identify the causes and any potential hazards and provide recommended control and preventative measures.

Stage 5: Incident review and closure

This stage outlines the process and accountabilities for incident reviews and closure. Reviews are discretionary but provide a valuable learning opportunity. The incident severity rating informs the responsible authority for closing incidents, in consultation with the principal. Incidents are closed when current and/or future risk is eliminated, mitigated or accepted.

Stage 6: Analyse and learn

This stage provides an overview of the department's data analysis framework for analysis of incident information. Incident data analysis includes monitoring, interrogating and acting on identified trends. Security and Emergency Management Division undertake regular data analysis and reporting.

Related policies

- CCTV in Schools – Installation and Management
- Child Protection and Child Safe Standards (PROTECT)
- Complaints, Misconduct and Unsatisfactory Performance — Teaching Service
- Crime Prevention in Schools
- Emergency and Critical Incident Management Planning
- Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Management in Schools
- Police and Child Protection Interviews
- Police — Department Protocol on Reporting Criminal Activity
- Reportable Conduct Scheme
- Students Absconding or Going Missing from School
- Suicide Prevention and Response
- Weapons and Other Harmful Items — Banning, Searching and Seizing

Relevant legislation

- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Health Records Act 2001 (Vic)
- Ministerial Order 1359 – Child Safe Standards (PDF)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)
- Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 (Vic)
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)

Contacts

To report an emergency or an incident of High or Extreme severity to the Incident Support and Operations Centre (ISOC) call 1800 126 126. ISOC will arrange for an eduSafe Plus report to be made.

Note: Multiple lower order incidents may necessitate support to manage the cumulative impact of incidents on the health and wellbeing of students, staff and the education community. In these circumstances, principals can request additional support by contacting ISOC.

To report a notifiable incident to WorkSafe call 13 23 60 in accordance with this policy.

Principals (or delegates) can contact the OHS Advisory Service on 1300 074 715 or via email at safety@education.vic.gov.au for help with reporting or managing staff related incidents and hazards in eduSafe Plus, implementing the OHS Management System, conducting risk assessments and other OHS issues.

Principals (or delegates) can contact the IT Service Desk on 1800 641 943 or access the Service Portal to submit a general enquiry, report IT faults and issues or for help with navigating the eduSafe Plus system. The IT Service Desk can also help you with technical difficulties, network issues and general IT advice.

For general queries or feedback in relation to this policy or guidance, contact the Policy and Intelligence Unit, Security and Emergency Management Division via email at incident.support@education.vic.gov.au or phone 03 7022.

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed in accordance with the school's three-year review cycle.

Last ratified by School Council in March 2025