

COVID-19 Safety Management Plan

The [advice on COVID-19 for schools](#) is evolving over time and therefore the [OHS guidances and supports](#) need to evolve accordingly.

This **Safety Management Plan** applies to all schools, and outlines some key health, safety and wellbeing hazards that schools should plan for. It links to the controls described by the latest health and safety guidance, and the central and regional supports available.

Principals should consult with their local Health and Safety Representative(s) and Health and Safety Committee(s) (if applicable) to implement the recommended controls to the maximum extent reasonably practicable.

The **OHS Advisory Service** will be proactively contacting each school early in Term 2 and is available to support principals to create a specific Safety Management Plan for your school if required, for instance, if there are local issues in implementing the latest guidance or accessing support. If you require immediate assistance, please call 1300 074 715 or email safety@edumail.vic.gov.au

Employees are encouraged to use [EduSafe](#) to report hazards, incidents and injuries to ensure effective and timely resolution of OHS issues, as well as escalation for further supports when required.

This plan covers four key areas of risk ('hazard types'):

- Infectious Disease (Infection Prevention and Control) – page 2
- Working Alone, in Isolation or from Home – page 3
- Occupational Violence and Aggression – page 4
- Mental Health and Wellbeing – page 5.

Hazard Type	Hazard Description	Recommended Controls	Examples of practical solutions
Infectious Disease (Infection Prevention and Control)	<p>Staff and students may contract disease through social interactions.</p> <p>Physical distancing is unable to be maintained (for example, in specialist school settings).</p> <p>Local supplies of personal hygiene products may be limited.</p> <p>Misuse of hand sanitiser including ingestion</p>	<p>Refer to the Return to School Operations Guide for advice on physical distancing: classrooms, learning spaces and offices.</p> <p>Refer to maintaining good health hygiene.</p> <p>Refer to personal hygiene products, including sourcing.</p> <p>Refer to Return to School Operations Guide (e.g. playgrounds).</p> <p>Refer to ChemWatch to access hand sanitiser safety data sheet.</p> <p>Ensure adequate supervision and safe storage of supplies.</p>	<p>Circulate the latest advice, including displaying on-site signage.</p> <p>Discuss implementation issues for on-site service provision, including planning recesses and lunchtimes, and supervision of hygiene products.</p> <p>Conduct regular visual inspections of the workplace to check that recommended risk controls are implemented and working effectively.</p> <p>Escalate issues to the OHS if issues cannot be resolved locally.</p>
	<p>Staff and students may contract disease by touching contaminated surfaces.</p>	<p>Refer to environmental cleaning services. Also access to cleaning supplies and services. For playgrounds please refer to Return to School Operations Guide</p>	<p>Oversee liaison with local service providers for tailored implementation at specific site/s.</p>
	<p>Vulnerable Workforce (higher risk of serious illness).</p>	<p>Refer to Return to School Operations Guide</p>	<p>Ensure consultation with your staff, and incorporate into workforce planning.</p>
	<p>A confirmed case (or a close contact of a confirmed case) may occur among staff, students or the school community.</p>	<p>Refer to Emergency Response Plan for Novel Coronavirus (COVID 19). Also advice regarding unwell students and staff.</p>	<p>Circulate expectations to the school community, and communicate the protocols to staff.</p>

Hazard Type	Hazard Description	Recommended Controls	Examples of practical solutions
			Stay in contact with affected staff or families remotely.

Hazard Type	Hazard Description	Recommended Controls	Examples of practical solutions
Working Alone, in Isolation or from Home	The home work environment may cause injury (noise, lighting, thermal comfort, and slips, trips and falls).	Refer to working alone, in isolation or from home policy and procedure . This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OHS guidance for working from home • ergonomic advice • tips for working from home safely and productively. Advice and support (including ergonomic advice via video-conference) is available to all staff via the OHS Advisory Service.	Promote the OHS advice and support to staff. Enable reasonable access to available school equipment. Proactively plan with staff who have a known pre-existing injury. Establish protocols for regular check-ins with staff.
	Staff may suffer musculoskeletal disorders by adopting static postures while using laptops, portable devices or personal computers.		
	Increased isolation (on-site and/or at home) may increase risk of injury.		

Hazard Type	Hazard Description	Recommended Controls	Examples of practical solutions
Occupational Violence and Aggression	<p>Online, over the phone or other remote threatening or aggressive behaviour by students, parents/carers, school staff or other members of school community.</p>	<p>Refer to the occupational violence and aggression policy and procedure, which covers online and on-site behaviour.</p>	<p>Ensure onsite staff are ready to manage the students that will be attending.</p>
	<p>On-site violence, bullying or harassment by students, parents/carers, school staff or other members of school community.</p>	<p>Also, refer to Creating Respectful School Communities (including template Statement of Values), the Respect for School Staff local policy template, and resources available through Respectful Relationships and Schoolwide Positive Behaviour Support.</p>	<p>Set expectations for behaviour with the school community, and promote appropriate ways for parents to raise their concerns.</p>
	<p>Staff experiencing stress or anxiety stemming from exposure to increasing onsite or online occupational violence and aggression from parents.</p>	<p>Escalated referrals will be managed by the Employee Wellbeing Response Team, and Complex Matter Support Team.</p>	<p>Discuss extra supports or strategies for staff who engage with anyone known to present a risk.</p>
		<p>Refer to the mental health and wellbeing advice on the OHSMS Covid page, and the relevant policy and procedure.</p>	<p>Encourage staff to report incidents, de-brief, and seek escalated support (e.g. through EAP) if required.</p>

Hazard Type	Hazard Description	Recommended Controls	Examples of practical solutions
Mental Health and Wellbeing	Staff experiencing changes to workload (increase/decrease) from modifications in tasks and priorities.	<p>Refer to the mental health and wellbeing advice on the OHSMS Covid page, and the relevant policy and procedure.</p> <p>Refer to the Return to Work Coordinator Portal.</p> <p>Refer to the Principal Health and Wellbeing services on the OHSMS Covid page.</p> <p>Refer to DET Flexible Work Policy.</p> <p>Refer to Return to School Operations Guide</p> <p>Video-counselling is available via the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for all staff and their adult family members.</p>	<p>Consult (check-in) with your staff on how they are feeling with the current situation, encourage managers to be flexible, and support remote contact between colleagues.</p> <p>Have regular conversations to provide as much clarity and flexibility as possible about tasks, priorities and the way work can be delivered (e.g. pre-recorded lessons).</p> <p>Encourage staff to use EAP and other supports and resources available.</p> <p>Ensure there are adjusted return to work strategies for people on sick leave or Workers' Compensation leave.</p>
	Balancing non-work related demands (e.g. caring responsibilities).		
	Staff experiencing disengagement and low morale regarding clarity of tasks, team roles and evolving priorities.		
	Staff experiencing uncertainty, stress, anxiety from the transition to working from home arrangements.		
	Staff experiencing uncertainty and anxiety about the COVID-19 risks to their personal health (especially if working onsite).		
	Staff experiencing isolation and changes in levels of support from leaders and colleagues as a result of the changed arrangements.		
	Aggravation of stress caused by pre-existing conditions (e.g. existing mental health conditions, disabilities, vulnerable cohorts and staff on leave, including Workers' Compensation or sick leave, etc.).		