

Incident Notification and Response Procedures

Read these procedures in conjunction with the Incident Notification and Response Policy.

Each workplace must establish local systems for responding to workplace incidents, based on these procedures. This includes creating and maintaining records of key actions and decisions, as well as a register of injuries and first aid records. The records management program provides further information on the department's record keeping requirements.

Immediate response to an incident and the notification process

When an incident occurs, all employees are required to take immediate appropriate action to provide emergency care and first aid to anyone injured and contact emergency services if required.

For all incidents, employees must implement an appropriate incident response commensurate with the circumstances of the incident, which may include:

- immediate provision of first aid
- contacting emergency services (triple zero, 000)
- activating the local emergency management plan
- securing the area to keep the site safe, to prevent further incident or injury and to adhere to any non-disturbance requirements for a notifiable incident under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- notifying the incident to the line manager
- reporting the incident to the relevant departmental area (see Appendix 1: Incident notification)
- contacting parents/carers or next of kin
- cooperating with emergency services
- coordinating post-incident support services for anyone impacted by the incident
- maintaining a record of decisions made and actions taken.

Notify the relevant line manager and departmental area about an incident as soon as practical to facilitate immediate assistance to support incident response activities at the workplace. In addition, the workplace should coordinate the provision of [student support services](#) and [post-incident support](#) services for anyone impacted by the incident.

To reduce the risk of a similar event happening again, investigate the incident to identify and implement corrective actions.

The department provides a broad range of services to help schools and departmental workplaces manage incidents. Appendix 2 of these procedures provides an overview of these services and the contact details of relevant directorates that can assist a workplace to manage issues and develop strategies or corrective actions in response to an incident. Schools and workplaces are encouraged to access these services to assist them as appropriate.

Incident notification

In the event of an emergency, always contact emergency services on triple zero (000) first.

When reporting an incident, injury, near miss or hazard, employees will need to report it to the relevant line manager so they can implement local workplace protocols for incident notification and response. Employees will also need to report the incident to the Incident Report and Support Hotline by calling 1800 811 523.

There are two categories of incidents that will be recorded and shared with relevant stakeholders for appropriate consideration and response:

- a workplace incident – occurs either in the workplace or during work activities, even if they occur outside the normal workplace, such as on excursions or during community events
- a non-workplace incident – does not occur at a school or workplace or on a related activity, but the incident has the potential to impact students, staff and the school community, such as a student or staff accident or death outside of work or school.

Employees must report particular incidents to the **Incident Report and Support Hotline on 1800 811 523** within the following timeframes:

- **immediately** – any **incidents notifiable under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011** to SafeWork NSW; Appendix 3 contains detailed information about the types of incidents that are notifiable under work health and safety legislation. In brief, a ‘notifiable incident’ will include, for example:
 - the death of a person
 - a serious injury or illness requiring immediate treatment as an inpatient in a hospital or immediate treatment for an amputation, serious head injury, serious eye injury, serious burn, the separation of skin from underlying tissue (for example, de-gloving), spinal injury, loss of bodily function or serious laceration or incident requiring medical treatment within 48 hours of exposure to a substance

- a dangerous incident that exposes any person to serious risk to their health and safety following exposure to an uncontrolled substance, explosion or fire, electric shock, fall from height, collapse of a structure
- **within the first hour** of the incident occurring – all incidents that result in the attendance of emergency services or that result in activation of an emergency management plan (for example, evacuation or lock down of an area)
- **as soon as practicable** (within 24 hours) – **all other incidents, including all incidents of assault in accordance with requirements under the Crimes Act**. This includes all other matters that may be reportable to police or have been reported to police. The Incident Report and Support Hotline is staffed by NSW Police Officers who provide advice to employees about school-related offences. A report to the Incident Report and Support Hotline brings an incident to the attention of police, in line with requirements under the Crimes Act to report child abuse offences

If there is any uncertainty as to whether to notify the incident, it is recommended that the incident be notified to the Incident Report and Support Hotline.

Minor student injuries that arise from normal play incidents, such as cuts and bruises that do not arise from a notifiable incident or offence under relevant legislation do not need to be reported to the Incident Report and Support Hotline but should be treated and documented within first aid records at the workplace in accordance with First Aid Procedures. However, schools must notify any incident or injury to a student that is a result of a safety hazard or potentially dangerous incident or offence.

From time to time, incidents occur that involve students who have an established behaviour support plan. Where an incident arises from a behaviour that is identified and effectively managed within that plan, an incident notification may not be required. However incidents that arise from new or escalating behaviours (for example, behaviours that are outside of that plan), or incidents that results in harm or injury to another person, or activation of lockdown/evacuation or emergency services being called should be reported to the Incident Report and Support Hotline. Where an incident is not reported to the hotline, schools are still required to take appropriate action following an incident to review student plans and seek advice from relevant areas as required.

The types of incidents that are required to be reported are described in a table located at Appendix 1.

Information sharing

To ensure support for a workplace manager responding to an incident, the department needs a whole-of-department response. Each directorate within the department is responsible for sharing incident notifications (as appropriate) with other areas in the department. This is to support a coordinated and effective response, which includes providing support to the workplace.

When an incident is reported to the Incident Report and Support Hotline, the information will be shared with other relevant areas including School Operations and Performance, Legal Services, Media unit, Child Wellbeing unit, School Infrastructure NSW, and others as appropriate. This reduces the need for a workplace manager to make multiple calls to various areas, enabling managers to focus on managing an incident locally.

Incidents that may amount to reportable conduct or misconduct by a staff member must be reported directly to the Employee Performance and Conduct directorate.

Lessons drawn from incidents may also be shared to inform and strengthen risk management practices across the department.

Appendix 2 provides an overview of the areas within the department that can provide support services and their contact numbers. Schools and workplaces are encouraged to access these services to assist in the management and response to issues and incidents in the workplace.

Post incident support

For each workplace incident, managers must implement and communicate post-incident support services to those affected. This may include arranging student counselling services and communicating information to employees on how to access post incident support services and/or facilitating support services on site. Post-incident support services should also be arranged for those affected by non-work-related incidents.

[Post incident support services](#) are arranged through the Health and Safety directorate. Information about employee post incident support services will be provided when an incident is reported to the Incident Report and Support Hotline or through post incident support services offered by the Health and Safety directorate. These resources are also available from the [EAP – Supporting You](#) website.

Related information

The department offers a range of services and support to schools and department workplaces. Advice and support can be obtained from the appropriate area to manage issues as appropriate. A list of key contacts for incident notification is located at Appendix 2. Resources to consider may include:

- emergency management procedures and supporting [resources](#)
- legal issues [bulletins](#)
- [Safety Alerts](#)

- relevant guidelines, including [student safety](#) and health care procedures such as anaphylaxis
- mandatory reporting [obligations](#)
- [Child Protection Policy and implementation documents](#): Responding to and reporting students at risk of harm
- [responding to allegations](#) against employees in the area of child protection
- managing [complaints and feedback](#)
- responding to student suicide: support [guidelines](#) for schools
- [guidelines](#) for schools responding to problematic or harmful sexualised behaviours between children.

Appendix 1: Incident notification

Tables A to C identify the range of incidents that can occur within department schools and workplaces that are to be reported to **the Incident Report and Support Hotline by calling 1800 811 523**. If there is any uncertainty as to whether to report an incident, it is recommended that the incident be reported. Anyone can report an incident to the Incident Report and Support Hotline. Staff reporting an injury or incident must also inform their relevant manager so they can implement local protocols for incident notification and response.

Table D identifies other reporting requirements that are reportable to other business areas of the department. This includes for example, the notification of incidents relating to child protection matters and the notification of allegations of misconduct or criminal conduct against employees.

Where any of these incident matters amount to reportable conduct or misconduct by a staff member, they must be reported to the Employee Performance and Conduct directorate.

In the event of an emergency, always contact emergency services on triple zero (000) first.

Table A: Student related incidents

| Sub-type | Incident description |
|---|--|
| Abduction/attempted abduction | Removing a person or attempting to remove a person to another location against their will and without authority to do so. |
| Child approach | An adult approaching and/or intimidating a child to coerce them do something or go somewhere against their will. |
| Suicide, attempted suicide, self-harm | Deliberate act of harming oneself or taking one's life. |
| Traumatic non-workplace incident | Where an incident has occurred resulting in death or injury to a member of the school or school community, impacting the wellbeing of staff, students or the school community. |
| Usage and consumption of substances | Student is witnessed using substances (such as drugs) or appears to be under the effects of a substance based on supporting information. |
| Problematic and harmful sexualised behaviour | The term 'problematic or harmful sexualised behaviours' covers a broad spectrum of behaviours. These can include pressure, coercion, aggression, bribery, secrecy or other grooming behaviours. They can include sexting, re-enactments of specific adult sexual activity, sexual play |

| Sub-type | Incident description |
|--|---|
| | with younger children and non-consensual groping or touching of another child's genitals. A student may exhibit problematic or harmful sexualised behaviours in their interactions with another student at school, during a school-related activity or outside of a school setting. These behaviours may also be exhibited in interactions with siblings or other close family members away from school. |
| Absconding/ missing student | An event or situation where a student's whereabouts are unknown or a student has absconded from school. |
| Inappropriate administration of prescribed medication | A situation where a student has been administered an incorrect dose of their medication or has been administered a dose of medication that has not been prescribed to them. |
| Risk of neglect, abuse, exploitation, violence | An event, situation or suspicion or threat that a child is at risk of harm, or significant harm from another person (including risk or threat from a student). |
| Custody issue | An incident where an adult tries to take a child from a school without consent. |
| Cyber incidents | The use of telecommunication devices to threaten, harass, stalk, bully, create offence or defame a specific person or group. Cyber incidents are of a threatening nature and can be shared with a wide audience using equipment or medium such as email, websites, phones and social media sites for negative purposes. Includes hacking into a person's social media site, email or web pages to misrepresent or harass. |
| Sexting | The digital transmission of sexually explicit or sexually implied messages or images, especially photographs or videos. Usually by social media platforms or telecommunication devices. |
| Assault, including accidental injuries | Intentional or reckless act that causes harm to another person, or accidental injuries that occur in circumstances where there was no intention to cause harm or injure. |
| Anti-social and extremist behaviour | Behaviour that causes concern that a person may be at risk from others who believe that fear, terror and violence are justified to achieve ideological, political or social change. |
| Consensual sexual acts | Sexual or sexually explicit contact that occurs with the consent of the recipient, but one or both of the students are under 16 years. |
| Indecent exposure | A person, adult or child that intentionally shows their sexual organs to another person/child, or in public. |

| Sub-type | Incident description |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Steal, extort or fraud | <p>Steal: Take another person's property without permission or legal right.</p> <p>Extort: Obtain benefit or something by force, threats or other unfair means.</p> <p>Fraud: Wrongful or criminal deception resulting in financial or personal gain.</p> |
| Anaphylaxis | Any incident where an adrenalin auto-injector (EpiPen) is administered or an ambulance called to assess and assist a person presumed to be having a severe allergic reaction. |
| Student injury | Any student injury at school or during a school-related activity resulting in emergency services being called, or which requires medical treatment or absence from the school. |

Table B: Staff related incidents

| Sub-type | Incident description |
|---|---|
| Personal injury, illness or health condition | Personal injury, illness or health condition that requires recovery at work assistance or case management (for example, a return to work plan). |
| Suicide, attempted suicide, self-harm or suicidal ideation | Deliberate act of harming oneself, or taking one's life, or concern regarding the intentions of a person. |
| Workplace injury or illness (physical or psychological) | Any workplace injury or illness resulting in first aid, emergency services being called, medical treatment or absence from the workplace. |
| Vehicle accidents | When a vehicle collides with another vehicle, building or other object or person, resulting in damage, injuries or death. |
| Cyber incidents | The use of telecommunication devices to threaten, harass, stalk, bully, create offence or defame a specific person or group. Using equipment or mediums like email, websites, phones and social media sites for negative purposes. Includes hacking into a person's social media site, email or web pages in order to misrepresent or harass. |
| Assault, including accidental injury | Intentional or reckless act that causes harm to another person without their consent, or accidental injury that occurs in circumstances where there was no intention to cause harm or injure (including assault or accidental injury of a staff member by a student). |
| Indecent exposure | A person, adult or child that intentionally shows their sexual organs to another person/child, or in public. |
| Steal, extort or fraud | <p>Steal: Take another person's property without permission or legal right.</p> <p>Extort: Obtain benefit or something by force, threats or other unfair means.</p> <p>Fraud: Wrongful or criminal deception resulting in financial or personal gain.</p> |

Table C: Incidents impacting schools and workplaces

| Sub-type | Incident description |
|---|---|
| Anti-social and extremist behaviour | Behaviour that causes concern that a person may be at risk from others who believe that fear, terror and violence are justified to achieve ideological, political or social change. |
| Intruder on site | Someone forcibly or randomly entering a site or building without consent. This includes a person or group of people entering with an intent to cause serious disruption to services, threaten or intimidate or to cause harm to others. |
| Parent/carer/visitor behaviour | This includes repeated aggressive behaviour or single incidents of violence or threats to intimidate or harm a member of the school, including staff, students or others who are at the school. |
| Fire | Any fire that causes damage to a school structure, whether extinguished by staff or by Fire and Rescue NSW or Rural Fire Service, and which interrupts school operations. |
| Malicious damage | A person who causes damage to property. |
| Injury to a visitor or community member | An injury resulting in emergency services being called or which requires medical treatment. |
| Environmental exposure | Any incident where there are concerns relating to potential exposure to asbestos or chemicals, mould and so on. |
| Outbreak of a communicable or infectious disease | A communicable disease is spread from one person to another through a variety of ways that include contact with blood and bodily fluids, breathing in an airborne virus or being bitten by an insect. |
| Fatality | Any incident that results in the death of a person on or near a department workplace or school or other school-related activity. |
| Bomb threat, suspicious packages | A threat, usually verbal or written, to detonate an explosive or incendiary device to cause property damage, death or injuries, whether or not such a device actually exists. |
| Drug-related incidents | Drugs (or drug-like substance) or paraphernalia found on a person, in their possession or at the school or at offsite school-based activity |
| Weapons or knives | Weapon or knives found at school, office or during school-related activity. This includes offsite activities. |

| Sub-type | Incident description |
|---|--|
| Natural disaster impacting operations | Any bushfire, flood or storm situation that results in the school ceasing operations, relocating to an alternate location, operating in reduced capacity (for example, limited staff on site) or activating their Emergency Management Plan. |
| Temporary ceasing of school operations | Any other incident or emergency situation, natural or man-made that has occurred on or near a department workplace or school, or during an excursion or other offsite activity, and results in the school ceasing operations or activating their Emergency Management Plan, for example, gas leak structural fire, hazardous materials leak. |
| Utility failure | Total loss of electricity, gas or water supply for a period extending beyond a reasonable period (for example, 1 to 3 hours) that results in activation of the school's Emergency Management Plan. |
| Police operation in local area impacting school operations | An offsite operation being conducted by NSW Police that results in a school activating lockdown, lockout or evacuation actions. |
| Non-workplace incidents | An event that does not occur at a school or workplace or on a related activity, which has the potential to impact students, staff and the school community, such as a student or staff accident or death outside of work or school. |
| Workplace hazard or near miss | An incident that has the potential for injury or damage (for example a faulty electrical switch with exposed wires). |

Table D: Other reporting requirements

The following incidents are also reportable to the business area as noted in the below table:

| Incident type | Contact name | Contact number |
|--|--|--|
| Allegations against employees of misconduct, criminal conduct or reportable conduct | Employee Performance and Conduct directorate | (02) 7814 3722 |
| Child protection concerns | <p>The Child Protection Helpline (Family and Community Services) should only be contacted for matters involving risk of significant harm.</p> <p>Where there are risk of harm concerns about children and young people that do not meet the threshold of suspected risk of significant harm, the department's Child Wellbeing unit can provide advice and support for appropriate local responses.</p> | <p>FACS: 132 111</p> <p>Child Wellbeing unit: (02) 9269 9400</p> |
| Urgent maintenance issues | School Infrastructure NSW | 132 779 |
| Contentious issues, including major complaints or unfavorable media attention | Media unit | (02) 7814 1559 |

Appendix 2: Department services and support

The department provides a broad range of services to support workplaces to manage incidents. The table below provides an overview of these services and contact numbers. Workplaces are encouraged to access these services to assist them to respond and effectively manage incidents.

Table A: Support for managing incidents

| Area | Services | Contact number |
|--|--|-----------------------|
| Health and Safety directorate | <p>The Health and Safety directorate offers a range of health and wellbeing services and support including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seconded police officers who provide advice on police and other criminal matters • case management services for incident response and injury and other health-related matters • coordination of post-incident support for staff and other people impacted by an incident • support for natural disaster planning and response • incidents or concerns relating to anti-social or extremist behaviour • support following a workplace incident, including incident review and risk management services • support following a workplace incident, including injury management and recovery at work processes • coordination and response to matters raised by SafeWork NSW. | 1800 811 523 |
| Legal Services unit | <p>Support in relation to legal advice including the <i>Inclosed Lands Protection Act 1901</i>, family law and legal aspects of managing incidents relating to weapons, searches, illegal drugs and court orders.</p> | (02) 7814 3896 |

| Area | Services | Contact number |
|----------------------------------|---|--|
| Child Wellbeing unit | <p>The Child Wellbeing unit is available to principals and workplace managers to assist and support them in meeting their legal obligations in responding to concerns about the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people.</p> <p>The Child Wellbeing unit must be contacted when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there are concerns about risk of harm that do not meet the threshold of significant harm but are not trivial • the NSW Mandatory Reporter Guide indicates this should be done • there is an observable pattern of cumulative harm that does not meet the threshold of significant harm • when a report has been made to the Child Protection Helpline but has been screened out as not reaching the threshold of risk of significant harm. <p>The Child Wellbeing unit should also be contacted if Family and Community Services has requested that an action be taken and concerns are held about taking that action.</p> | (02) 9269 9400 |
| Media unit | The Media unit provides support in relation to contentious issues or media concerns. It can assist if an incident may generate media attention. | (02) 7814 1559 |
| School Infrastructure NSW | Support in relation to asset-related safety issues including, for example: tree safety, equipment safety, building maintenance and other local support for maintenance issues. | 132 779 |
| School Security unit | Advice and support in relation to security issues in schools including arson, break-and-enter, vandalism, trespass and personal safety. The unit provides a range of security guard services, maintains and repairs intruder alarm, CCTV (video surveillance) and electronic access control systems and undertakes the provision of onsite security risk assessments. Schools are also assisted with the design and installation of new and | (02) 9672 2000 1300 880 021 (After Hours) SSUCustomerservice@det.nsw.edu.au |

| Area | Services | Contact number |
|---|---|---|
| | upgraded security systems and security fencing. | |
| School Services Teams | Provide advice and support schools to meet the needs of students with diverse and complex learning and support needs. Network support through offices across the state. | http://www.edservices.det.nsw.edu.au/ |
| Employee Performance and Conduct directorate | Concerns about employee performance or conduct including potential allegations of a child protection nature against employees or criminal conduct by employees. | (02) 7814 3722 |

Appendix 3: Notifiable incidents

If there is a serious injury or illness, a death or a dangerous incident in a departmental workplace or school or during a department activity offsite, employees must **report this incident immediately to the Incident Report and Support Hotline on 1800 811 523**. The Health and Safety directorate will undertake the necessary reporting to SafeWork NSW.

What is a notifiable incident?

A 'notifiable incident' under the work health and safety legislation relates to:

- the death of a person
- a serious injury or illness
- a dangerous incident

Notifiable incidents may relate to any person (employee, student, contractor or visitor). In the event of a notifiable incident, employees must take immediate action to provide first aid and secure the area to prevent further incident or injury. The site where the incident occurred (including any equipment, plant, substance, structure) should be secured and not disturbed until a SafeWork NSW inspector arrives at the site or any earlier time that an inspector directs.

What is a serious injury or illness?

Only the most serious health and safety incidents are notifiable, and only if they are work-related. A **serious injury or illness** of a person means an injury or illness requiring the person to have:

- a immediate treatment as an in-patient in a hospital
- b immediate treatment for
 - the amputation of any part of the body
 - a serious head injury
 - a serious eye injury
 - a serious burn
 - the separation of skin from an underlying tissue (such as de-gloving or scalping)
 - a spinal injury
 - the loss of a bodily function (such as loss of consciousness, movement of a limb, loss of sight/hearing or loss of an internal organ)
 - serious lacerations
- c medical treatment within 48 hours of exposure to a substance (chemicals, airborne contaminants, human or animal blood and body substances).

Notification is also required for any infection or illness arising from contact with animals (zoonotic diseases) where work is a significant contributing factor.

What is a dangerous incident?

A **dangerous incident** is one that exposes any person to a serious risk from exposure to a substance such as:

- an uncontrolled escape, spillage or leakage of a substance
- an uncontrolled implosion, explosion or fire
- an uncontrolled escape of gas or steam
- an uncontrolled escape of a pressurised substance
- electric shock
- the fall or release from a height of any plant, substance or thing
- the collapse, overturning, failure or malfunction of, or damage to, any plant that is required to be registered for use under the regulations (for example, a crane)
- the collapse or partial collapse of a structure
- the collapse or failure of an excavation or of any shoring supporting an excavation
- the inrush of water, mud or gas in workings, in an underground excavation or tunnel
- the interruption of the main system of ventilation in an underground excavation or tunnel.

Notification is also required where there has been exposure to a substance that is likely to create a serious risk to health or safety in the future, for example, asbestos or hazardous chemicals.