

WORK-RELATED VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact our office administrative team, on (03) 5248-1400.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the risk management methodology for preventing, managing, and responding to health, safety and wellbeing risks posed by work-related violence and other unsafe behaviours in our school.

DEFINITIONS & CONTEXT

WorkSafe defines work-related violence 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 work-related violence can be found at [Work-related violence: a guide for employers](#).

POLICY

Newcomb Secondary College is committed to providing a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for all students, staff, and members of our community.

Under the OHS Act, employees must take reasonable care of their own health and safety and the safety of others who may be affected by their actions or omissions while at work.

In order to meet their OHS obligations as site manager, the principal or their delegate, in consultation with school employees and health and safety representatives (HSR), must:

- enter 'work-related violence' as a hazard in the school [OHS risk register \(XLSX\)](#)
- identify and record the workplace factor(s) that contribute to the work-related violence risk in the workplace
- assess the level of risk associated with workplace contributing factors, as per section 3.1 and 3.2 of the Work-Related Violence in Schools 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 \(DOCX\)](#) or equivalent (refer to specific requirements for student challenging behaviours 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 a work-related violence 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](#) – staff login required)
- ensure all employees are provided with information, instruction and training about the risks and controls in place to manage work-related violence in the school
- ensure all hazards, incidents and injuries related to work-related violence are reported on eduSafe Plus per the [Managing and Reporting School Incidents \(Including Emergencies\) Policy](#).

The school may consult with central and regional offices who can offer 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 support officers, who can provide advice about how to manage risks related to work-related violence.

PROCEDURE

At Newcomb Secondary College, the following procedure will be followed-

1.0 Risk Assessment

1.1 Identify Hazards

The principal and/or their delegate, in consultation with health and safety representatives (HSR) and employees must enter 'work-related violence' in the 'Hazard Description' column of the school [Occupational Health and Safety \(OHS\) Risk Register \(XLSX\)](#)

The principal and/or their delegate, in consultation with HSRs and employees must 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 \(DOCX\)](#) or equivalent.

1.2 Identify the contributing workplace factors

The principal and/or their delegate, in consultation with the HSR and employees, are to identify and record the contributing workplace factor(s) that alone, or in combination, may contribute to the WRV risk in the workplace. Contributing factors may occur at the level of the school, the Department, or the broader community.

Schools should consider the following questions/statements to assist with identifying workplace hazards and contributing factors:

Effective Systems

- a) Workplace design
- b) Resourcing and workflow
- c) Incident management systems and planning
- d) Consider the strategies contained in-
 - [Risk controls – student challenging behaviours](#)
 - [Risk controls – parent/carer behaviours](#)

Capability and Culture

- e) Organisational culture and school climate
- f) Education & training
- g) Consultation and information sharing

Supporting our people

- h) Incident response
- i) Department support

2.0 Risk Controls- General

Newcomb Secondary College is committed to addressing determined or potential risks via control as such-

2.1 Development and selection of risk controls

Appropriate risk controls are critical to ensure staff are provided with the highest level of prevention of and protection from work-related violence (WRV). To discharge their responsibilities as site manager, the principal and/or their delegate, in consultation with the health and safety representative (HSR) and employees, must eliminate or (if this is not possible) reduce the level of WRV risk so far as is reasonably practicable, by considering workplace factors.

2.2 Record current risk controls

The principal and / or their delegate in consultation with the HSR and employees must record the current risk controls in the [OHS Risk Register](#).

Where a risk assessment is to be completed, current risk controls should also be recorded in the [Risk Assessment Template](#) or equivalent.

2.3 Information, instruction, and training

The principal and / or their delegate must ensure all employees are informed about the risk controls in place to manage occupational violence and aggression in the workplace.

2.4 Monitor, review, and revise controls

Due to the complexity of workplace factors that can cause OVA related injury, it is important that OVA risks are managed on an ongoing basis, regularly reviewed, and revised when necessary. The principal and /or their delegate are required to monitor and review the effectiveness of implemented risk controls on a regular basis (e.g. quarterly) in consultation with HSR and relevant employees.

3.0 Risk Controls- Student Challenging behaviours

Newcomb Secondary College is committed to addressing determined or potential risks via control as such-

3.1 Development and selection of risk controls

For all students, building a positive, safe, and inclusive school environment is critical in assisting to prevent and manage the occurrence of behaviours that are violent, aggressive, or otherwise pose a safety risk. Where students present with known challenging behaviours, equipping school staff with the skills to work safely with students, and the capability to support students to be engaged in learning according to their skill and functional level, can help prevent situations where there is a significant risk to safety.

Where student challenging behaviour poses a safety risk that is rated 'High' or 'Extreme', a functional behaviour assessment is recommended, and a [Behaviour Support Plan](#) may be required.

- A Behaviour Support Plan is required for all students with known challenging behaviours. It is a document designed to assist schools to provide additional support and guidance to identified students. Behaviour Support Plans are function based and include preventative strategies to reduce triggers leading to challenging student behaviours and is reviewed regularly to ensure students and staff are receiving the best support. If a student has particularly challenging behaviour, it may be useful to engage a board-certified behaviour analyst to conduct a formal functional behaviour assessment to inform the student's Behaviour Support Plan.

Where there is a significant, ongoing risk to staff safety, a [Risk Management Plan](#) for students with challenging behaviours must also be in place.

- Risk Management Plan assists the principal and school staff, with the support of the Employee Wellbeing Response Team, to define the range of actions that have been identified to ensure staff can safely provide teaching and support to a student whose behaviours may pose a risk to the health, safety and wellbeing of staff, students, and others at the school. If the student has a Behaviour Support Plan, the Risk Management Plan for student behaviour will support and reference the Behaviour Support Plan and should be reviewed whenever the Behaviour Support Plan is reviewed or updated.

If there is / will be a Behaviour Support Plan or OVA Risk Management Plan for students with challenging behaviours for a particular student, this / these plan(s) document the risk assessment undertaken for the risk posed by the student's challenging behaviour and must be recorded on the Risk Register.

Another consideration for schools managing challenging behaviours is the Protective intervention training (PIT). PIT helps school staff to:

- prevent and manage challenging behaviours while reducing the need for physical interventions
- de-escalate situations involving aggressive or violent behaviour
- ensure the health and safety of students and staff at all times.

Protective intervention training does not provide training in restraint or physical interventions and should not be relied upon to manage challenging student behaviour overall.

3.2 Record current risk controls

Where a school has individualised plans in place for students with challenging behaviours, the principal and / or their delegate should record the existence of these plans in the school OHS Risk Register. The principal and / or their delegate do not need to indicate the names or number of students for whom plans are in place.

3.3 Information, instruction, and training

The principal and / or their delegate must ensure that in addition to induction and general staff training, staff likely to be affected by student challenging behaviours must be briefed on / trained in the individual plans for students with challenging behaviours. A copy of any plan(s) must be readily available to staff.

3.4 Monitor, review, and revise controls

The principal and / or their delegate must ensure that in addition to regular reviews of controls, any incident involving a student with challenging behaviours requires a review and, if necessary, revision of the Behaviour Support Plan and any other individual plans in place. If student behaviour continues to pose a significant safety risk, the principal and/or delegate must escalate the case through the SSS Branch Manager and the Employee Wellbeing Response Team.

4.0 Risk Controls- Parent/ Carer behaviours

A safe, supportive, and inclusive school environment is essential for providing quality learning opportunities for all students, which parents/carers and schools have a shared responsibility in creating.

While the majority of parents/carers, community members and visitors to schools positively engage with their child's education and the school community, in some cases, parents/carers engage in behaviour towards school staff that is disrespectful, unsafe, or otherwise unacceptable.

Parent/carer behaviour towards school staff that is violent, aggressive, or otherwise unsafe is also a recognised occupational health and safety (OHS) risk.

4.1 Establishing and promoting respectful and safe parent/carer behaviour

When a child is enrolled at a school it is important to establish positive relationships and clear expectations with parents/carers from the outset.

Ways that schools can do this include:

- sharing the department's [Respectful Behaviours within the School Community Policy](#) with their school community. This policy sets out clear standards of behaviours that help create and support a safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environment for students, staff, and adult members of the school community.
- sharing resources that communicate this policy to the school community and promote positive, respectful relationships in our schools, which can be found in the [Government Schools Communications Toolkit \(DOCX\)](#) on the Resources tab. The communication resources include:
 - [Respectful Behaviours Within the School Community - Staff \(PDF\)](#) for display in staff rooms and other areas of the school
 - [Respectful Behaviours Within the School Community - Parents and Carers \(English\) \(PDF\)](#) and
 - promoting respectful behaviours communicated in the policy
 - establishing the school community's collective expectation for respectful, safe, and positive behaviours right from the commencement of its relationship with a parent/carer through:
 - ensuring staff model the respectful behaviour reflected in the [Respectful Behaviours within the School Community Policy](#)
 - the [Family engagement in learning \(PDF\)](#) (staff login required) resource, which outlines the benefits of respectful and meaningful parent-school relationships
 - involving parents/carers in school activities, such as:

- providing opportunities for parents to provide feedback, both positive and negative
- to assist a parent wishing to provide negative feedback, ensuring that the school’s complaint’s policy is publicly accessible, for example on the school’s website and in welcome packs to the school, and referring to the department’s [Complaints – Parents Policy](#), emphasising the message that complaints can be an opportunity for improvement in the school’s practices and its relationships. A quick reference guide is available for parents and carers to understand how to raise a concern or complaint: [Parent concerns and complaints \(PDF\)](#)

If you consider that a parent or carer’s behaviour falls short of your school’s expectations, the principal or delegate can consider contacting the parent/carer to refer to the department’s Respectful Behaviours within the School Community Policy (and any other relevant school-based policies) and the behavioural expectations it outlines, and provide the parent with options to raise concerns in ways that are consistent with those expectations – a template letter (DOCX) (staff login required) is available to remind the parent or carer to behave respectfully towards staff and note that measures may need to be put in place if such behaviours continue. Schools may also consider establishing a [communications plan \(DOCX\)](#) between the school and the parent which sets out the expected method of communication. Complex Matters Support Team or Legal Division can assist in tailoring this to your specific needs.

5.0 Incident Reporting

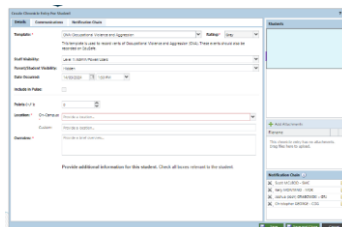
The principal or their delegate must ensure all hazards, incidents and injuries are reported in accordance with the department’s [Reporting and Managing School Incidents \(including emergencies\) Policy](#), including reporting on [eduSafe Plus](#) (staff login required).

IMPLEMENTATION

In addition to the procedures listed above, at Newcomb Secondary College, the following steps will be actioned in response to an OVA incident-

1. OVA Compass Chronicle entry

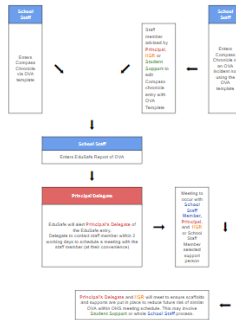
Staff who experience an OVA situation will enter the incident on Compass as a Chronicle entry alerting key responders (noted on the chronicle notification chain) to the situation. Key responders will be expected to action a reasonable follow-up on this situation as soon as practicable.



2. NSC OVA Support Flowchart & Checklist

Key responders will, as part of the response actions to an identified OVA situation, support staff involved in-line with the determined OVA Support Flowchart- NSC within 24-48hrs.

OVA Support Flowchart
Newcomb Secondary College



OVA Support Flowchart- Newcomb SC

WORK-RELATED VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS POST-INCIDENT CHECKLIST

WHAT KINDS OF INCIDENTS IS THIS CHECKLIST FOR?

WHO SHOULD USE THIS CHECKLIST?

WHEN CAN I GO FOR MORE INFORMATION?

1. Identify and report

1.1 Report for support

1.2 Ongoing support and recovery

2. Investigate

Key actions to support staff

Key actions to support students

3. Review and close

4. Communicate with staff and the school community

Work-Related Violence in Schools Post-Incident Checklist (Department)

3. Risk Response & Reasonable Adjustments- Student Challenging Behaviour

A safe, supportive, and inclusive school environment is essential for providing quality learning opportunities for all students, which students and schools have a shared responsibility in creating. When an OVA situation presents involving a student displaying challenging behaviours, the following actions are to be considered and implemented in-line with NSC Behaviour structures.

Note: Key responders will provide communication and updates when and where appropriate with key situation stakeholders. These communications may be actioned via Compass, in email, as part of an eduSafe process or direct in person.

a) Immediate Risk Management Response

- Key responders will implement an immediate Risk Management response to ensure the safety of all involved is suitably supported.
- Key responders will perform a preliminary investigation of the situation and respond accordingly, followed by a more details and comprehensive investigation to determine further actions.
- Risk Management responses may include a period of exclusion/ suspension.

- Exclusion/ Suspension determinations are informed by the [Newcomb Secondary College Behaviour Matrix](#).

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NSC Response Guidance Matrix
This matrix is an effort to increase the consistency of approach to managing student incidents. It is to be considered guidance for actions to be taken in response to specific incidents based on the type of incident and who was affected.

Significant Injury, high severity of harm inflicted	Eg. Drug use/charging, self-harm, self-harm, self-harm	Eg. Disruption in classroom	Eg. Weapon	Eg. Armed threat or action against school community	Eg. Weapons (in public, etc.)
Physical harm	Eg. Self-harm, self-harm, self-harm	Eg. Fighting	Eg. Attack a student	Eg. Physical aggression against staff member	Eg. Risk taking behaviour in public, self-harm, safety alarm
Damage to, theft of or inappropriate use of property	Eg. Phone use, inappropriate use of uniform	Eg. Water fight	Eg. Damage to locker or property in locker	Eg. Vandalism of school	Eg. Theft or evasion
Impact's identity, mental health and/or wellbeing	Eg. Out of uniform	Eg. Threatening behaviour about self	Eg. Bullying in person or online	Eg. Verbal abuse towards staff member	Eg. Absence to public, etc.
Impacts learning and/or teaching	Eg. Refusal to engage	Eg. Students disrupting each other	Eg. Disruptive behaviour	Eg. Disruptive behaviour	Eg. Disruption in public
Concern indicate level of behavioural involvement	Affects self only	Mutually affecting peers	Affecting peers	Affects school staff	Affecting other community members or public

Legend:
 Short Exclusion: 1-2 days
 Long Exclusion: 3-10 days
 Detention: 1-2 days
 Suspension: 1-10 days
 Referral: 1-2 days
 Restorative Practice Meeting: 1-2 days
 Behaviour Support Plan: 1-2 days
 Risk Management: 1-2 days
 Wellbeing Support Plan: 1-2 days
 Safety Plan: 1-2 days
 Classroom Teacher: 1-2 days
 Student Support: 1-2 days
 Wellbeing: 1-2 days
 Inclusion: 1-2 days
 Community: 1-2 days
 Public: 1-2 days

Examples of types of incidents which might fit this category. Subsequent actions, consequences/penalties applied for this type of incident.
 Detention - either within or adjacent to the school day, could be classroom teacher run or Student Support run.
 Exclusion - could be voluntary exclusion for part or whole days to allow for a reset of attitudes, a formal suspension, or a combination.

b) Action Plan Response

- Where student challenging behaviour poses a safety risk that is rated 'High' or 'Extreme', a functional behaviour assessment is recommended, and a Behaviour Support Plan may be required.
- Key Responders, Student Support, Wellbeing, or Inclusion leaders will, based on the known information, determine appropriate and reasonable implementation or adjustments to (but not restricted to):
 - Risk Management or Safety Plan
 - Behaviour Support Plan
 - Modifications to learning program
 - Wellbeing Support Plans

c) Re-engagement Plan

Prior to a student re-engaging with their full learning program at school, one or more of the following actions should be conducted-

- **Post suspension meeting**
This meeting will be conducted by or involve contributions from Principal class, Leading Teacher, Student Support, Wellbeing team, the student, parent/ carer, and external care team supports (if necessary).
- **Re-entry meeting**
This meeting will be conducted by, or involve contributions from Leading Teacher, Student support, Wellbeing team, the teacher involved and the student.
 - Restorative Practice Meeting: this formal meeting may be held if all parties are willing participants.

- **Student Support Group (SSG) meeting**

This meeting will be conducted by the Student Support, Inclusion, Wellbeing team, teachers, learning mentors, external care team supports (if necessary), the student and parent/ carer. Review of Individual Education Plans will form part of this process.

4. Monitor, review, and revise control measures

The following appropriate monitor, review and revise measures will be actioned:

- a) Risk Management Strategies- within 3-weeks or as outlined on plan(s) and in-line with policy processes.
- b) Behaviour Support Plans- as determined on plan or at the start of each term by Leading Teacher and Student Support team members.
- c) Individual Education Plans- as outlined on IEP plans in conjunction with SSG process.
- d) EduSafe- in consultation with Principal/ or delegates, and the staff member involved as outlined in policy.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our staff in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes and staff training.
- Included in staff handbook/manual.
- Shared and stored on Compass.
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required.
- Included in transition and enrolment packs.
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions.
- Reminders in our school newsletter
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Department of Education and Training policies and resources:

- [Behaviour- Students](#)
- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Duty of Care](#)
- [OHS Risk Management](#)
- [Restraint & Seclusion](#)
- [WorkSafe Victoria- Occupational Violence](#)
- [Respectful Behaviours within the School Community Policy](#)
- [Occupational Health & Safety Act 2006](#)

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	2024
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	2025