Reporting And Recording Violent Incidents

The Occupational Safety and Health Act requires all employees to report work-related injuries or harm to themselves or others and all hazards in the workplace to their employer.

Please ensure that all accidents and violent incidents within your workplace, or connected with your work, are reported to your principal, OSH representative, union representative and the SSTUWA. There is an online reporting capability on the SSTUWA website. Reporting to the SSTUWA allows us to offer advice and support if you require it.

Incident reporting is an essential part of creating a safer workplace. It allows the opportunity for investigation, risk assessment and for appropriate control measures to be applied. The Department of Education accident/incident report forms have been designed specifically to ensure Principals or line-managers go through a risk assessment process following any safety incident or accident.

When an accident or incident results in an injury for which the employee makes a workers' compensation claim, the claim must be accompanied by a completed accident/incident report.

Where an incident results in an employee taking three or more days off work, a copy of the accident/incident form must be forwarded to the Employee Support Bureau, even if a workers' compensation claim is not made.

When completing accident/incident report forms for incidents (of physical violence, threats of physical harm or serious verbal abuse) that have an impact on an employee's health which is perpetrated by a student, it is recommended that you do not include the name of the student.

The perpetrator should just be referred to as "student". Should WorkSafe choose to investigate an incident on receipt of a complaint or in response to a "notifiable injury", they cannot access reports that include a named minor.

Care should be taken when describing the event, especially if it involves a student, to ensure that it cannot be interpreted as the employee being culpable of assault or using unreasonable force.

On-line Incident Reporting

There are additional DoE reporting requirements. Any incident that results in harm to a staff member or student, or may have an ongoing impact on the school community, or may result in media interest, must be reported through the department's intranet system by the principal.

This information is immediately transmitted to regional office and several different departments in central office. OSH representatives or employees that have been injured can request a print-out of the electronic report. OSH representatives can only make this request if they have the permission of any staff member named in such a report.

Education Support Schools and Units

It is recognised that numerous incidents of harm or potential harm to staff occur on a daily basis and the current reporting requirements are burdensome. Nevertheless, it is a legal requirement and the situation will not change until the true extent of the impact on staff is recorded. Consider tabulating incidents over a weekly or fortnightly period and ensure a regular risk assessment of the student's behaviour occurs.

A high frequency of violence should not lower the expectation of appropriate behaviour, the need to protect staff from violence or the need to record and report such incidents.

Minor Incidents

Record these in a diary. This information may prove valuable at a later stage to support a case of escalating behaviour for DoE, WorkSafe or police action.

Other Action

- OSH representatives m

Authorised by Sally Dennis, General Secretary, The State School Teachers' Union of W.A.
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