

Video transcript:

Work-related Violence in Government Schools

About this audit

Teachers and school staff have a right to be safe at work.

Violence at work can negatively impact their health and wellbeing and is an occupational health and safety issue.

As the government school staff employer, the Department of Education must provide and maintain a safe workplace for government school staff.

We did this audit to see if the department has and maintains a system of work to protect staff from work-related violence resulting from student behaviour.

Some background

Work-related violence includes behaviours ranging from verbal abuse to physical assaults. Risks can come from different cohorts in the school community. This audit examined students behaving in a violent way toward staff in government schools.

Incidents of work-related violence resulting from student behaviour are a significant occupational health and safety issue for the department.

The department's own data shows incidents are growing at an average annual rate of 31.4 per cent.

What we concluded

We concluded that the Department of Education takes reasonable steps to provide a safe working environment to staff.

But, it does not have a clear overall picture of work-related violence resulting from student behaviour and there are gaps in how it maintains a safe working environment.

We made 3 key findings.

Key finding 1

The department's regional teams provide OHS support and guidance on student behaviour to school staff.

Regional leadership staff support principals, and act as coordination points for incidents and long-term responses.

Key finding 2

The department does not know how many incidents of work-related violence resulting from student behaviour are not recorded.

And incidents are under-reported because they do not appear, or appear inaccurately, in the department's internal reporting.

Key finding 3

The department does not consistently review its OHS and work-related violence policies as planned.

The department does not gather outcomes from reviews on how it responds to incidents or specify when post-incident reviews should happen in its procedures.

What we recommended

We made 4 recommendations to the Department of Education about completely recording and reporting incidents, and improving policy reviews and planning, to manage the risks from student behaviour.

More information

For more information, or to read our full report, go to audit.vic.gov.au