



Occupational Violence Policy

Last review: New Policy	Ratified: OLHC School Advisory Council and Staff
This review: February 2020	Future Review: February 2024

Our Lady Help of Christians Primary School has a ‘**NO** Tolerance’ approach to violence against staff by students, parents/carers, visitors, contractors etc. This type of behaviour will not be tolerated consequences may include :

- For students suspension, expulsion or transfer to another school.
- For parents/carers, visitors, contractors etc. Exclusion from the school and any activities held by the school.

(VIEU POLICY – Managing Violence in Schools)

Definition

Violence in schools is present in any situation where a member of the school community (teacher, student, other education worker, parent or visitor) is intimidated, bullied, abused, threatened or assaulted; or their property is deliberately damaged by another member of that community or the public in circumstances arising out of their activities in a school. 2.2 Therefore, violence in schools may be:

- student(s) to student(s);
- student(s) to staff member; Staff member to student;
- staff member to staff member;
- caused by or involve a parent;
- caused by “outside” forces not directly connected to the school.

Forms of Violence

- harassment which is sex-based and specifically aimed at primary and secondary school age girls and female teachers;
- racial harassment;
- student to student verbal and physical abuse, particularly in the school yard, but also occurring in the classroom;
- student verbal and physical assault upon teachers;
- verbal abuse of teachers by parents;
- vandalism and theft of property.

The Impact of Violence in Schools

Student learning Actual violence/harassment, or fear of violence, has a considerable negative effect on students’ capacity to participate fully in learning, particularly related to reduced motivation, impaired academic functioning and, in some cases, such students exhibit behaviour problems themselves.

There is evidence which indicates a clear correlation between the rise in teacher anxiety and a corresponding rise in students' anxiety, alienation and expression of behaviour and academic problems.

Behaviour Management Policies

Behaviour management policies in schools must :

1. be based on the premise that management of student behaviour should be preventative in nature, viewed in a holistic way and related to a range of aspects of education, such as curriculum, classroom organisation, class sizes and so on;
2. ensure consistency in the encouragement of students to see a series of consistent and inevitable consequences resulting from certain actions, and to take responsibility for their own actions;
3. involve teachers, parents and students in its development and implementation;
4. be based on the understanding that student behaviour management is not simply one person's responsibility, and that policies should develop commonly agreed and implemented action stages, which outline the roles and responsibilities of various parties such as, students, parents, classroom teachers, other and specialist staff, year/other co-ordinators, school executive, system;
5. underpin each stage with the provision of adequate support from both within the school (and system) and outside the school, ranging from, for example, staff "team" approaches to working on behaviour management programs for groups of students, through to access to specialist professionals and targeted professional development programs, etc;
6. be complemented by adequately resourced system policies. Schools and systems need to ensure that there are ongoing resources allocated to support behaviour management policies. These include such areas as:
 - class sizes in the years p-2 which do not exceed 26, and in years 3-10 which do not exceed 29;
 - access to student counsellors in all schools;
 - access to quality professional development for all teachers;
 - whole school approaches and structures to problem solving.

Violence against school staff

When a student inflicts violence upon a staff member:

1. that student shall be immediately removed from the classroom and/or any contact with other staff.
2. The student shall not be allowed to return to the classroom and/or have any contact with staff until a plan and any necessary additional resourcing is in place which will guarantee safety for all members of staff.
3. should the school fail to provide such a plan and necessary additional resourcing, all VIEU members in a school will attend work but refuse to undertake duties pertaining to that student, until such a plan and any necessary resources are in place.
4. Staff should be informed of any rights they may have under criminal and civil law when a student inflicts violence upon VIEU members

Victims of violent behaviour

Teachers and students need to be made aware of, and be able to exercise, their legal rights and responsibilities in the area of assault. Teachers and students who are victims of violence and harassment need to have a clear, adequately resourced program of treatment, counselling and ongoing support.

Vandalism and theft In addition to the above outlined management procedures, schools and systems must compensate staff for any damage to or theft of their property which occurs in the carrying out of their duties.

Reporting

Staff who are subjected to violence from students should be made aware of their entitlements to Workers Compensation (WorkCover) and a report of the incident should be made in the school's accident book.

Occupational Violence Protocols

PRINCIPAL & LEADERSHIP ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Implementing procedures developed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of staff in their workplace in relation to occupational violence.
- Identifying occupational violence hazards and the presents of any common risk factors /triggers. Undertaking subsequent risk assessments.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of current risk controls in managing occupational violence after any incident on a regular basis.
- Students who repeatedly exhibit challenging and aggressive behaviours will have their Student Safety Plans reviewed and updated regularly .
- Modelling behaviours consistent with reducing occupational violence risk.
- Communicating and consulting with staff on occupational violence issues.
- Making staff aware of occupational violence procedures and seeking compliance with such procedures
- Encouraging staff members to reports occupational violence and act to prevent reoccurrence to their best abilities
- Ensuring occupational violence incidents are reported to OHS.
- Ensuring any notifiable incidents are reported in mandated timelines.
- Responding to occupational violence incidents where emergency services are engaged and ensuring protocols for emergency plans are followed.
- All staff will be informed of changes to student behaviours and safety plans.
- Providing a positive and supportive workplace for anyone impacted by occupational violence.

EMPLOYEES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Complying with occupational violence policy/protocols.
- All incidents of occupational violence **MUST** be reported to principal and OHS.
- Ensuring their actions do not create an occupational violence risk to themselves or to others.
- Ensuring they are not alone with violent students, **MUST** have two or more staff present – **support needed card** must always be used.
- Relocate the class if required, rather than trying to relocate an aggressive student.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPRESENTATIVE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Ensuring all incidents involving occupational violence are recorded.
- Ensuring Principal and Leadership are compiling with procedures.