

**INCIDENT SUPPORT**  
AND OPERATIONS CENTRE

**1800 126 126**



# A guide to managing incidents in your school

*REPORT FOR SUPPORT*





## Contents

Six stages of the School Incident Management System (SIMS)	4
Identify and Respond	5
Report for support	6
Understanding the severity of incidents and when to report them to ISOC	8
How to rate the severity of an incident	9
Ongoing support and recovery	10
Roles and responsibilities	11
Investigate	12
Review and close	13
Analyse and learn	14

For more information on responding to and managing incidents in your school, search **'managing incidents'** on the Department's intranet.

## Six stages of the School Incident Management System (SIMS)

-  1 Identify and respond
-  2 Report for support  
**1800 126 126**
-  3 Ongoing support and recovery
-  4 Investigate
-  5 Review and close
-  6 Analyse and learn

# 1 Identify and respond



## Ensure safety

- assess the safety of the situation
- remove the students and staff from any source of danger
- administer first aid and/or seek medical attention
- if necessary, **contact emergency services on 000** and enact emergency management plan
- if a staff member or another student is accused or suspected of harming a student, separate them from immediate contact with the alleged victim
- provide support to any student or staff witnesses.



## Record evidence

- keep and make a record of any physical or documentary evidence
- if multiple students have witnessed the incident, separate them to preserve the integrity of their evidence until they are interviewed
- in cases of alleged child abuse, follow instructions on evidence preservation from Victoria Police.



## Contact relevant parties

- in cases of alleged child abuse or student sexual offending, request guidance from Department of Health and Human Services Child Protection or Victoria Police about what information can be shared
- contact parents/carers to provide them with information regarding the incident
- contact Worksafe for notifiable incidents.



## Report for support

**INCIDENT SUPPORT  
AND OPERATIONS CENTRE**

 **1800 126 126**

Reported incidents will be lodged as an Incident Reporting Information System (IRIS) alert by the Incident Support and Operations Centre (ISOC) for coordination of Area-based support to your school.

## 2 Report for support

### Incidents reportable to the Incident Support and Operations Centre (ISOC)

#### Factor 1: Incidents that impact or risk impacting on the health, safety and wellbeing of students or staff

- when students are under the care or supervision of the school, including all instances of restraint and seclusion
- when the incident is brought to the attention of the school, regardless of when or where it occurred, provided it is impacting on the student or other students in the school setting
- where the incident impacts on staff and students and/or the continuity of school operations
- where the principal needs incident support from the region or central offices.

#### Examples:

- death or suicide of a student, staff member or member of the school community
- self-harm/injury or threats of suicide
- injuries requiring treatment by a doctor, transport by ambulance or hospitalisation
- concerning mental health and traumatic incidents requiring peer, professional or clinical support
- incidents that did not lead to injury or death but very nearly did
- incidents of a sexual nature
- abuse or risk of abuse or neglect including online child abuse (mandatory reporting obligations may also apply)\*
- missing student
- online bullying, inappropriate use of social media and/or mobile phones.

\*refer to the Department's **PROTECT** program:

[www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/protect/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/protect/Pages/default.aspx)

#### Factor 2a: Incidents that impact on the continuity of school operations, including property damage and emergencies, for example:

- damage to parts of a school building or its content
- loss of essential service
- emergency situation and warnings
- bomb threats.

#### Factor 2b: Incidents that involve matters of serious conduct, for example:

- alleged criminal activity
- aggressive behaviour or actions or behaviours of concern
- forced marriage or human rights abuse
- family violence
- human trafficking
- sexual exploitation
- suspicious activity within or near school environment.

## 2 Report for support

### **Incidents that don't require reporting to ISOC:**

- those with an insignificant impact or risk of impact on student health, safety and wellbeing, such as a grazed knee (these incidents should be managed locally and recorded in CASES21 or equivalent)
- where school operations continue with slight interruptions, such as a 10-minute power outage
- generally, incidents involving the health, safety and wellbeing of staff only are out of scope and should be reported in eduSafe.

### **Other Department reporting obligations still apply. For example:**

- Incidents involving the health, safety and wellbeing of staff via eduSafe\*
- Early Childhood Incidents via Quality Assessment and Regulation Division (QARD)
- Reportable Conduct Scheme via the Employee Conduct Branch (ECB).

\*Individual and school support available via OHS Advisory Service and the Department's Worker's Compensation Advisory Service

## 2 Understanding the severity of incidents and when to report them

The School Incident Management System Policy and Guidelines (SIMS) outlines the approach and key actions to manage school incidents. SIMS introduces an incident severity rating to triage the management of incidents end-to-end. Under this policy, the principal is responsible for the initial severity rating and reporting, with support from ISOC staff.

Incident severity rating	Description	Schools report to ISOC	Department response to report
<b>Extreme (Red)</b>	<p>Impact or risk of impact on student or staff health, safety and wellbeing and on the continuity of school operations is severe.</p> <p>To be managed locally with support from the region, and overall leadership accountability by the Department's Incident Commander in central office and reported in IRIS. Incidents involving the following should automatically be categorised as Extreme (Red):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the actual, near miss or credible threat of death or permanent disability of student(s) or staff that occurs in the school environment.</li> <li>2. the following act, or allegation of the following act, on a student that occurs in the school environment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ a sexual offence or grooming for sexual conduct with a child under the age of 16 years</li> <li>◦ the infliction of serious physical violence or serious emotional or psychological harm</li> <li>◦ serious neglect of a child.</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. the cessation of school operations</li> <li>4. employee misconduct that impacts on the wellbeing of a student.</li> </ol>	<b>Immediately</b> (within one hour)	<b>Immediately</b> (within one hour)
<b>High (Orange)</b>	<p>Impact or risk of impact on student health, safety and wellbeing and on the continuity of school operations is moderate to major.</p> <p>To be managed locally, governed and supported by the region and reported in IRIS.</p>	<b>As soon as possible</b> (within three hours)	<b>As soon as possible</b> (within three hours)
<b>Medium (Yellow)</b>	<p>Impact or risk of impact on student or staff health, safety and wellbeing and on the continuity of school operations is minor.</p> <p>To be managed and governed locally and reported in IRIS.</p>	<b>As soon as possible</b> (within one working day)	<b>As soon as possible</b> (within one working day)
<b>Low (Blue)</b>	<p>Insignificant impact or risk of impact on student health, safety and wellbeing and on the continuity of school operations.</p> <p>To be managed and governed locally and recorded in CASES21 (or equivalent) within two business days.</p>	Not applicable	Not applicable

**Consider the local context** when assessing the severity rating such as incident pattern or history and student characteristics. These could include a **student's possible vulnerability** (age, culture, gender, history of trauma, physical/mental capacity, balance of power between involved parties) and **relevant medical history**.



## 2 How to rate the severity of an incident

Factor 2: Impact on school operations or seriousness of conduct involved, with consideration of scale

<p><b>Severe</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>normal school operations cease and/or</li> <li>conduct that requires police notification and immediate intervention</li> </ul> <p>Scale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>incident may involve numerous students or staff</li> </ul>	Extreme	Extreme	Extreme	Extreme	Extreme	Extreme
<p><b>Major</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>whole-of-school operations disrupted and/or</li> <li>conduct that requires police notification and intervention</li> </ul> <p>Scale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>incident may involve many students or staff</li> </ul>	High	High	Extreme	Extreme	Extreme	Extreme
<p><b>Moderate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>key school operations temporarily disrupted and/or</li> <li>conduct that requires police notification</li> </ul> <p>Scale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>incident may involve multiple students or staff</li> </ul>	High	High	High	High	Extreme	Extreme
<p><b>Minor</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>minor workarounds could return school to normal operations and/or</li> <li>conduct that may require police notification</li> </ul> <p>Scale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>incident may involve a few students or staff</li> </ul>	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	High	Extreme
<p><b>Insignificant</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>school operations continue with slight interruptions and/or</li> <li>conduct that may require staff intervention and notification to the principal</li> </ul> <p>Scale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>incident may involve a single student or staff</li> </ul>	Low	Low	Medium	High	High	Extreme
<p><b>None</b></p> <p>Incident has no impact on school operations nor involves conduct that may require police notification and intervention</p>		Low	Medium	High	High	Extreme

### Severity rating

### Decision-making matrix

Factor 1: Impact on student and/or staff health, safety and wellbeing

### 3 Ongoing support and recovery

Responding to an incident requires an appraisal of the impact. Identifying those most affected and vulnerable, addressing their physical and psychological needs and providing ongoing monitoring and recovery support can offset the initial distress and responses.

For all severity level incidents, schools should plan to:

- take active steps to promote and protect students' safety and wellbeing
- develop ongoing risk management strategies
- support students through any required action with authorities
- provide ongoing support to all affected students and staff, as their needs may change. This may include providing counselling or professional support and debriefing for staff and student witnesses as part of their recovery
- manage incidents in accordance with all policies
- document key actions and updates within CASES21 or equivalent.

For **High (Orange)** and **Extreme (Red)** incident reports, the Area Executive Director or delegate will:

- contact the principal to ensure confidence in actions undertaken and planned
- identify any needs and coordinate assistance to the school
- update the incident report on IRIS.

For **Low (Blue)** and **Medium (Yellow)** incidents, schools can seek assistance or advice from region or central teams (ECB, Legal Division, SEIL, Employee Safety), as required.

### 3 Roles and responsibilities

<b>Low (Blue) incidents</b>	Principal manages and governs incidents.
<b>Medium (Yellow) incidents</b>	Principal manages and governs incident. Region and central teams have visibility of incident and provide support as required.
<b>High (Orange) incidents</b>	Principal manages incident. Area Executive Director governs incident and coordinates support. Central has visibility of the incident.
<b>Extreme (Red) incidents</b>	Principal manages incident. Area Executive Director supports. Director, Security and Emergency Management Division (SEMD) in central (or Department incident commander) governs incident.

## 4 Investigate

An incident may trigger internal or external investigation(s) under other policies and legislative schemes. An investigation is a formal process of collecting information to ascertain the facts in order to inform a subsequent criminal, civil penalty, civil, disciplinary or administrative sanction.

A preliminary investigation screening should be undertaken **within two days** of the incident being reported in IRIS via the ISOC, to determine the incident type and identify if any investigation pathway is applicable (e.g. privacy breaches should be referred to Executive Knowledge and Service Division, mandatory reporting should be referred to DHHS).

For **Low (Blue)** and **Medium (Yellow)** incidents, the principal must undertake the preliminary screening. For **High (Orange)** and **Extreme (Red)** incidents this will be undertaken by the region or central office.

A principal may also choose to conduct a school-based inquiry.

## 5 Review and close

An analysis of all incidents should occur to identify what happened and the cause. This is to help determine whether an incident was managed correctly and to identify learnings to reduce the risk of similar events occurring in the future.

Depending on the severity of an incident, an incident review may be initiated. A review may be directed by the school principal, Regional Director, Area Executive Director or other Executive Director within the Department. Reviews generally should be initiated within three days and completed within 21 days of the incident occurring.

Incident closure is a formal process of closing an incident. An incident is closed with comments once the responsible person is confident that appropriate ongoing supports are in place, and if relevant, pending investigations are underway and/or reviews have been completed and recorded.

Incident closure authority:

Authority	Incident severity rating	
Principal	Low (Blue)	Medium (Yellow)
Area Executive Director (AED) (in consultation with the principal)	High (Orange)	
Executive Director, SEMD (in consultation with the principal and the AED)	Extreme (Red)	

The closure of all **High (Orange)** and **Extreme (Red)** incidents must be determined in consultation with the principal.

## 6 Analyse and learn

Incident data analysis includes the monitoring of, interrogating of, and acting on identified trends.

Data informs policy and program support of schools.

Analysing data fulfils three core objectives, the purpose is to:

- understand what happened
- understand why an incident happened
- inform what can be done to produce better outcomes for student and staff health, safety and wellbeing in the future.

The SEMD will be undertaking regular data analysis and reporting and sharing this with regions.



