

RETURN TO WORK

GENERAL STATEMENT

The Thomastown West Primary School leadership team and school council has a responsibility to ensure, as far as practicable, the provision and maintenance of a safe and secure working environment which is without risk to the health and safety of staff, students and visitors. This policy is to be read in conjunction with Thomastown West Primary School's other Occupational Health and Safety policies.

The Victorian WorkCover Authority, operating under the title WorkSafe, is responsible for administering the Victorian WorkCover Scheme. The legislative basis for the WorkCover Scheme is the Accident Compensation Act 1985. The WorkCover scheme is a 'no fault' work related injury compensation scheme. This means that a worker's entitlement to compensation is not a question of who was responsible for the injury, but is determined by whether the injury was employment related, according to the provisions of the Accident Compensation Act. The key objective of the scheme is to ensure that the social and economic costs of workplace injuries and illnesses are minimised by:

- improving the health and safety of people at work and the rehabilitation of injured employees.
- ensuring that injured employees receive appropriate entitlements as compensation for workplace injuries.
- ensuring that employers provide suitable employment for employees who have been injured at work.
- ensuring employers contribute equitably to the costs of the scheme through the payment of WorkCover premiums.

RATIONALE

The school acknowledges that staff members have the right to return to work as soon as possible after an accident, injury or illness. The school accepts its responsibility to ensure that this return to the workplace is appropriate and considers the welfare of the injured staff member, other staff and students.

BROAD GUIDELINES

Thomastown West Primary School is committed to assisting staff members to return to work as soon as possible following accident, injury or illness. This will require prompt action consistent with appropriate medical advice.

- A Return to Work Plan will be developed to facilitate the return to work of the injured staff member.
- Duty modification may be required to facilitate the staff member remaining at work or returning to work.
- DEECD employees are entitled to make a WorkCover claim in the event of an injury being sustained in the course of their employment.

IMPLEMENTATION

- The workplace must have a nominated Return to Work coordinator who will manage the return to work of any injured worker. At Thomastown West Primary School the Return to Work coordinator is the Assistant Principal (management and accountability).
- Return to work will commence as soon as practicable after illness or injury, and a Return to Work plan will be established using Work Cover criteria.
- The Certificate of Work capacity will be given to the Return to Work Coordinator as soon as possible following an accident, injury or illness.
- Suitable duties, which do not jeopardise the well-being of the worker, will be provided, where possible, as part of the return to work program. Return to work activities will be reviewed weekly in consultation with the worker to ensure that progress is continuing.
- There will be full involvement of workers in the development and implementation of their own return to work plan. Participation in a return to work program will not, of itself, prejudice any worker.
- Where suitable duties cannot be found within the school setting, the Return to Work Coordinator, in consultation with the Principal and Work Cover (if appropriate), will attempt to locate other settings in which these duties can be provided.
- The confidentiality of workers' information during return to work and any occupational rehabilitation will be maintained.
- All staff members are expected to assist and co-operate in ensuring that this policy is followed, and that their responsibilities in relation to worker rehabilitation are followed.

PROCESSES AND PROTOCOLS

- Any staff member who sustains a work related accident, injury or illness must notify the Principal as soon as is practicable following the injury or onset of illness.
- Under WorkCover, for an injury or illness to be accepted as work related, it must arise out of, or occur in, the course of employment and be one in which employment was a significant contributing factor.
- The Principal will ensure that the injured staff member has obtained any necessary medical treatment and that details of the accident, injury or illness have been recorded in EduSafe.
- On notification the Principal will ensure that all relevant documentation is completed and that the Return to Work Coordinator is immediately informed.
- On receiving notification of an accident, injury or illness the Return to Work Coordinator will:
 - contact the staff member immediately.
 - ensure the staff member has access to appropriate treatment.
 - obtain details of the extent of any incapacity for work.
- Where the staff member has an incapacity for work that is expected to involve a Return to Work Plan referral to an Occupational Rehabilitation Provider should be made, via Thomastown West Primary School insurers CGU, immediately,
- The Return to Work Plan will be reviewed on a weekly basis and the staff member's progress reviewed regularly by the staff member and the Return to Work Coordinator.
- In the event of a dispute over a Return to Work Plan, immediate action will be taken to resolve the situation through discussion with all parties involved.
- If resolution is not possible at the school level, the WorkCover Conciliation Service will be approached to provide assistance.

REFERENCES

DEECD School Policy and Advisory Guide

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/spag>

EduSafe website: <https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/EduSafe/login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2fEduSafe%2fdefault.aspx>

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed as part of the Thomastown West Primary School review cycle or when appropriate due to alterations to Work Cover legislation.