

Duty of Care Policy



Williamstown High School

Updated in 2021

Duty of Care Policy

Development process

1. Rationale

“Duty of care” is a legal obligation that requires schools to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm, which can include personal injury (physical or psychological) or damage to property. The reasonable steps that our school may decide to take in response to a potential risk or hazard will depend on the circumstances of the risk.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to explain to our school community the non-delegable duty of care obligations that all staff at Williamstown High School owe to our students and members of the school community who visit and use the school premises.

3. Implementation

Our school has developed policies and procedures to manage common risks in the school environment, including:

- Yard duty and Supervision
- Bullying Prevention
- Camps and Excursions
- First Aid
- Child Safe Standards
- Emergency Management
- Visitors
- Working with Children and Suitability Checks
- Mandatory Reporting
- Occupational Health and Safety

Our school acknowledges we are required to take reasonable precautions to prevent the abuse of a child by an individual associated with the organisation while the child is under the care, supervision or authority of the organisation.

Staff at our school understand that school activities involve different levels of risk and that particular care may need to be taken to support younger students or students with additional needs. Our school also understands that it is responsible for ensuring that the school premises are kept in good repair and will take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of members of our community suffering injury or damage because of the state of the premises.

School staff, parents, carers and students are encouraged to speak to the principal to raise any concerns about risks or hazards at our school, or our duty of care obligations.

4. Specific procedures

External Providers

Staff at our school acknowledge that, as our duty of care is non-delegable, we are also required to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm when external providers have been engaged to plan for or conduct an activity involving our students.

Our *Visitors Policy* and *Camps and Excursions Policy* include information on the safety and care of our students when engaged with external providers.

Our school also takes steps to ensure student safety when they are engaging in off-site workplace learning programs with external providers, such as when students are participating in work experience, school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, structured workplace learning and any

other workplace learning program involving external providers. Our School will follow all applicable Department of Education and Training policy and guidelines in relation to off-site learning and will ensure that the safety and welfare of the students engaging in these activities is paramount.

The Department's guidelines in relation to Workplace Learning are available at the following link:
<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/structured-workplace-learning/policy>

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Provided to staff at induction and included in staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at staff meetings/briefings as required
- Made available publicly on our school website
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

5. Evaluation and review

This policy will be monitored by the Principal team who will ensure:

- This policy is included as an agenda item for the Term 1 meeting each year.
- The policy will be reviewed annually and updated (where appropriate.)

6. Definitions & references

the Department's Policy and Advisory Library: Duty of Care
the Department's Policy and Advisory Library: Structured Workplace Learning
WHS Yard duty and Supervision
WHS Bullying Prevention
WHS Camps and Excursions
WHS First Aid
Child Safe Standards
WHS Emergency Management Plan
WHS Visitors
WHS Working with Children and Suitability Checks
WHS Occupational Health and Safety

7. Consultative process

The policy was updated in line with DET's Policy Advisory Library and consultation undertaken to ensure accurate representation across both campuses by the Principals and first aid teams. Policy tabled at Principal meeting during term three 2021.