Psychological safety foundations checklist

# For school leadership staff

A checklist to support schools in the review of their practices to understanding and improving psychological safety in the school.

## Keep in mind:

* This checklist focuses on the foundations that are within control, to identify improvements and increase psychological safety
* Schools can have some of the most dynamic and challenging work environments. Therefore, it is important to note that a work environment completely free of psychosocial hazards can be difficult to achieve.
* There are also psychosocial hazards outside of the workplace that can affect staff mental health, which are outside of the principal/school’s control.
* To help inform this review, schools should utilise the data already available - including school staff survey, eduSafe Plus reports, staff feedback, and consider recent workplace observations.
* Use the [Psychological safety guide for schools](https://content.sdp.education.vic.gov.au/media/psychological-safety-guide-for-schools-2589) to support this review, particularly when planning actions for improvement.
* The department has provided a range of [supports and other resources](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/occupational-health-safety-wellbeing-management/policy) available for you to use, promote, protect, and respond to psychological hazards in the workplace.

| **1. How well do you look after your own mental health?** *Consider the following:* | **Yes** | **Not evident / could improve** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| You have self-care strategies in place to support your own mental health in the workplace |  |  |
| You proactively access the supports available to you, including:   1. [Employee Wellbeing Support Services](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/occupational-health-safety-wellbeing-management/guidance/employee-wellbeing-support-services) 2. [Proactive Wellbeing Support](https://eduvic.sharepoint.com/sites/SchoolsSecure/SitePages/Proactive-wellbeing-support.aspx) 3. [Principal Mentor Program](https://www.schools.vic.gov.au/principal-mentoring-program) 4. [Principal Health Checks](https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/sites/i/Pages/production.aspx#/app/content/3010/support_and_service_(schools)%252Fhuman_resources%252Fprincipal_health_and_wellbeing%252Fprincipal_health_checks) 5. [Early Intervention Program](https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/sites/i/Pages/production.aspx#/app/content/3025/support_and_service_(schools)%252Fhuman_resources%252Fprincipal_health_and_wellbeing%252Fearly_intervention_program) |  |  |
| You have accessed and used the information in the [Principal Welcome Pack](https://eduvic.sharepoint.com/sites/SchoolsSecure/SitePages/Principal-welcome-pack.aspx) |  |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **2. How does your school actively promote and protect psychological safety?** *Consider whether the following occurs at your school:* | Yes | Not evident / could improve |
| As a principal, you are transparent with staff about health and safety issues |  |  |
| As a principal, you encourage staff to raise both physical and psychological health and safety issues and express ideas and opinions |  |  |
| A variety of communication channels are available to staff to raise issues so they can choose a way to escalate matters that works best for them. |  |  |
| OHS inductions include information about [existing department resources, supports and strategies](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/occupational-health-safety-wellbeing-management/guidance/expert-supports). |  |  |
| Staff are regularly reminded about these resources, supports and strategies. |  |  |
| Staff are made aware of the common psychosocial hazards in the workplace (see the school’s OHS risk register). |  |  |
| As a principal, you encourage and model inclusivity, respect, and civility. |  |  |
| Workplace behaviours, goals and values are spoken about and agreed upon at staff meetings. |  |  |
| Employees are made aware of professional standards and the expected behaviours and their importance in contributing to a positive workplace culture |  |  |
| There is acknowledgment and appreciation for staff who model supportive and respectful behaviours. |  |  |
| Staff are openly encouraged to report all hazards, incidents, and injuries on eduSafe Plus. |  |  |
| Staff are supported and encouraged to set boundaries (e.g. using emails to communicate hours to parents, use local policies etc). |  |  |
| Staff are provided supportive feedback on work performance. |  |  |
| The school provides a strong learning culture with opportunities for development and growth (learning from mistakes). |  |  |
| As a principal you encourage your staff to provide feedback on your approach to leadership to identify further ways to improve psychological safety in the school. |  |  |
| Staff treat each other with respect and consideration in the workplace. |  |  |

| 3. How does your school respond to psychological safety issues?*Consider whether the following occurs at your school:* | Yes | Not evident / could improve |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Staff are provided information/training on how to report psychosocial hazards, risks, and incidents on eduSafe Plus. |  |  |
| When staff do raise issues, they are actively listened to, their confidentiality is respected, and issues raised are taken seriously. |  |  |
| There is ongoing monitoring and review of risk controls in response to eduSafe Plus reports, in consultation with HSR (where elected) and relevant school staff. |  |  |
| You regularly review school data available to help identify the presence of psychosocial hazards, including eduSafe Plus, workers compensation claims, staff absenteeism, and school staff surveys. |  |  |
| Open and respectful communication and consultation occurs between the principal or delegate, the Health and Safety Representative (where elected) and affected school staff on health, safety and wellbeing issues. |  |  |

Where you have ticked “not evident/could improve”, see the relevant sections (workplace factors) in the [Psychological Safety Guide for Schools](https://content.sdp.education.vic.gov.au/media/psychological-safety-guide-for-schools-2589) for information on resources that can help proactively manage psychological safety. It is important to note that some of the foundations in this checklist will overlap with many workplace factors. Utilise the support and advice that works best for you and your staff.