

**Department of Education
SMS-PR-012 Student Protection
Student Protection Fact Sheet**

Student protection involves:

- Working to make schools safe and supportive places;
- Taking action to prevent students being harmed at school; and
- Reporting any suspicion you have that a student has been harmed or may be at risk of harm

All children have a right to be protected from harm.

Harm is:

Any detrimental effect of a significant nature to the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused.

This means anything that will have a serious and harmful effect on a student's physical health, or how they think and feel about themselves.

Any behaviour that harms a student is wrong. Sometimes a culture may have a custom or practice that harms children.

Departmental procedures say that harm to students will not be tolerated. It is **NOT** OK. In other words, culture or custom is NO EXCUSE for harming students.

Everyone who works in a school must look after the safety, wellbeing and best interests of children.

Managing your own behaviour is the first step in student protection

- NEVER harm a student, either physically, psychologically or emotionally
- NEVER make fun of a student, put them down or discriminate against them because of their race or religion
- NEVER touch a student in a sexual way, or engage in any other inappropriate sexual activity (for example, sending suggestive text messages or showing a student pornography)
- NEVER do anything that would make people think you are doing something sexual to a student

You must report, to the Principal, any harm to a student that is caused by:

- Someone working at the school
- Another student
- Someone from the student's family, a friend or a stranger
- The student self-harming

If you see harm occurring at school:

1. **Help** the student, who has been harmed, for example,
 - By telling the students to move away
 - Get a staff member involved as soon as possible
2. **Tell the principal** straight away about what you have seen
3. **Write** down what you saw and give the information to the Principal.

If you suspect a student has been harmed at school or outside of school:

1. **Tell the principal** straight away about what you suspect
2. **Write** down what you suspect and give the information to the Principal.

If a student tells you that they have been harmed at school or outside of school:

1. **Listen** carefully
2. **Reassure** the student that they have done the right thing by telling you
3. **Tell the student** you must tell the Principal what they have told you
4. **Tell the principal** straight away about what the student told you
5. **Write** down what the student told you and give the information to the Principal.

If you suspect the Principal is responsible for causing harm to a student report this to the Executive Director, Schools at the local district office.

The main thing to remember is: If you suspect a student might have been harmed or might be at risk of harm tell the Principal straight away. If the Principal isn't available you must tell the Acting Principal or a Deputy Principal.

Standards of Behaviour Fact sheet

The following tables include, but are not limited to, the specific *standards of behaviour* in relation to working closely with students in any situation:

Language	
Do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate, both verbally and non verbally, in a way which models and demonstrates respect for the rights, interests and wellbeing of all students • Use appropriate language taking into consideration age, developmental stage, emotional or psychological state, special needs, language background, religion or disabilities • Ensure both verbal and non verbal communication are non abusive or bullying • When possible, frame communication from the positive perspective in interactions with students
Don't	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become involved in inappropriate conversations of a sexual nature • Make sexually suggestive comments • Use language that could be offensive to another • Personally correspond (including email and/or mobile phone) with a child or young person in respect of personal or sexual feelings for students

Relationships with Students	
Do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behave in a way, which models and demonstrates respect for the rights, interests and wellbeing of all students • Dress appropriately while working with children and young people, in a way that models respect for the students
Don't	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spend inappropriate time with a student • Inappropriately give gifts to a student • Show special favours to a student • Expose student to sexual behaviour of others including displays of pornography • Persuade a student that a 'special' relationship exists

Physical contact	
Do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect the personal space of student and limit physical contact generally • Limit hugging when initiated by the student by changing from a frontal hug to arm around the shoulder of student • Limit hugging when initiated by the student by sitting on the floor with child next to you
Don't	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hit, kick, slap or push a student • Allow student to sit on your lap • Touch parts of a student's body usually covered by a swimming costume • Change nappies or engage in toileting practises

(Adapted from information from Blue Card Services)