



INTRODUCTION

The Department is committed to supporting employees experiencing family and domestic violence (FDV) by maintaining employment, providing additional leave, implementing workplace flexibilities to accommodate individual needs and ensuring employees are able to participate safely in their school or workplace.

These guidelines provide information on support available for employees experiencing FDV and how principals and line managers can assist employees in these circumstances. It applies to all Department employees, including casual employees.

The Department acknowledges that each FDV case has unique circumstances that may involve difficult and complex matters that can have significant impact on an individual's mental, emotional, physical, social and financial well-being.

Principals and line managers should facilitate access to support for affected employees within a compassionate, safe and confidential working environment, based on the provisions in the [Premier's Circular 2017/07 Family and domestic violence – paid leave and workforce support](#), August 2017. It is aligned to the Department of Communities [Path to Safety: Western Australia's strategy to reduce family and domestic violence 2020-2030](#) and Public Sector Commission [Family and domestic violence support](#): A guide for public sector agencies to create safe workspaces for their staff.

WHAT IS FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

“Family and domestic violence is an ongoing pattern of behaviours intended to coerce, control or create fear within a family or intimate relationship. This includes physical harm or threats of physical harm, financial, emotional and psychological abuse, sexual violence or any other behaviour which causes the victim to live in fear. Many adult and child victims live with perpetrators who use coercive patterns of control and may not realise that what they are experiencing is family and domestic violence.

Although family and domestic violence affects victims of all genders and backgrounds, the overwhelming majority of victims are women and their children, and the majority of perpetrators are men.” [Path to Safety](#).

The Department does not tolerate employees perpetrating family and domestic violence in or from their school or workplace. Such conduct may constitute a breach of discipline under the Department's [Staff Conduct and Discipline](#) policy. Some acts of FDV such as physical or sexual assault, making threats against a person's physical safety, stalking, damage or stealing of property and breaching restraining orders, may constitute a criminal offence and should be reported to the Police.

CONFIDENTIALITY

It is important that principals and line managers provide a supportive, non-judgemental and confidential environment where employees feel comfortable disclosing FDV concerns and applying for FDV leave.

Principals and line managers should keep confidential any information disclosed by an employee experiencing FDV and manage the matter with sensitivity, including:

- sharing information within the school or workplace only on a need-to-know basis or where there are concerns for the safety of students and employees, with prior consent of the employee experiencing FDV; and
- recording FDV leave. Information and evidence for accessing FDV leave should only be retained by the employee and not kept on their personal file without their permission.

EMPLOYEES

Employees who are experiencing FDV and have concerns about their safety, health or welfare may:

- access counselling through the Department's [Employee Assistance Program](#). This independent service provides confidential counselling sessions (face-to-face, telephone or Skype) for staff, their partners and dependent children under 25 years of age. Six free sessions per year are available. [Employee Assistance Program brochure](#). External/community support services are also available for staff (See Appendix A);
- approach a senior member of staff with whom they feel comfortable to have a confidential conversation related to their concerns. This may be their principal, school executive team member or line manager;
- discuss flexible work arrangements with their principal or line manager to assist them to feel safe at work and in accordance with applicable Awards and Agreements, including filtering phone calls or emails or providing a quiet room for confidential conversations;
- apply for FDV leave through their principal or line manager, under the [Premier's Circular 2017/07 Family and domestic violence – paid leave and workforce support](#), August 2017. This includes an additional 10 days, non-cumulative paid leave per calendar year that can be taken as whole or part days and up to two days of unpaid FDV leave on each occasion when they exhaust their 10-day FDV leave entitlement. The FDV leave is applicable to all employees, including casuals;
- use other leave entitlements provided in their Award and/or Agreement, including personal/sick leave, annual leave, accrued long service leave, purchase leave and/or accrued time off in lieu of overtime, flexi leave or banked hours. Use of leave entitlements is subject to principal or line manager's approval and sufficient leave credits available. There is no need to exhaust other leave entitlements to access FDV leave;
- use FDV leave to attend special appointments or for other personal or family safety-related matters. Using FDV leave does not affect salary increment dates, personal leave entitlements, long service leave entitlements or annual leave entitlements. Examples include:
 - attending court dates or other legal proceedings
 - attending appointments for medical, legal, or counselling (or other therapy)
 - attending to financial matters
 - relocating
 - making safety arrangements

- other matters of a pressing nature that require immediate attention and may arise without notice; and
- be required to provide supporting evidence if FDV leave is accessed. Examples include: documents issued by the police, a court, legal service, health professional, counsellor or refuge service.

Where it is not reasonably practicable to provide documentation, a statutory declaration may be acceptable.

Documentation is to be retained by the employee only. The principal or line manager records that documentation has been sighted.

Leave may be granted without supporting evidence where the principal or line manager is satisfied as to the reason for leave.

PRINCIPALS AND LINE MANAGERS

Where an employee discloses they are experiencing FDV, the principal or line manager should compassionately and sensitively facilitate the employee's access to support options and consider safety of students and employees in the school or workplace.

Family and domestic violence can affect the wellbeing, productivity and performance of employees. Flexible work arrangements can often support employees continuing in their role. These may vary depending on their circumstances and specific needs.

Principals and line managers are responsible for:

- developing a risk management plan if an employee feels unsafe in the school or workplace or the safety of students and other employees may be at risk;
- facilitating practical help and support for an employee by informing them about counselling services, including the Department's [Employee Assistance Program](#) and support available from external agencies (See Appendix A);
- facilitating an employee's request for FDV leave by emailing Corporate Business Services Team Leaders Personnel and Payroll at ppteamleaders@education.wa.edu.au. This is an interim measure until a confidential functionality to process FDV leave is available in HRMIS;
- requesting supporting evidence from an employee to access FDV leave. Leave may be granted without supporting documentation where the principal or line manager is satisfied as to the reason for the leave. Documentation will not be kept on the employee's personnel file unless otherwise agreed. The principal or line manager records that any evidence produced was sighted;
- monitoring and managing leave related to FDV. Employees may have difficulty meeting usual notifications of absences due to their circumstances; however, notification should occur as soon as is practicable;
- reporting via the [Online Incident Notification System](#) (See [Keeping Our Workplace Safe](#)) where an incident adversely affects or has potential to adversely affect safety or school operations, and/or threatens the safety and wellbeing of staff and/or students. The Online Incident Notification System is used to report school incidents only;
- contacting the Director, Staff Recruitment and Employment Services to discuss circumstances where FDV may impact on an employee's ability to continue working at the school or worksite at the request of and in consultation with the employee. Instances will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis; and

- accessing the [Manager Assistance Program](#), if required. This is a telephone advisory service for managers dealing with difficult or complex staff issues. [Manager Assistance Program brochure](#).

FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CONTACT OFFICERS

The role of the FDV Contact Officer in the school or worksite operates within existing roles and responsibilities:

- Principals and line managers provide support to employees, including facilitating access to FDV leave and ensuring a safe work environment for staff.
- Occupational Safety and Health Consultants support and provide advice to principals and line managers on developing a risk management plan for employees to assist managing FDV matters in the school or worksite. OSHTeam@education.wa.edu.au.
- Equal Opportunity Contact Officers provide information on how to access FDV leave and internal and external support available. [EOCO contact list](#).
- Equity and Diversity team provides information on the Family and Domestic Violence Leave Guidelines. equity@education.wa.edu.au

Contacts

Manager, Labour Relations, Ph: 9264 5126.

Manager, Workforce Policy, Ph: 9264 5081.

Manager, Payroll Operations, Ph: 9264 8763.

Manager, Payroll Services, Ph: 9264 8426

Director, Staff Recruitment and Employment Services, Ph: 9264 5213.

Resources

- [Premier's Circular 2017/07](#) *Family and domestic violence – paid leave and workforce support*, August 2017.
- [Implementation Guidelines Premier's Circular 2017/07](#)
- [Path to Safety: Western Australia's strategy to reduce family and domestic violence 2020-2030](#) Department of Communities.
- [Family and domestic violence support](#): A guide for public sector agencies to create safe workspaces for their staff. Public Sector Commission, October 2020.
- [Keeping Our Workplace Safe](#): a resource for principals to help address incidents of workplace violence against staff.

APPENDIX A – EXTERNAL SUPPORT RESOURCES

Below are a range of community support resources available for individuals experiencing family and domestic violence and those supporting them. The Department of Communities also maintains a comprehensive list of [support services](#).

POLICE

For emergencies, call the police on **000** if someone is in immediate danger.

To report an incident of family or domestic violence, call the police on **131 444** or **SMSAssist** can be accessed by dialling 0403 227 478. SMSAssist is a text messaging service to contact WA police for assistance and is designed for people who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired.

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

[Department of Communities, Child Protection and Family Support](#) 24-hour helplines:

- Crisis Care Helpline: (08) 9223 1111 or free call 1800 199 008.
- Men’s Domestic Violence Helpline: (08) 9223 1199 or free call 1800 000 599.
- Women’s Domestic Violence Helpline (including referral to a women’s refuge): (08) 9223 1188 or free call 1800 007 339.

[1800 RESPECT](#): National Sexual Assault, Domestic Family Violence Counselling Service
This is a national service providing information, counselling and support services for those impacted by sexual assault, domestic or family violence and abuse.
Free call 1800 737 732 (available 24 hours a day, seven days a week).

[Department of Justice](#): Family Violence Service
This service provides information, advocacy and support.
Free call 1800 600 476 or email FamilyViolenceService@justice.wa.gov.au.

[The Patricia Giles Centre](#)
This service provides accommodation and counselling for women and children affected by domestic violence. For assistance call (08) 9300 0340.

[Women’s Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services WA](#)
For assistance call (08) 9420 7264 or email info@womenscouncil.com.au.

[Women’s Health and Family Services](#)
Free call 1800 998 399 or email info@whfs.org.au.

Daisy App
Daisy is free and connects women around Australia to services providing support for impacts of sexual assault and family and domestic violence.

[Google Play](#)

[App Store](#)

Sunny App
Sunny is a free app providing support for women with disability who have experienced violence and abuse. This app has been co-designed with women with disability to ensure it provides the best support for people who use it.

[Google Play](#)

[App Store](#)

SEXUAL ASSAULT SERVICES

Department of Health: Sexual Assault Resource Centre
24 hour emergency line call (08) 6458 1828 or free call 1800 199 888.

HOUSING AND FINANCIAL SERVICES

Department of Communities, Child Protection and Family Support:

Crisis Accommodation and Homelessness Services

- Homelessness Advisory Service call 1800 065 892
- List of funded [homelessness services](#)

Safe at Home

This service provides support for women and children experiencing domestic violence to enable them to stay in their homes, when it is safe to do so.

- North West Metro: (08) 9300 1238
- North East Metro: (08) 9205 7375
- South West Metro: (08) 9527 3289
- South East Metro: (08) 9227 0348

Department of Human Services: Family and Domestic Violence Support

This service provides information, resources and referrals to people affected by family and domestic violence.

Zonta House Refuge Association

For general enquiries call 1800 870 149 (option 7) or email info@zontahouse.org.au.

LEGAL SERVICES

Women's Law Centre of WA

The Women's Law Centre is a community legal centre funded to provide free legal services for women of Western Australia. To request information or to book an appointment, call (08) 9272 8800 or 1800 625 122 or email info@wlswa.org.au.

Legal Aid WA: Domestic Violence Legal Unit

The Legal Aid WA Domestic Violence Legal Unit assists women, children and men in same sex relationships with legal advice about family violence matters, including the law about Family Violence Restraining Orders. For assistance call 1300 650 579.

Community Legal WA

A list of community legal centres that are located throughout metropolitan, regional and remote WA can be found on this [website](#). For assistance call (08) 9221 9322.

CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE (CALD) BACKGROUNDS

Ishar Multicultural Women's Health Centre

Ishar Multicultural Women's Health Centre provides a range of inclusive, holistic and culturally sensitive services to women from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds. For assistance call 9345 5335 or email info@ishar.org.au.

Family Safety Pack (developed by Australian Government)

The Family Safety Pack provides information on Australia's laws regarding domestic and family violence, sexual assault and forced marriage, and a woman's right to be safe. It is developed to improve support for people from CALD backgrounds. Interpreters play an important role in domestic violence situations. If an interpreter is needed visit [Translating and Interpreting Service National](#) website or for emergencies call 131 450.

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SERVICES

[Yorgum Healing Services](#)

Yorgum provides culturally secure healing, counselling, therapy and support to help Aboriginal children, young people and adults recover from the harmful impacts of child sexual abuse and/or family and domestic violence.

Free call 1800 469 371 or (08) 9218 9477.

[Djinda Service – Relationships Australia WA and Women’s Legal Service WA](#)

Djinda Service provides legal, counselling and crisis accommodation support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children.

For assistance call 6164 0650.

[Marnin Family Support and Legal Unit \(MFSLU\)](#)

Deliver culturally appropriate legal representation and non-legal holistic support services. MFSLU works with women and communities to find solutions to effectively address the impact & challenges experienced by women and children in relation to family and domestic violence.

For assistance call (08) 9191 5284 or email marninsupport@mwrc.com.au.

[Aboriginal Legal Services of WA](#)

This service provides legal representation and support services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in WA.

Free call 1800 019 900 or (08) 9265 6666

After hours call (08) 9265 6644

[Aboriginal Family Law Services](#)

This service provides legal support services for all Aboriginal people experiencing family and domestic violence or sexual assault.

For assistance call 1800 469 246 or 9355 15020 or email office@afls.org.au.

DISABILITY SERVICES

[National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline](#)

This is a free, independent and confidential service for reporting abuse and neglect of people with disability.

To make a report call 1800 880 052 or email hotline@workfocus.com.

LESBIAN, GAY, TRANSGENDER AND INTERSEX SERVICES

[QLife](#)

QLife provides national LGBTI peer support, telephone counselling and referral for people wanting to talk about a range of issues including sexuality, identity, gender, feelings or relationships.

This free service is available from 3pm to midnight every day (both telephone and webchat). For assistance call 1800 184 527 or click here for [webchat](#).