

Informing Staff of their Legal Responsibilities for the Care, Safety and Welfare of Students



A school might like to consider the following suggestions as means to ensuring that staff members are aware of their responsibilities:

- Individual staff contracts could refer to the overall responsibilities of staff members, including their legal responsibilities for the care, safety and welfare of students.
- The staff handbook – prepared annually in either paper or electronic form, will list the responsibilities of all staff members.
- At staff meetings to commence the new school year, staff members should be reminded of their legal responsibilities.
- New staff briefings could emphasise the expectations of the school in relation to student welfare.
- Specialist in-service programmes for staff run both within the school and by external organisations (with input from the legal profession) can focus on topics such as duty of care. Case studies and question and answer sessions are a suitable approach to ensure that staff fully understand their responsibilities.
- Reminders to staff can be made at pertinent times of the year, for example at camp time, and when there are changes to the relevant law.
- An understanding of these responsibilities could be part of a performance review process for staff.

It would be advisable for schools to prepare a schedule recording the dates when such information is distributed to staff to ensure that all areas relating to staff legal responsibilities of the above (and any updates as needed) are covered in a set time period.