Scenario 2

School

Example scenarios for managing psychosocial hazards and risks at work

The control measures you choose must suit the organisational and worker needs and effectively control the risks to the highest level that is reasonably practicable. Below is an industry-specific scenario example featuring common psychosocial hazards and risks, example controls and approaches to maintain, monitor, review and achieve continual improvement of the risk management approach.

Scenario context and work content

A new governmental policy is required to be implemented with little time for consultation.

The school provides for students with complex needs.

The changes mean that teachers will need to add to their current workload. This will increase tasks such as face to face teaching and its preparation and planning, data collection and analysis, ongoing assessment, staff meetings, and communications with parents and community. These requirements make it difficult to continue to manage daily incidents and interactions amongst increasingly complex student cohorts, professional learning and development and compliance activities.

Psychosocial hazards and risks

Role overload: The change has added to the demand on workers. Workers are concerned that to meet deadlines, tasks such as professional learning, reporting and lesson planning are priorities, and therefore will need to be completed outside standard work hours. Workers are also concerned the changes may require learning new skills at a time when they are experiencing difficulty with the existing role overload.

Poor organisational change consultation, poor support and low job control: Poor change consultation has contributed to the perception that there has been limited consideration of existing workload and poor support to manage the increase in workload from new requirements. Workers have limited say in the decisions about their workload, how the work is done and the changes to their work.

There are no clear guidelines to support re-prioritisation of tasks to meet deadlines within the strict timetables of schools.

Psychosocial controls

Role overload: The organisation consults with teachers to:

- Review current tasks and new demands to prioritise.
- Monitor and review the work hours undertaken by teachers and capacity to incorporate new work load associated with this policy.
- Employ more permanent teachers to take responsibility for new policy/procedural requirements.
- Provide system support centrally available for schools to access.
- Ensure that there are enough resources allocated to manage these risks and undertake effective consultation, coordination and cooperation processes.

To address **poor organisational change, poor support and low job control**, the organisation will:

- Consult with workers about the proposed changes.
- Undertake analysis to inform the re-prioritisation of tasks.
- Communicate to affected workers how this will change their work and how they might now re-prioritise tasks.
- Provide support and required professional learning to undertake additional tasks within core working hours.

Review and improve

The organisation will:

- Review WHS procedures and processes to ensure that psychosocial hazards and risks including role overload and low job control are reported and recorded through the systematic approach to managing psychosocial hazards.
- Implement cyclical and frequent reviews, both at system and school level, of current task demands of workers.
- Monitor progress and impact on affected workers and provide responsive support based on consultation.
- Review timetables to ensure that accommodations are made to reduce remote and isolated work caused by the increase in work demands.

Refer to SafeWork NSW's [Code of Practice Managing Psychosocial Hazards at Work](#) for more information or [Designing Work to Manage Psychosocial Risks](#) which also includes four case studies illustrating organisational and team level work design, and team and task level work design.