

DVD Training Material

- Ch 3 - Returning to Work – Non Work Related Injury



Overview

Injuries that affect a person's capacity to work may not always happen in the school environment. Serious injuries and illnesses that occur in a person's personal life can also impact their capacity to work.

Supporting an injured employee's return to work is not always easy, but it's good for the employee and good for the school. This guideline aims to help you understand why return to work is so important, what you can do to help and where you can get more information.

A personal injury does not require a formal WorkCover process. However, you may still benefit from developing a return to work plan.

Return to Work

Things You Should Know About Return To Work

- The relationship between the school leader and an injured employee can have a significant impact on the speed and sustainability of return to work outcomes. You can make a big difference!
- The return to work process also applies to employees who are unable to perform their normal work duties as a result of a serious illness
- Your employee doesn't need to be 100% recovered to return to work. Returning to work is actually an important part of their recovery
- Whether it's on reduced hours in their regular job or on modified or alternative duties, getting your employee back to work is an important part of their rehabilitation while they are recovering.

By playing an active role in the return to work process you can retain the skills and knowledge of injured staff members and help build morale in the school by showing all employees that the injured employee is valued.

What You Can Do To Help

When assisting an employee to return from a non-work related injury or illness there are a number of steps you can take:

1. Obtain relevant medical information about what the employees capacity (i.e what they can and cannot do)
2. Consider reasonable workplace support, aids or modifications to assist in your employees return to work
3. Assess and propose options for suitable employment duties to your employee
4. Monitor their progress.



Supporting Your Employee

- From the moment you become aware of the employees injury or illness, support them. Be respectful and non-judgmental in conversations with the employee and in conversations about them to others involved in their return to work. The first conversations with the employee following an injury/illness often 'set the scene' for how positive the employee will feel about their injury, you, their employer and return to work
- Keep in regular contact with the injured employee and make sure they still feel part of the team. If appropriate, invite them to attend meetings, training, send them work newsletters or updates to help them feel connected while they are recovering
- When talking with the employee show genuine interest, talk about their recovery to see how they are going, offer your assistance and don't put unnecessary pressure on them to get back to work
- When talking with the employee focus on what the employee can do, rather than what they can't. Be respectful and non-judgmental when speaking both with and about them.

Example One - A Teacher has been diagnosed with cancer. They will require ongoing medical treatment. What modifications to their role may be required to accommodate the illness?

Example Two - An employee sustains an injury while playing sport on the weekend. They have a dislocated shoulder that results in a permanent reduction in arm movement. What reasonable adjustments to their role may be required to accommodate the injury?

Where to get more information

- Catholic Education Melbourne OHS Advisory Team – (03) 9267 0431
- WorkSafe Advisory Service – Tel (03) 9641 1444 or Free call 1800 136 086 **OR**
- Email info@worksafe.vic.gov.au