Equal Opportunity — Employees

Overview

As an equal opportunity employer, the Department is committed to providing safe, inclusive and respectful workplaces which are free from discrimination and harassment. Equal opportunity means that every person can participate freely and equally in areas of public life such as in the workplace, in education or in accessing goods and services. Discrimination is treating, or proposing to treat, someone unfavourably or bullying them because of a personal characteristic protected by law.

Equal opportunity law aims to promote everyone's right to equal opportunities, eliminate, as far as possible, discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation and provide redress for people whose rights have been breached.

In Victoria, the main legislation which makes it unlawful to discriminate is the Equal Opportunity Act 2010. Other relevant Victorian laws are the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 and the Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001.

At the Commonwealth level, there is a range of legislation that provides for equal opportunity including the Fair Work Act 2009, the Racial Discrimination Act 1975, the Sex Discrimination Act 1984, the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the Age Discrimination Act 2004.

The Department's [Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination Policy](http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/equal-opportunity/policy-and-guidelines) <http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/equal-opportunity/policy-and-guidelines> sets out the rights and responsibilities of employees and the Department in relation to equal opportunity. All Department employees are required to comply with the legislation and the Department's policy. Managers and principals are required to ensure that the Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination Policy, legislation and supporting principles and practices are integrated into appropriate workplace plans and activities.

Reporting and support

To report discrimination or harassment in our workplace or seek support, employees can speak with their principal or manager or the [Employee Conduct Branch](#) ↗

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/workm/Pages/comunt.aspx> .
[Workplace Contact Officers](http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/workplace-contact-officer-wco-network/resources) <http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/workplace-contact-officer-wco-network/resources> (WCOs) are a good point of contact to find out who is best to talk to for your situation.

Support is available to employees, principals and managers involved in reporting and managing a discrimination or harassment complaint, even after the matter has been resolved.

Employees can also access 4 free and confidential counselling sessions through the [Employee Assistance Program (EAP)](http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/occupational-health-and-safety-management-system-ohsms/guidance/expert-supports) <http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/occupational-health-and-safety-management-system-ohsms/guidance/expert-supports> on [1300 361 008](tel:1300361008). The EAP also has a dedicated Manager Assist telephone advisory service to support principals and managers to access management support and coaching.

An e-module has been created to help you understand Equal Opportunity (available on the [Resources](http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/equal-opportunity/resources) <http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/equal-opportunity/resources> tab) and how representative behaviours apply to your role. This module is one of a suite of modules linked to the Department's commitment to respectful workplaces.

Inclusive workplaces guide

The Inclusive Workplace Guide supports and aids the implementation of the Department's Equal Opportunity and Anti-discrimination Policy, bringing together available resources to assist principals/managers and employees to create inclusive and respectful workplaces.

This guide has been developed to assist everyone at Department workplaces to support employees with diverse and intersecting identities. It gives practical tips to implement best practice in diversity and inclusion across teams, and to support staff to bring their whole selves to work. Each area of the guide goes into depth about what discrimination looks like and actions to foster inclusion. There are also links to further resources and department policies.

Collection of staff information

The Department respects its employees and its legislative obligations to support them.

One important way of achieving this is recognising that staff have diverse gender identities. The policy for the [Collection and reporting of staff gender](#)

[information](http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/equal-opportunity/policy-and-guidelines/collection-and-reporting-staff-gender-information) <http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/equal-opportunity/policy-and-guidelines/collection-and-reporting-staff-gender-information> has been developed and sets out when and how to collect information on staff gender. This ensures that privacy is maintained and staff information can be collected in a respectful and consistent way.

Related policies

- [Code of Conduct](http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/code-conduct/overview) <http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/code-conduct/overview>

- [Complaints — Information for Employees](http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/complaints-information-employees/overview) <http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/complaints-information-employees/overview>

- [Department Values](http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/values-department-vps-school-employees/overview) <http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/values-depart-ment-vps-school-employees/overview>

- [Disability and Reasonable Adjustment — Employees](http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/disability-and-reasonable-adjustment/overview) <http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/disability-and-reasonable-adjustment/overview>

- [Inclusive Workplaces](http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/inclusive-workplaces/overview) <http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/inclusive-workplaces/overview>

- [Employee Conduct Branch ↗](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/workm/Pages/comunt.aspx) <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/workm/Pages/comunt.aspx>

- [Employee Health Safety and Wellbeing — expert supports](http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/node/1248) <http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/node/1248>

- [LGBTIQ Inclusive Workplaces](http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/lgbtiq-inclusive-workplaces/overview) <http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/lgbtiq-inclusive-workplaces/overview>

- [Respectful Workplaces](http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/respectful-workplaces/overview) <http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/respectful-workplaces/overview>

- [Sexual Harassment — Employees](http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/sexual-harassment/overview) <http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/sexual-harassment/overview>

- [Workplace Bullying](http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/workplace-bullying/policy) <http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/workplace-bullying/policy>

- [Workplace Contact Officers Network](http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/workplace-contact-officer-wco-network/overview) <http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/workplace-contact-officer-wco-network/overview>

Relevant legislation

- [Delegations](http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/delegations/overview) <http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/delegations/overview>

- [Industrial Agreements](http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/industrial-agreements/overview) <http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/industrial-agreements/overview>

- [Industrial Awards](http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/industrial-awards/overview) <http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/industrial-awards/overview>

- [Legislation — Employment Topics](http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/legislation/overview) <http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/legislation/overview>

- [Ministerial Orders — Employment](http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/ministerial-orders-employment/overview) <http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/ministerial-orders-employment/overview>

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Scope

- Schools
- All Department staff

Contact

People Division
Workforce Diversity and Inclusion

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