



Domestic and Family Violence (Staff Support) procedure

Section 1 - Preamble

(1) This Procedure is effective from 5 January 2023.

Section 2 - Purpose

(2) This Procedure outlines the steps that staff experiencing domestic or family violence can take to access available support mechanisms (including special leave).

(3) This Procedure gives effect to the situations of domestic or family violence clauses contained in the [Deakin University Enterprise Agreement 2023\(EA\)](#).

Section 3 - Scope

(4) This Procedure applies to all staff of the University.

Section 4 - Policy

(5) This Procedure is pursuant to the [Family Violence \(Staff and Student Support\) policy](#).

Section 5 - Procedure

(6) The University will adopt a collaborative approach to supporting staff experiencing domestic or family violence. The University's Safer Community Services will act as the central point of enquiry for information, advice and support and will work positively with other internal and external avenues of assistance and the affected staff member so that they can continue to work.

Requesting support

(7) Staff experiencing domestic or family violence can elect to contact the following to discuss their situation and access support:

- a. a staff member within [Safer Community Services](#); or
- b. their leader; or
- c. a harassment and discrimination contact officer; or
- d. their Senior People and Culture Partner; or
- e. a University health professional.

It is recognised that staff experiencing domestic or family violence may also disclose their experience to a trusted colleague or someone from outside their immediate work unit or an external support agency.

Confidentiality

(8) All staff involved in supporting a staff member experiencing domestic or family violence must treat the matter as confidential. To protect the safety of others or as agreed with the staff member, supporting staff must not discuss the matter with other staff or people outside the University, other than Safer Community Services, or unless there is a legal obligation to do so.

Managing requests for support and responding to a disclosure

(9) Any individual receiving a disclosure will:

- a. respect the rights of the staff member to make their own decisions regarding their personal affairs and avoid judgement, and
- b. bring the [Family Violence \(Staff and Student Support\) policy](#) and this Procedure to the attention of the affected staff member.

(10) Additional requirements apply to specific roles:

- a. Leaders who have received a request for support from staff experiencing domestic or family violence must:
 - i. act in accordance with their responsibilities under the [Health, Wellbeing and Safety policy](#) to manage operational health, wellbeing and safety matters and notify or directly engage with Safer Community Services, and
 - ii. offer support to the affected staff member, as well as any affected colleagues, such as the [Employee Wellbeing Support \(EWS\)](#).
- b. Harassment and Discrimination Contact Officers, Senior People and Culture Partner or University health professionals must notify or directly engage with Safer Community Services in order that they can provide appropriate support.
- c. Safer Community Services will work directly with the person and other areas of the University to coordinate the support provided to the staff member by the University.

(11) Staff may request a support person to attend any meetings in relation to matters of domestic or family violence.

(12) The University will co-operate with all legal orders protecting staff experiencing domestic or family violence.

Types of support available to staff

(13) Safer Community Services, in consultation with other relevant areas of the University including the relevant Senior People and Culture Partner, will consider any request for support from staff experiencing domestic or family violence. Staff experiencing domestic or family violence may have access to a range of supporting measures, which may include:

- a. changes to hours of work
- b. changes to location of work
- c. changes to work phone numbers or work email addresses
- d. blocking of particular email contacts or telephone numbers
- e. protection of identity and privacy at work related activities
- f. changes to the staff member's contact details on the University's directory
- g. assistance from Deakin Security while on campus or arriving or leaving from campus
- h. safety provisions for staff attending work related activities (e.g. conferences)
- i. access to leave entitlements under the [EA](#), including personal and carer's leave, annual leave and long service

- leave in accordance with the [Leave and Public Holidays procedure](#)
- j. access to special leave as outlined in clause 54.1(h) of the [EA](#) and clauses 14-17 of this Procedure
 - k. access to leave without pay where all paid leave entitlements have been exhausted
 - l. the right to have a support colleague accompany them when attending any internal or external meetings dealing with matters or issues arising out of domestic or family violence, and
 - m. other reasonable provisions determined on a case by case basis, such as advice, information and referrals to appropriate support agencies.

Special Leave

(14) Requests for special leave can be submitted by staff via [Safer Community Services](#) or by contacting their Senior People and Culture Partner. For a casual professional or sessional academic staff member, paid special leave means payment for the duties that would have been completed but for the taking of approved, paid special leave.

(15) A request that is submitted via [Safer Community Services](#) or Senior People and Culture Partner will by-pass the staff member's work area and go direct to a designated approver within HRD.

(16) The amount and timing of special leave will take into account the individual's situation and will be assessed and determined in consultation with the staff member, [Safer Community Services](#), the staff member's leader and People and Culture.

(17) Special leave may be granted for a range of reasons:

- a. seeking medical, legal or financial assistance
- b. attending court appearances
- c. making arrangements for children or any other people for whom the staff member has carer responsibilities
- d. organising alternative accommodation
- e. counselling or other related appointments.

(18) The University may require staff to provide documentation, such as from the police, court, community or government agencies, counselling services or a statutory declaration in support of any application for paid special leave.

Safety Plans

(19) When a staff member raises a concern regarding domestic or family violence, [Safer Community Services](#), with input from their leader and the area's Senior People and Culture Partner, may be required to put in place strategies to ensure the safety of the staff member and others in the workplace.

(20) When developing a personal safety plan the following must be considered:

- a. the plan must have the staff member's consent
- b. it must be reviewed with the staff member on a regular basis (and may be adjusted at any time in consultation and by agreement with the staff member)
- c. the staff member's emergency contact details must be kept up to date
- d. all reasonable attempts should be made to ensure staff maintain their normal working hours and working conditions
- e. compliance with legal orders (e.g. Intervention or Personal Safety Orders)
- f. the plan may require consultation with other areas within the University such as Security and Digital Services, which will be coordinated by Safety Community Services on a confidential basis, and

g. action to be taken if the staff member does not arrive at work.

(21) If a person breaches a court order by coming into the workplace or disrupts the workplace, the staff member's leader must:

- a. initiate the University's emergency response procedures by contacting security by dialing 222 and requesting assistance and immediate police attendance if necessary;
- b. contact [Safer Community Services](#) and People and Culture
- c. document any incident as soon as possible (Incident Form to be lodged with People and Culture)
- d. refer any staff involved in or witnessing the incident to the [Employee Wellbeing Support \(EWS\)](#).

(22) In the case where a reported domestic violence situation is occurring between two members of the University community, the University will make reasonable changes necessary to support and maintain the safety of both parties.

(23) When applying for support under this procedure, including for special leave, proof of domestic or family violence may be required by Safer Community Services and/or People and Culture. Evidence can be in the form of a document issued by:

- a. the police
- b. a court
- c. a medical practitioner
- d. a government agency
- e. a counselling professional, or
- f. a statutory declaration from the staff member.

Record keeping

(24) Any notes of meetings, discussions and actions proposed or taken must be stored in a secure location in accordance with the [Privacy policy](#). All information pertaining to a staff member's personal circumstances in terms of domestic or family violence must be kept confidential and not be placed on their personnel file.

Responsibility of leaders

(25) Leaders are responsible for:

- a. offering support to staff who may require assistance as a result of experiencing the effects of domestic or family violence
- b. providing advice to staff about the [Employee Wellbeing Support \(EWS\)](#)
- c. seeking advice as necessary from specialist staff such as Safer Community Services and working with People and Culture
- d. being familiar with processes to support people who may be experiencing domestic or family violence and participating in relevant training provided by the University, and
- e. ensuring all personal information concerning the staff member's circumstances and application is used solely for the purpose of assessing the staff member's needs and determining and applying the appropriate support mechanisms and is otherwise kept confidential.

Section 6 - Definitions

(26) For the purpose of this Procedure:

- a. Domestic or family violence: as defined in the [Family Violence \(Staff and Student Support\) policy](#).
- b. Safer Community Services: is an in-house University service that acts as the central point of enquiry for information, advice and support in managing problem behaviours affecting staff or students that have, or could, cause offence, fear or trauma (physical and or psychological).

Status and Details

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Expiry Date	To Be Advised
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