



General Media Enquires

P: (08) 9323 3800

(request Publicity Office)

F: (08) 9323 3878

E: publicity@cpsu.org

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School first aid response a grey area says union

Some support staff at Western Australia's public schools are being pressured into looking after sick or injured children which is beyond their duty of care or expertise according to the Community and Public Sector Union/Civil Service Association.

Front office staff are permitted to carry out basic first-aid such as dispensing band aids or cold packs but Education Department policy dictates anything further must be done by a qualified and designated first aid officer.

CPSU/CSA Branch Assistant Secretary Rikki Hendon said there was growing concern that support staff were responding to the children's needs outside their expertise level.

Traditionally sick bays are near the school front offices which means support staff are the first point of contact for sick children.

The union is aware of one school that moved a support officer's workstation into the sick bay to look after the children.

"Our members help the children to the best of their ability but are fearful if they are forced to administer first aid or something out of their permitted duty of care and something goes wrong the department will say they didn't follow approved procedures," Ms Hendon said.

"It has become a bit of a grey area about who should be doing what.

"School principals have to appoint staff to administer first aid duties and it has to be someone with a current first aid certificate.

"Our argument is senior school support staff can volunteer to be the first aid officer as long as they have a current first aid certificate but they can not be forced to do so."

Members have said this policy is not always followed.

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The union is aware of schools that don't have a qualified first aid officer or a first aid plan for staff to follow.

"We have reminded the department about their policy and that first aid should be conducted by designated and qualified first aid officers."

FOR COMMENT:

Rikki Hendon
CPSU/CSA Branch Assistant Secretary
9323 3800

FOR INFORMATION:

Darren O'Dea
CPSU/CSA Media Liaison Officer
M: 0421 934 794
P: (08) 9323 3855
E: darren.odea@cpsucsa.org

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