



Unschedule the Burnout

A practical guide for the education sector



Industry overview

Over a quarter of surveyed education and academia workers (26 per cent) feel burnt out¹, and 38 per cent say they can't take proper breaks due to back-to-back schedules².

Teacher shortages, rising expectations and complex student needs can mean heavy workloads and high emotional demands. Beyond teaching, the compliance, behaviour and wellbeing duties pull focus from core work. Many educators go 'above and beyond', blurring boundaries and limiting recovery.

This guide translates new research and expert insights into practical steps leaders can implement now. You'll find an overview of the causes of burnout, followed by targeted actions for employers and their leaders.

"We need to acknowledge that, as designed, teaching work often isn't sustainable. Think system and school: prevent harm by redesigning roles; promote the positives of meaningful work; and manage ill-health with clear support."



Dr Ben Arnold
Senior Lecturer
in Educational Leadership,
Deakin University

A snapshot of burnout in education



Mental stress and/or work pressure accounted for over 40 per cent of all FY25 psychological claims in the education sector, the highest of any contributing factors.³



The average days taken off work when an educator claims for psychological injury is 102, twice more than those with physical claims.⁴



Seven in ten (69 per cent) surveyed employees in the education sector report having experienced mental distress linked to work overload, which is a higher rate than most other industries surveyed.⁵



Nearly a quarter (24 per cent) of surveyed education workers are dissatisfied with their organisation's ability to create a mentally healthy workplace.⁶



Nearly a third (31 per cent) of surveyed employees in the education sector say they are likely to consider leaving their current organisation in the next 6–12 months.⁷



Tips for the education sector

For workers in the education industry, emotional labour, marking, administrative burdens and after-hours parent communication can extend the day.

Using Allianz's research-informed **Beyond Burnout framework**, we collaborated with Dr Ben Arnold, to share practical tips and strategies to help mitigate the experience of burnout and promote employee wellbeing and productivity.

Dr Ben Arnold is a Senior Lecturer at Deakin University, where he investigates the relationship between education policies, psychosocial work environments and mental health in the education workforce. His passion for burnout prevention plays a key role in his work to sustain and strengthen Australia's educational workforce.

"I think we really need to see stress as something that exists in every workplace. But when it becomes overwhelming and sustained, that's when it can cause really significant challenges for teachers and other employees."

Dr Ben Arnold



48 per cent of those surveyed and working in education cited unrealistic workload or deadlines as the main factor contributing to negative feelings about their job.⁸



Over a third (36 per cent) feel they are negatively impacted by unnecessary meetings or tasks.⁹



Nearly two in four (39 per cent) feel a lack of team resource/staff shortages negatively impact their job satisfaction.¹⁰



Creating a just workplace

A fair and equitable workplace fosters a sense of value and respect among employees and reduces feelings of injustice.

Tip: Establish a peer network that encourages collaboration and shared problem-solving: create regular opportunities for staff to plan together and address challenges collectively. This fosters a sense of community and ensures that issues like student behaviour or parent expectations don't fall on individuals alone.

Tip: Integrate in-school support with external organisations that support student and community wellbeing, and ensure clear processes are in place for referral. A good network of support will help relieve some of the increasing emotional and social demand on teachers.



Managing workload and work pressure

Ensuring manageable workloads and reasonable time pressure can help prevent employees from becoming overwhelmed and exhausted.

The breadth of workload demands in the education sector are multifaceted. It's not just the volume of work required to support student learning but the intensity and mental demands of that work.

"I think the first thing is understanding why teaching is so challenging, and it's not just about how we traditionally think about workload. It's about the mental load of the work, thinking, problem solving, interacting all day."

"It's also about the emotional elements of the work, so dealing with students' needs, supporting student wellbeing, helping parents who are concerned about their loved ones." Dr Ben Arnold.

Tip: Protect teaching time by reducing non-core tasks to allow educators to focus on supporting student learning and delivering quality education.

Tip: Provide educators with access to teaching materials and resources that can streamline lesson planning and reduce preparation time. This may include digital tools, shared resource libraries, and collaborative platforms.



Effective workplace communication and support

Clear and open communication builds trust and collaboration, reducing misunderstandings and conflicts that can increase stress levels.

A supportive workplace culture and environment provides resources and emotional support, reducing feelings of isolation and promoting resilience.

Tip: Ensure leaders are trained in how to recognise the early signs of burnout and how to have supportive conversations about it. This will help to create an environment where mental health is prioritised and where employees feel safe to have open conversations with their leaders.

Tip: Implement digital platforms to facilitate communication between educators and students/parents. This could include apps or portals where teachers can share updates, respond to queries or provide feedback, but where communications outside of reasonable working hours are automatically paused until the following working day. This helps teachers manage expectations and build trust with students and parents, while also automating boundaries around availability.



Promoting autonomy

Empowering employees with autonomy promotes a sense of control and ownership, thus reducing frustration and disengagement that can lead to burnout.

Tip: Provide teachers with the support and permission to adapt their teaching practice to support the needs of the specific students in their classroom. Encouraging creativity and innovation in lesson planning empowers educators to take ownership of their teaching methods and outcomes and drives greater satisfaction from work.

"I think the core curriculum's there, and I think that does a great job. Within the classroom, consider how teachers can shape their teaching to support students' needs. Each school is different. Each student's needs are different. So how do teachers change their practice, how much permission are they given to do that?" Dr Ben Arnold.

Tip: Offer self-directed learning opportunities where educators choose professional development activities that align with their interests and career goals. Providing a variety of learning options, such as workshops, courses, or conferences, allows educators to tailor their growth and development.

Further information is available in our [Beyond Burnout – a holistic guide to workplace wellbeing in the workplace](#). This is a comprehensive evidence-informed guide for employers and employees to support the prevention, and necessary intervention, of burnout in the workplace.

About the research

The research was commissioned by Allianz and conducted by YouGov in accordance with the Australian Polling Council standard. The 2025 survey comprises a nationally representative sample of 1,642 employees (middle managers and below) and 506 managers (senior managers and above) aged 18+ across Australia.

Fieldwork was conducted online between 28 July and 7 August 2025. Following interviewing, data were weighted by age, gender and region to reflect the latest ABS population estimates. Professional services, construction, education and healthcare cohorts were upweighted for analysis.

Allianz Workers' Compensation claims data for Financial Years 2021 to 2025 and across all Allianz portfolios including, Allianz Australia's Underwritten Workers' Compensation, NSW Managed Fund (for both private and public sector employees) and Victorian Managed Fund Portfolios.

- ¹ 26% of surveyed employees in the education/academia sector reported feeling burnt out, when asked about how they feel about their job.
- ² 38% of surveyed employees in the education/academia sector agreed that they can't take proper breaks in their work environment due to their back-to-back schedule.
- ³ According to Allianz Workers' Compensation data, in FY25 Mental Stress and/or Work Pressure was the highest contributor to Allianz Primary Active Psychological Claims in the Education sector, accounting for 41.9 per cent of all claims.
- ⁴ According to Allianz Workers' Compensation data, in FY25 the average days off work for a Allianz Primary Active Psychological Claim in the Education sector was 102 days. This was two times more days off than those with a physical claim (51 days).
- ⁵ 69% of surveyed employees in the education/academia sector stated they have experienced mental distress (e.g. anxiety, burnout, emotional exhaustion) as a result of work overload (e.g. workload pressure, meeting overload, unrealistic deadlines).
- ⁶ 24% of surveyed employees in the education/academia sector stated that they are dissatisfied regarding their organisation creating mentally healthy workplaces for them to work in, in the last six months (since January 2025).
- ⁷ 31% of surveyed employees in the education/academia sector said they are very or somewhat likely to consider leaving their current organisation in the next 6-12 months.
- ⁸ 48% of surveyed employees in the education/academia sector identified unrealistic workload or deadlines as being a contributing factor to feeling negatively about their job.
- ⁹ 36% of surveyed employees in the education/academia sector identified unnecessary meetings or tasks as being a contributing factor to feeling negatively about their job.
- ¹⁰ 39% of surveyed employees in the education/academia sector identified staff shortages as being a contributing factor to feeling negatively about their job.