

Occupational Health & Safety (OH&S) Policy

1. Preamble

1.1 Purpose

The School Board and Executive Leadership Team are committed to providing a safe working environment through the implementation of risk management and reduction strategies that are integrated into all school activities. A consultative, co-operative approach between employees and management on OH&S issues is a key priority. This Policy acknowledges:

- the School's legal obligations under the Victorian *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* and Common Law duty of care;
- all Independent Schools Victoria (ISV) policies and procedures related to risk management; and
- the Gippsland Grammar Risk Management Policy.

1.2 Scope

The school recognises that it has a responsibility to provide and maintain a working environment that is safe, with minimum risk to individual health and welfare. This responsibility extends to all employees, students, parents, contractors and other visitors to the School. Promotion and maintenance of a safe working environment is a responsibility shared by all members of the School community.

This policy requires the School to:

- comply with relevant OH&S legislation and Independent Schools Victoria directives and guidelines;
- provide and maintain, as far as practicable, a working environment that is safe and without risk to health and safety;
- keep school buildings and grounds safe;
- minimise the occurrence of injury and illness in the school through systematic hazard identification, risk assessment and control and in respect of these matters sharing of ideas between the School and its employees;
- promote and provide information, training and supervision for all staff, students, contractors and visitors in specific health and safety procedures, as required;
- be informed of, and take action as required on, incidents and accidents which occur (and serious near misses) so to ensure action has been taken to avoid recurrence;
- maintain written records on all OH&S activities undertaken;
- facilitate the rehabilitation of injured employees back into the workforce; and
- review and develop the current and required OH&S policies and procedures within the School.

2. Management and Governance

Overview

As employers, the **Principal** and **School Board** have direct responsibility for ensuring the policy objectives are fulfilled and that the necessary resources are provided to achieve effective implementation. Employers' direct duties under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* include:

2.1 Duties of employers to employees

- 2.1.1** An employer must, so far as is reasonably practicable, provide and maintain for employees of the employer a working environment that is safe and minimises risk to health.
- 2.1.2** Without limiting sub-section 2.2.1, an employer contravenes that sub-section if the employer fails to do any of the following:
- a. provide or maintain plant or systems of work that are, so far as is reasonably practicable, safe and without risks to health;

- b. make arrangements for ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, safety and the absence of risks to health in connection with the use, handling, storage or transport of plant or substances;
- c. maintain, so far as is reasonably practicable, each workplace under the employer's management and control in a condition that is safe and without risks to health;
- d. provide, so far as is reasonably practicable, adequate facilities for the welfare of employees/students at any workplace under the management and control of the employer;
- e. provide such information, instruction, training or supervision to employees of the employer as is necessary to enable those persons to perform their work in a way that is safe and without risks to health.

2.1.3 For the purposes of sub-sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 –

- a. a reference to an employee includes a reference to an independent contractor engaged by an employer and any employees of the independent contractor; and
- b. the duties of an employer under those sub-sections extend to an independent contractor engaged by the employer, and any employees of the independent contractor, in relation to matters over which the employer has control or would have control if not for any agreement purporting to limit or remove that control

2.1.4 An offence against sub-section 2.2.1 is an indictable offence.

2.2 Duties of employers to monitor health and conditions

2.2.1 An employer must, so far as is reasonably practicable:

- a. monitor the health of employees of the employer; and
- b. monitor conditions at any workplace under the employer's management and control; and
- c. provide information to employees of the employer (in such other languages as appropriate) concerning health and safety at the workplace, including the names of persons to whom an employee may make an enquiry or complaint about health and safety.

2.2.2 An employer must, so far as is reasonably practicable:

- a. keep information and records relating to the health and safety of employees of the employer; and
- b. employ or engage persons who are suitably qualified in relation to occupational health and safety to provide advice to the employer concerning the health and safety of employees of the employer.

2.3 Duties of employers to other persons

2.3.1 An employer must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that persons other than employees of the employer are not exposed to risks to their health or safety arising from the conduct of the undertaking of the employer.

2.4 An offence against sub-section 2.4.1 is an indictable offence. Structures implemented by Management

The **OH&S Committee** has been set up through a nomination and election process by School management and reports regularly to the Board through the Principal. The aim of the OH&S Committee is to promote and ensure, through the process of joint consultation, the health and welfare of all employees, students, and visitors to the School. As such it shall be responsible for:

- ensuring legal compliance with State OH&S Legislation
- ensuring that OH&S policies and procedures are implemented and reviewed

- promoting and supporting the implementation of all OH&S policies and procedures;
- ensuring prompt, reasonably practicable, action is taken to control workplace hazards so far as it is reasonably practicable;
- maintaining accurate and thorough OH&S records that comply with OH&S Legislation and the school's policies;
- ensuring OH&S is an agenda item at appropriate School meetings; and
- complying at all times with established policies and procedures.

The **Health & Safety Representatives** are employees elected by staff members to represent them in relation to their health and safety. They *do not* have responsibility for managing OH&S in the school however have powers under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* to (amongst other things):

- inspect any part of the School with members of their DWG after giving reasonable notice (24 hours);
- accompany a WorkSafe inspector;
- require the establishment of a health and safety committee;
- after consulting with the relevant school management, issue a Provisional Improvement Notice (PIN) to require a OH&S contravention to be fixed;
- if the employee consents, be present at an interview concerning OH&S between a member and an inspector or the member and the employer concerned or its representative; and
- seek the assistance of any person whenever necessary.

2.5 Responsibilities of Staff, Students, Contractors and Visitors

All **Staff, Students, Contractors and Visitors** have a duty of care:

- for their own health and safety and of others affected by their actions;
- to report hazards, accidents or incidents (near misses) in accordance with agreed procedures;
- to participate in and contribute to the effectiveness of any OH&S initiatives; and
- to comply with any safety procedures and directions, as determined by the School.

2.6 The School is committed to ensuring this policy is communicated and implemented effectively and will regularly monitor and review its effectiveness.

Appendix A: History

Version	Authorised by	Approval date	Effective date	Sections modified
1. final	David Baker	30/7/2014	30/7/2014	Entire policy
2. revised	David Baker	1/10/2015		
3.	Board	9/8/2017	10/8/2017	Renamed WHS to OHS
4.	Kate Ray	17/12/2020	18/12/2020	Powers of HSRs

Related Policies:

Risk Management Policy
 OHS Committee Structure
 OHS Resolution Flowchart