



Cobram Anglican Grammar School

A School of the Anglican Schools Commission (Inc.)

Managing Common Risks to Staff Health & Safety

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1. Principles

The OHS Act requires employers to provide a healthy and safe working environment for their employees so far as is reasonably practicable. This means that any risks must be eliminated, and those risks which cannot be eliminated must be reduced so far as is practicable.

2. Duty of Employees

The OHS Act requires employees to take reasonable care for their own health and safety, as well as the health and safety of other people who may be affected by their work (such as students and employees). Staff must co-operate with their employer's efforts to comply with its legal duties. This includes co-operating with the employer's system for reporting OHS incidents and hazards.

3. Addressing the key risks in schools

The most common types of injuries in schools can be summarised as:

- Psychological injuries and illness
- Injuries resulting from manual handling
- Injuries resulting from slips, trips and falls

Many other types of injuries can occur in the school environment.

4. Injuries associated with manual handling

Manual handling means using the body to exert force to handle, support or restrain an object, including people. It includes lifting, pushing, pulling, holding, lowering, throwing, carrying, typing, clearing and using tools.

The term is not limited to handling heavy objects and includes:

- Stacking photocopier paper on a shelf
- Carrying a laptop computer
- Moving sporting equipment
- Assisting a student
- Moving maintenance equipment
- Using a keyboard

In the school environment, manual handling may lead to injury when it involves:

- A repetitive or sustained application of force, awkward postures or movements
- Tasks that people would find difficult due to the degree of force required
- Manual handling of unstable objects that are difficult to grasp or hold

5. Addressing manual handling risks

Risk	Risk Controls
Likelihood of injury resulting from moving heavy/large/awkward equipment, teaching tools or materials such as televisions, other audio-visual equipment, class sets, chairs, tables and building materials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Equipment is available in each room or area where it is needed• Equipment is stored permanently on suitable trolleys close to where it is required, and it is easy to move the trolleys to the classroom, maintenance workshop etc (smooth flooring, no steps or steep ramps)• Equipment is suitably mounted and restrained on the trolleys• Smaller size and weight equipment and materials are purchased
Likelihood of injury resulting from handling heavy or awkward equipment such as sporting equipment and hitching and unhitching trailers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The need to move equipment frequently is eliminated through planning and timetabling• Alternatives to heavy or awkward equipment are used• There is adequate storage, with the heavy and more frequently handled items stored between knee and shoulder height• Equipment can be transported without applying high force (for example using

Risk	Risk Controls
	<p>trolleys and cages with castors selected for the terrain)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trailers are fitted with suitable jockey wheels Small trolleys are provided for transporting laptop computers and books to classrooms. Staff are trained to avoid risks (for example in loading laptops into car boots)
Likelihood of injury resulting from hanging objects/displays/projects at a height in buildings and classrooms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pulley systems are in place to hang objects or displays Display boards for lightweight objects are easily accessible, and work is displayed within the staff member's arm reach Staff use suitable stepladder to hang objects and displays
Likelihood of injury resulting from computer-based or written tasks which are done continuously for more than 30 minutes or a total of two hours in the day (for example preparation or report writing).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suitable adjustable chairs are provided for all workstations where computer or written work is done Suitable desks are provided at each workstation Screens are clear and free from glare The workplace design encourages staff to move by locating printer at a distance from the workstations Where laptop computers are being used, a height adjuster for the keyboard, mouse and monitor is provided
Likelihood of injury resulting from sitting on damaged chairs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All damaged chairs are immediately removed and replaced or repaired
Likelihood of injury resulting from moving and storing boxes (for example in archives or general storage rooms).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Double handling is eliminated by ensuring safe access and direct delivery of items Only boxes and cartons with lower weights are moved and stored Trolleys are provided and readily available Storage and shelving systems are installed Just in time purchasing procedures are used to minimise demands on storage areas Trolleys are used where practical Items that are heavy or commonly accessed are stored at waist height Storage areas are designed to reduce turns and distances that need to be crossed

Risk	Risk Controls
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular storage audits are undertaken to ensure materials that are not needed are removed to free up space for safer access Adequate storage is provided and used

6. Injuries and illness resulting from work-related stress, violence, harassment and bullying

Risks to psychological and physical health can result from work-related stress, violence, harassment and bullying.

Some of the risk factors in the school environment that may lead to harm include:

- Lack of control over workloads and work demands (such as pressure to work long hours and timetabling issues)
- Challenging behaviour of students, parents or colleagues
- Bullying and workplace violence
- Poor leadership skills
- Poor communication
- Lack of clarity around roles, processes and procedures
- Perceptions that processes, such as promotion processes, are not procedurally fair
- Concerns about career development, social status and pay
- Conflicting demands of home and school

The injuries, illnesses and other impacts that can result include:

- Psychological distress
- Emotional exhaustion
- Physical health symptoms
- Taking frequent sick leave
- A sense of low morale and low level of engagement with work
- Deteriorating work performance
- An intention to resign from work

7. Addressing injuries and illness resulting from work-related stress, violence, harassment and bullying

Risk of injury/illness arising from	Risk controls
Organisational culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building a leadership structure that engages, supports and motivates staff Building leadership and management skills

Risk of injury/illness arising from	Risk controls
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving consultation and communication between leaders and staff • Providing clear educational and other objectives for the school • Making sure that job roles and accountabilities are clearly defined so everyone knows what is expected of them – role clarity and performance review • Developing clear school policies on issues such as mobile phone use by students and behaviour management, and making sure they are consistency applied • Providing support for staff to do their work, including a mentoring system and Employee Assistance program (EAP) • Providing career options and professional development opportunities and other training for staff where possible • Providing flexibility in timetabling where possible for staff with conflicting home and school requirements
Interpersonal relationships at work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing and implementing policies to deal with bullying and occupational violence • Implementing issue resolution (grievance) processes for staff • Specific training for managers on how to manage workplace behaviours and when to directly intervene • Timely investigation into a bullying complaint in line with principles of natural justice
Physical work environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring staff have a well-designed work environment • Providing the equipment, facilities and technology needed to help them achieve excellent educational outcomes • Ensuring that security arrangements at the school are appropriate and consider the principles Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) • Ensuring that OHS is considered when designing new buildings and modifying existing ones
The way work is managed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocation duties to staff members on the basis of their skills and interests • Making sure there is a clear and effective process for replacing teachers on sick leave or professional development, including giving adequate notice of extras and engaging Casual Relief Teacher (CRT)'s • Ensuring the timetable gives teachers a spread of teaching periods, yard duty and non-student contact time across the working week • Involving staff in decisions about their work and giving them opportunities to have as much input and control as possible • Ensuring there are adequate meetings at appropriate levels so that there is good communication within teams

Risk of injury/illness arising from	Risk controls
Inadequate information, instruction or training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a formal induction process for all staff, including CRT's and Education Support Staff, as well as volunteers • Giving staff information about the school's OHS procedures including; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ processes for reporting hazards and incidents ○ who to go to about an OHS issues ○ who Health and Safety Representatives (HSR) are ○ the roles of the leadership team members responsible for OHS, HSRs and staff • Giving staff members, parents and students clear information about the school's expectations, including enrolment, discipline and transfer procedures • Providing relevant OHS training, instructions, information and supervision

8. Injuries resulting from slips, trips and falls

The main causes of slips, trips and falls are:

- Flooring – unsuitable, slippery, dirty, not correctly fitted, not maintained, changes of level that are not highlighted.
- Stairs – low visibility, no suitable handrail, steps of uneven height, steps of varying width, poorly maintained covering or surfaces.
- Roofs – retrieving items from roofs.
- Housekeeping – no suitable walking way through work area such as staff rooms, maintenance of sheds or storage areas, trailing wires, obstructions, untidy floors around work stations, inadequate storage space, not enough rubbish bins.
- Human factors – wearing inappropriate footwear, students and staff rushing about, carrying large objects, becoming distracted while walking.
- Environment – Light on a shiny floor causing glare, too little light, rainwater or condensation getting on flooring, spills.
- Cleaning – Damp floors after cleaning, trailing wires from vacuum cleaner.

9. Addressing risks of slips, trips and falls

Risk	Risk Controls
Likelihood of injury arising from slips, trips and falls on stairs and steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stairs are not slippery and the surface is well maintained • The nosing and/or tread is well defined and visually, e.g. good lighting and bright strips • There are no isolated low steps which could be a trip hazard • Sturdy handrails are provided on all steps and stairs

Risk	Risk Controls
Likelihood of injury arising from slips in the general environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a slip-resistant floor surface in areas where water or grease can create a slip hazard • There are slip-resistant strips on any other hazardous walking surfaces • Suitable mats are placed at entrances to buildings and sheds • Outdoor surfaces are free from leaves, mud, clippings, paper, gravel, moss and slime • Spills are managed immediately • The locations of power points avoid the need for electrical cables on the floor
Likelihood of injury arising from trips in the general environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flooring, doormats and carpets remain firmly in place • There are no low obstacles. • There are adequate storage racks for bikes. • Aisles and passageways are kept uncluttered. • Lockers, desks and shelves are provided for storage of personal items • Footpaths and garden edging are properly maintained • Surfaces do not have trip hazards, such as potholes
Likelihood of injury arising from falls from roofs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balls are only retrieved from roofs by designated staff members who have been trained, using suitable equipment

10. Other Common Hazards and Risks

Apart from the hazards and risks covered in the previous sections, a number of others can cause injury and illness.

- **Plant and Equipment** in the technology and science rooms, maintenance sheds, facility sheds and other parts of the school pose significant risk of injury. Wherever practicable, plant and equipment that has a lower level of risk must be used. If there is still some risk associated with the plant and equipment, physical controls, such as machine guarding and personal protective equipment, must be used to reduce the risk.
- **Hazardous Substances** are substances that have the potential to harm human health. These can include chemicals used in science, technology and art rooms. As well as cleaning agents. Any risk associated with hazardous substances must so far as is reasonably practicable be eliminated.

If it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate the risks associated with the substance, other control methods should be implemented:

- Substituting the substance with a less hazardous substance
- Isolating people from the source of exposure to the hazardous substance
- Using engineering tools

If it is not reasonable practicable to use the above risk controls then administrative risk controls such as systems of work should be implemented and if this is not reasonably practicable personal protective equipment, must be used.

A register must be kept of all the hazardous substances in the school, Safety Data Sheets (SDS) must be obtained and available for each hazardous substance.

- **Dangerous goods** are substances that can cause injury or death and can also seriously damage property and the environment. Petrol, LPG, pesticides and acids are common dangerous goods that may be found in the school environment. Risks associated with dangerous goods must be eliminated or reduced as far as practicable.
- **School excursions and camps.** The obligation to protect the health and safety of staff and students extends to activities away from school, such as school excursions and camps. An assessment of the risks that may arise from any proposed excursion or camp should be prepared well in advance. The assessment should cover any foreseeable hazards and risks, and set out the ways in which the risks will be managed (including the supervision arrangements).
- **Health and safety of contractors** and their employees (such as cleaners, CRTs, tradespersons and grounds contractors) must be protected in the same way as that of any other staff – to the extent that the hazards and risks are under the control of the school.

If the contractor is a self-employed person, the school will usually have the duty to protect his or her health and safety.

Where the employees of an agency are engaged to work at a school, responsibility for the health and safety of those employees is shared between the agency and the school.

11. References

WorkSafe Victoria 'A Handbook for Workplaces OHS in schools'

Review Frequency		Document Availability		Policy Delivery	
1 Year	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	School Website	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2 Years	<input type="checkbox"/>	Student	<input type="checkbox"/>	Staff Intranet	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3 Years	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parents	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Student Handbook	<input type="checkbox"/>
As Required	<input type="checkbox"/>			Prospectus	<input type="checkbox"/>
NA	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Version Control

Version	Date	Summary of Changes
1.0	28/04/2023	New policy