

# Occupational Health and Safety Policy & OHS Consultation and Communication Policy

## **Purpose**

The Council delegates responsibility for the health and safety of all employees and students within the College to the Principal and requires the cooperation of all members of staff. In fulfilling this responsibility the Principal and staff have a duty to provide and maintain, so far as practicable, a working environment that is safe and without risks to health, and includes:

- i. providing and maintaining safe equipment and systems of work and/or tuition;
- ii. maintaining College premises and facilities in a safe and healthy condition;
- iii. providing adequate facilities to protect the welfare of all employees and students;
- iv. making and monitoring arrangements for safe use, handling and storage of equipment and substances;
- v. providing training and supervision for employees and students to work and/or receive tuition in a safe and healthy manner.

## **General Principles**

The Principal is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of this policy. To this end the Principal will ensure the appointment of a Health and Safety Committee to assist in detailing health and safety duties for staff and students, together with training and back-up support provision. In fulfilling the objectives of this policy the Principal and Health and Safety Committee are committed to regular consultation with employees to ensure that the policy operates effectively and that health and safety issues are regularly reviewed.

## **DEECD OHS Commitment and Principles:**

DEECD is committed to providing employees, students, contractors and visitors with a healthy and safe environment. DEECD will so far as is reasonably practicable take action to improve and promote health, safety and wellbeing and prevent workplace injuries and illnesses at all DEECD workplaces.

## **DEECD is committed to:**

- preventing injury and illness occurring in DEECD workplaces;
- consulting and co-operating with employees on health, safety and wellbeing issues directly as well as through their Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) and employee representative organisations on OHS issues affecting them;
- achieving continuous improvement through the monitoring and review of measurable targets and objectives and improvement of health and safety management systems and initiatives;
- complying with all relevant health and safety legislation; and
- allocating adequate resources to maintain healthy, safe and supportive workplaces.

## **DEECD will meet its commitment to Health & Safety by:**

- providing appropriate information and training for principals/managers (including senior management and regional personnel) and employees to enable them to perform their OHS roles and responsibilities;
- holding all levels of management accountable for the health & safety of employees under their management;

- consistently applying DEECD OHS procedures, practices and other relevant policies in accordance with statutory requirements and accepted health and safety standards;
- reporting, recording and investigating accidents and incidents and acting to prevent re-occurrence;
- reducing health, safety and wellbeing risks through a documented process of hazard identification, selection, implementation and review of risk controls; and
- monitoring, reviewing and improving health, safety and wellbeing management systems.

**DEECD employees, visitors, volunteers and contractors are required to:**

- report hazards and incidents;
- participate in training;
- consult and cooperate with DEECD on safety related matters; and
- follow safety instructions and observe the wearing of personal protective equipment as required.

**Duties**

Recognising the hazards occurring, the College will take every practicable step to provide and maintain a safe and healthy work environment for all employees and students. To this end:

**Staff in all Sections**

- i. are responsible for the effective implementation of this Health and Safety Policy;
- ii. must observe, implement and fulfill their responsibilities under the State Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (No 10190) which forms the basis for the statements of duties and training provided.
- iii. Must ensure that the procedures for consultation between the Principal, the Staff and those with designated health and safety responsibilities are followed;
- iv. must make **regular assessments** of health and safety performance and resources in cooperation with those with designated health and safety functions, as deemed necessary according to individual policies;
- v. must ensure that all specific policies or guidelines operating within the College, viz. fire and explosions, systems of work in tuition, movement of students, training, first aid, noise, dangerous substances - are periodically revised and consistent with College health and safety objectives, as deemed necessary according to individual policies;
- vi. are to be informed of serious accidents occurring on the College premises, or to College employees and students, so that health and safety performance can be accurately gauged;
- vii. have a duty to take the care of which they are capable, for their own health and safety and of others affected by their actions on the College premises;
- viii. must not willfully interfere with, or misuse items or facilities provided in the interests of health, safety and welfare of others;
- ix. must, in accordance with agreed College procedures for accident and incident reporting, report potential and actual hazards to designated health and safety representatives;
- x. are, through instruction and example, to take all reasonable steps to ensure that students accept and practise items (vii) and (viii) above.

This policy will be reviewed regularly in the light of legislative changes. The Council and the Principal seek the cooperation of all staff and students in realising our health and safety objectives, and creating a safe work environment.

**NB: The term “staff” incorporates all persons employed by the College.**

## Scope

This policy applies to **all employees and contractors** in Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) **schools and offices and is readily accessible to all interested parties**. This policy builds on Part 4 of the Victorian *Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act 2004* which outlines the legal duties of employers to consult.

## DEECD OHS Commitment and Principles:

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is committed to providing DEECD workplaces with consultative arrangements that allow employees to contribute to decisions that impact on their health and safety.

Workplace health and safety benefits significantly from effective consultation. Employees are often best placed to identify health and safety hazards and issues in the workplace. Consultation and communication can also help build commitment to health and safety.

- Consultation on OHS issues shall be meaningful and effective and employee contributions valued and taken into account;
- Consultation will not delay the implementation of a policy or procedure to address an immediate or serious health and safety risk in a timely manner;
- Consultation will be undertaken in a manner consistent with positive supportive working relationships; and
- DEECD has ultimate administrative and operational responsibility for all workplace decisions that affect health and safety provided that these decisions are made in accordance with this policy.

## DEECD will meet its commitment to Health & Safety by:

Consulting with health and safety representatives and employees so far as is reasonably practicable when making any decision or change in relation to their health and safety in the workplace including the following:

- identification of workplace hazards;
- assessment of the risks associated with workplace activities and hazards;
- decisions made in relation to measures taken to eliminate or control workplace risks;
- review of workplace risk assessments;
- introduction of, or alteration to procedures for monitoring workplace risks;
- decisions made in relation the adequacy of workplace facilities;
- proposed changes to the work premises, systems of work, plant or substances used at the workplace;
- decisions made in relation to changes in job role; and
- decisions made in relation to consultation procedures, and any legislative requirements.

Where OHS issues cannot be resolved directly as a result of using the local/established OHS issue resolution procedure, external assistance may be sought.

## DEECD employees and contractors are required to:

- consult and cooperate with DEECD on health and safety related matters;
- openly communicate any instances of hazards or incidents in the workplace;
- provide feedback to DEECD on the effectiveness of established consultation and communication arrangement.

**Evaluation:** This policy will be reviewed as part of the College's review cycle

**Related policies:** School Policy Advisory Guide – <http://www.education.vic.gov.au>

*This policy was endorsed by the College Council in June, 2016*