

# Armadale Primary School

## Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Policy

Armadale Primary School recognises it has a responsibility to provide and maintain a working environment that is safe and without risks to individual health and welfare. This responsibility extends to all employees, students, parents, contractors and other visitors to the school site.

School management is committed to providing a safe working environment through the implementation of risk prevention and reduction strategies that are integrated into all school activities. A consultative, co-operative approach between employees and management on OHS issues will be encouraged.

*The school management team which meets weekly will implement and monitor the actions that result from the risk management strategy plan which is developed in consultation with the OH & S representative/s and the Principal as the delegated officer on site.*

This policy is consistent with:

- (a) The Department of Education Mission Statement that school provide a safe and appropriate teaching and learning environment for both staff and students; and
- (b) The school's legal obligations under the Victorian OHS Act (1985) and Common Law.

### **Policy Objectives**

- To comply with OHS related legislation and DoE directives or guidelines relating to health and safety.
- To minimise the occurrence of injury and illness in the school through systematic hazard identification, risk assessment and control.
- To investigate accidents (including serious near misses) with a view to preventing recurrence.
- To maintain written records on all OHS activities undertaken.
- To implement staff health and well being strategies.
- To provide a Return to Work (RTW) program for employees in the event of injury or illness.

Adequate resources will be provided to support this policy.

### **Responsibilities**

As employers, the **Principal** and **School Council** have the direct responsibility for ensuring the policy objectives are achieved and that the necessary resources are provided to ensure effective implementation.

Employers' direct duties under the OHS Act also include:

- providing and maintaining a safe working environment and systems of work;
- making arrangements for the safe use, handling, storage and transport of equipment and substances;
- maintaining the workplace in a safe and healthy condition;
- providing adequate facilities for staff welfare;
- providing such information, instruction, training and supervision to staff members to enable them to perform their work in a safe and healthy manner.

Responsibility for Occupational Health and Safety has been assigned to the Principal.

(The Principal may nominate a staff member with appropriate seniority to act as the employer's OHS representative in an operational capacity but the overall responsibility cannot be delegated. The nominated OHS management representative may **not** also act in the role of elected staff Health and Safety Representative (HSR) as per section 21 (4ca) OHS Act).

**Professional Learning/KLA Team Co-ordinators** are responsible for the health and safety performance of their team. This responsibility extends to

- maintaining the workplace in a safe condition and reporting any identified hazards;
- actively promoting and implementing agreed OHS procedures;
- identifying OHS training needs of both individual staff and the team as a whole.

**All staff** have a responsibility to

- take reasonable care of their own health and safety of others affected by their acts or omissions;
- report hazards, accidents or incidents (near misses) in accordance with agreed school procedures;
- follow established safe working procedures.

Armadale Primary School is committed to ensuring this policy is publicised and implemented and will regularly monitor and review its effectiveness.

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(Principal)

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(President of School Council)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Review date/cycle \_\_\_\_\_

**\*DOE resources available to support implementation of Policy Objectives**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Resource</b>
<b>1</b>	OHS Guidelines* Section 5
<b>2</b>	OHS Guidelines Section 2, Schools of the Future Reference Guide (6.12)
<b>3</b>	OHS Guidelines Section 2, Schools of the Future Reference Guide (6.12)
<b>4</b>	OHS Guidelines Page 71
<b>5</b>	OHS Guidelines Section 6, Health and Wellbeing at Work Kit and Action Plan
<b>6</b>	WorkCover Management Guide (on Sofweb), SOTF Reference Guide Section 6.12.3

***\*Unless otherwise stated resources correspond to sources of further information in the DoE OHS Guidelines: Support Material for School (1994): available in hard copy in schools or on CD InformUS.***

## Implementation

1. The role of OHS Co-ordinator will remain with the Principal, however, the management will have a role in implementing the policy and risk management strategy plan and monitoring its effectiveness. This will be completed in the following ways:
  - Fortnightly the management team will review the first aid diary in the sick bay and the accident reports, identify trends and patterns and make recommendations to the Principal and School Council.
  - On alternative fortnights the Assistant Principal, after reviewing the yard duty diaries and identifying trends and patterns, will make recommendations, via the management team, to the Principal and School Council.
  - Implementation of the risk management plan developed in conjunction with the OHS representative/s. This plan is developed after a walk around the school each term to identify potential hazards and through reports compiled from the perusal of accident/injury reports.
2. Relevant OHS responsibilities will be included in all job descriptions and responsibilities will be publicised at last annually from 2000 onwards (pages 15-19).
3. Staff will elect Health and Safety Representative/s at the start of each year.
4. The elected HSR will be provided with training and practical support to fulfil his/her role effectively (as stipulated in the OHS Act) and will be consulted on changes in the school, which may affect staff health, safety or wellbeing (page 20).
5. OHS Issue Resolution Procedures will be developed in consultation with staff or its representatives and these will be documented and publicised in accordance with the OHS (Issue Resolution) (1989) Regulations. (Section 3, pp 54 and 57-59). The drafting of this process will be completed in the year 2000.
6. OHS considerations will be integrated into the general management practices of the school for example:
  - guidelines for handling purchases
  - facilities design, upgrades and maintenance
  - contractor management (p 69)
  - staff welfare (Section 6 and Appendix 4 OHS Guidelines and Health and Wellbeing Kit)
  - professional development and induction procedures (Section 4)
  - staff role allotments and timetabling
  - curriculum design (p 89-90)
  - program budgeting.

7. Risk reduction will be a central goal of the school and the Risk Management program will aim to reduce both the frequency and severity of injury and illness arising from school activities through the implementation of:
  - regular evaluation of compliance with relevant OHS Regulations and DoE directives;
  - formal processes for reporting, recording and investigating potential or actual hazards in both the physical environment and work practices;
  - reporting and documenting of all injuries and incidents, including near misses;
  - investigation of accidents and recording of outcomes;
  - periodic analysis of records to identify incident patterns;
  - scheduled and documented preventative maintenance programs for buildings and equipment;
  - provision of appropriate first aid facilities and trained personnel;
  - emergency management procedure which are documented, publicised and practised;
  - staff support programs.
8. The Principal will act as the Return to Work Co-ordinator (RTW) and be given appropriate training. RTW policy and procedures will be developed, documented and publicised.
9. Effectiveness of the implementation of the policy will be monitored informally on an ongoing basis and evaluated formally at least once a year. This evaluation will be undertaken during OHS team meetings.
10. OHS initiatives and performance will be included in the Annual Report.

## **Armadale P.S. OH&S Issue Resolution Flow Chart**

The management representative for resolving health and safety issues at this school is:

The OH&S representatives for resolving health and safety issues in the school are:

**Armadale Primary School**

**NEAR HIT and PROPERTY DAMAGE REGISTER**

## **References**

*The Occupational Health and Safety (Manual Handling) Regulations 1999*. These can be downloaded from <http://www.dms.dpc.vic.gov.au/sb> under 1999 Statutory Rule *Occupational Health and Safety (Manual Handling) Regulations 1999*.

*Reduce Manual Handling Injuries* Victorian WorkCover Authority 1996.

*Preventing Manual Handling Injuries*, Ministry of Education 1991 reprinted by the DoE 1999.

*Occupational Health and Safety, Support Material for School DSE* 1994 (also on Edulibrary home page Browse/Manuals & Guidelines/OHS Guidelines).

*Schools of the Future Reference Guide* section 6.12 Risk management.

## **Manual handling risk identification**

Tasks likely to cause manual handling injuries may be identified from CASES and the first aid register/register of injuries, by consultation with staff and by direct observation – especially of work practices.

In the Department of Education manual handling injuries are common and costly, and range from sprains and strains due to sudden over exertion or forceful movement, to long term wear and tear related injuries including Occupational Overuse Syndrome (previously RSI). Other related injuries such as slips, trips and falls may occur after someone has been undertaking manual handling tasks because for example, they are tired.

## **In schools, manual handling risks include**

- moving furniture
- carrying computers
- pushing a trolley
- lifting a ladder
- restraining a frightened child
- typing school reports using a laptop in an awkward posture
- stretching to reach a high shelf
- separating fighting students
- lifting high jump mats and other PE equipment
- standing on a table and/or chair to pin up students' work
- bending to a bottom shelf to reach a carton
- carrying large slabs of soft drink
- lifting 25 litre containers of cleaning chemicals with one hand
- moving rocks, digging etc. at a gardening bee
- bending over for extended periods to be at the same height as students
- in special settings, lifting, changing, supporting and catching (dropping) children.

## ARMADALE SCHOOL MANUAL HANDLING POLICY

**Manual Handling** is defined under the occupational Health and Safety (Manual Handling) Regulations 1999 as “any activity requiring the use of force exerted by a person to lift, push, pull, carry or otherwise move or restrain any object”. **Object** is defined as animate or inanimate object, plant and any substance or material contained by an object.

**Hazardous manual handling** means:

- (a) manual handling having any of the following characteristics: -
  - (i) repetitive or sustained application of force;
  - (ii) repetitive or sustained awkward posture;
  - (iii) repetitive or sustained movement;
  - (iv) application of high force;
  - (v) exposure to sustained vibration;
- (b) manual handling of live persons or animals;
- (c) manual handling of unstable or unbalanced loads, or loads which are difficult to grasp or hold.

This Policy applies to all school staff, students, visitors, contractors, and volunteers – especially on working bees. It also applies to all activities both on and off property, including school camps, excursions, and any other programmed activity outside the school grounds.

The Principal will co-ordinate the plan for managing manual handling in the school and will ensure that resources are provided to meet OHS commitments.

Our aim is to promote and maintain the health and wellbeing of staff, students and visitors, and to minimise the risks of manual handling injuries by implementing a systematic approach as outlined below.

- 1) Where possible, manual handling risks will be considered and **designed out** prior to any building upgrade, new activities and/or the purchase of all goods to be used at the school.
- 2) A **risk assessment** will be undertaken on tasks identified as having a manual handling component, and tasks will be ordered in priority for assessment. Records of the risk assessment will be retained by the school.
- 3) The Health and Safety Representative should be **consulted** about the identification, risk assessment or control of risks.
- 4) Once the risk assessments have been conducted, they will be ordered to establish **priorities for control**.
- 5) The risk control hierarchy will be as follows:
  - a) **redesign** to eliminate or reduce the risk as a first step;
  - b) **change the workplace, systems or work and/or the object;**
  - c) **provide mechanical aids** to reduce the risk and **training** in their use;
  - d) **training and education** appropriate to the task.

- 6) Once the control measures are in place, they must be **evaluated** to make sure they
- are being used correctly
  - are not increasing the risk of injury, and
  - do help to reduce the manual handling risk.

For some manual handling tasks a combination of the risk control methods of reducing risk may be appropriate, however information, training or instruction should not be the sole or primary means of controlling the risk.

## **STAFF OHS ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Your employer is required to provide you with a safe and healthy workplace. This cannot be done without your assistance. You can help by:

- co-operating with your employer;
- following OHS policies and procedures;
- taking reasonable care for your own health and safety;
- and the health and safety of anyone affected by what you do or don't do;
- observing safe work practices at all times;
- remembering that your workplace is anywhere you work;
- reporting hazards, near misses, and property damage;
- encouraging your students to do the same;
- considering OHS before ordering/purchasing;
- identifying OHS risks before commencing new or unusual activities and/or in different situations;
- taking an active part in improving OHS in the school;
- being positive.

# **MANUAL HANDLING**

## **THREE THINGS TO REMEMBER**

1. Stop and think before you move anything\*
2. The safest lift is between mid thigh and shoulder, with heavier items safest lifted at waist height.
3. The risk increases greatly from 16 kilos up.

### **\*Plan the move**

**How heavy is it?**

**Can I move smaller amounts at a time?**

**Do I need help?**

**Should I use a trolley?**

**Is my path clear? (If you have to step over anything, twist or jerk, you might injure yourself).**

**Where will I put it down?**

**Is there a better time to move it?**

**Whom do I tell if I am having problems?**