

## **OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY**

### **Responsibility**

This policy recognizes that the health and safety of all employees, students, contractors and visitors within St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is the responsibility of the Principal. In fulfilling this responsibility, the Principal has a duty to provide and maintain so far as is practicable a working environment that is safe and without risk to health, and includes:

- providing and maintaining safe plant and systems of work
- making and monitoring arrangements for the safe use, handling, storing and transport of plant substances
- maintaining the work place in a safe and healthy condition
- providing adequate facilities to protect the welfare of all employees and students
- providing information, training and supervision for all employees enabling them to work in a safe and healthy manner

The Principal (under delegated responsibility from the Parish Priest) is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of this policy.

The health and welfare of all employees at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is of major concern and to that end, we are committed to the provision of a workplace that is safe and without risks to health, and to the prevention of workplace injury and illness.

In fulfilling the objectives of this policy, the Principal (under delegated responsibility from the Parish Priest), is committed to regular consultation with employees to ensure that the policy operates effectively and that health and safety issues are regularly reviewed.

### **Duties**

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School will take every practicable step to provide and maintain a safe and healthy work environment for all employees, students, contractors and visitors.

The Principal (under delegated responsibility from the Parish Priest) is responsible for the effective implementation of the school's health and safety policy and shall:

- observe, implement and fulfill its responsibilities under the Occupational Health and Safety Act and regulations that apply within the state
- ensure that the agreed procedures for regular consultation between the Principal through the Parish Priest and those with designated and elected health and safety functions are followed
- ensure that all specific policies operating within St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, are periodically revised and are consistent with school health and safety objectives
- provide information, training and supervision for all employees in the correct use of plant, equipment and substances used within the school
- ensure that all employees, students, contractors and visitors inform the school of incidents and accidents occurring on the school premises so that health and safety performance can be accurately gauged

## All Employees

- 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 of work
- should comply with the safety procedures and directions agreed between the Principal, employees and with the elected occupational health and safety representative
- will not willfully interfere with or misuse items or facilities provided in the interests of health, safety and welfare of school employees and students
- must act in accordance with agreed school procedures for accident and incident reporting and report potential hazards to the Principal

## Contractors

According to Section 21 of the Occupational Health & Safety Act outsourcing work to contractors does not remove an employer's occupational health & safety obligations.

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School shall, as far as practicable, ensure that a contractor and its employees:

- Carry out their work in safe premises using proper and safe plant and equipment
- Employ systems of work that are safe and in which there has been adequate instruction, training and supervision.

For the purposes of this policy, contractors engaged to do work in the school also have obligations to ensure safe work practices and shall comply with the Contractors policy.

The contractor and the Principal or Principal's nominee will complete a Job Safety Analysis. See Attachment No 1.

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Contractors need to be:

- Suitably experienced to perform tasks;
- In possession of all necessary licenses, permits, registrations and insurance to perform the works safely and in compliance with the appropriate regulations;
- Notified of any potential hazards associated with the location or use of the area where the works are to be carried out.

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School has a list of contractors who regularly undertake maintenance or improvements. They and the quality of their work are well known to us.

The duties of a contractor at a workplace are to undertake the works in a responsible and safe manner and as outlined in writing in the scope of works.

The duties of a contractor at the workplace relate only to matters over which, and the extent to which, the contractor has control or can reasonably be expected to have control at the site. Contractors may be defined as employers if they engage other Contractors to carry out some of their work.

Contractors and their Subcontractors have a responsibility to ensure that new employees engaged by them are familiar with the school's environment.

Prior to the commencement of work the contractor shall

- Confirm with the Principal/Principal's nominee that they are in receipt of all necessary information regarding the task

- Provide a copy of their Safety Management plan if applicable
- Provide copies of licenses & permits
- Provide copy of currency of WorkCover Certificate and public liability
- Perform a risk assessment to ensure the workplace is free of hazards.

Upon the completion of work the Principal or Principal's nominee will inspect the works to ensure that the site is left free from hazards and presents no risk of injury to any person who comes in contact with the site.

## **The Management of Occupational Health and Safety**

### **Consultation with staff**

All employees are involved in OH&S at various stages. St Joseph's Catholic Primary School has a process for involving employees in identifying hazards, reporting problems and providing possible solutions to OH&S issues.

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School encourages employees' participation in reporting health and safety risks in their area of employee expertise.

### **Induction of new staff**

All new staff at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School will be informed of the Occupational Health and Safety policies of the school through the normal induction process. Staff will be trained in safety procedures and be given a working knowledge and understanding of the commitment of the Principal and staff of the school to safety and the prevention of accidents in the workplace.

### **Occupational Health and Safety Representative**

There is a health and safety representative elected by the staff in accordance with the OHS Act. The elected person is: Vanessa Fleitas

The representative's responsibilities include:

- inspecting the whole or any part of the workplace:
- at any time after giving reasonable notice to the Principal; or
- immediately in the event of any accident, hazardous situation, dangerous occurrence or immediate risk to the health and safety of any person:
- accompany any inspector during an inspection of the workplace
- require the establishment of a health and safety committee with the consent of the employee
- to be present at any interview between any employee, an inspector or the employer, concerning a health and safety matter

The Principal will provide to the health and safety representative any information the school possesses on the health and safety of the employees or any actual or potential hazards at the workplace.

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School recognizes that the OH&S representative is permitted to take such time off work with pay as is necessary for performing his/her function or duties or taking part in any course of training relating to health and safety which is approved by VWA. The Principal and OH&S representative shall discuss a convenient time, having regard to the needs of the school to attend such course of training and carrying out the responsibilities.

### **Health and Safety Committee**

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School has established a health and safety committee. The names of the committee members are:

The Principal:  
The Deputy Principal:  
OH & S Officer:  
Administrative Officer:

The role of the committee is:

- to facilitate cooperation between the employer and employees with a view to ensuring the health and safety of the employees
- to provide employees with information including standards, rules and procedures relating to health and safety which are to be carried out or complied with at the workplace
- to deal with any other relevant matter as agreed
- to assist the OH&S representative and the Principal to ensure the OH&S responsibilities of management and staff are met on a regular basis
- to assist in the communication of staff of OH&S practices and awareness
- minutes of meetings will be kept and distributed to all staff
- to provide advice to the Principal on the induction of new staff on Occupational Health and Safety matters.

The health and safety committee meets once a term. The activities and issues with which the Occupational Health and Safety Committee deal are reported regularly at whole staff meetings.

### **OH&S and Risk Management Policy**

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School actively works towards meeting the safety needs of its community as effectively as it can. A systematic process of evaluation is in place to provide information on which to base plans for improvement, by reducing the risk factors for accidents. It is the intention of the school that involvement in such a process raises the level of consciousness and sensitivity of all involved to issues of workplace health and safety.

The risk management policy of the school requires:

- Annual Audit of the school; and
- Ad hoc audit by way of a Hazard alert Register

### **Annual Audit**

An annual audit is conducted by the Principal and the Occupational Health and Safety representative. This involves:

- collection of information to identify potential hazards
- analysis of potential risks
- prevention of future accidents through risk control
- audit of practices, equipment and facilities in the school.
- Attachment No 2 sets out the areas that will comprise this annual audit

### **Hazard Alert Register**

In addition to the annual audit, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School has instituted a process of identifying hazards and risks. This process involves keeping a school Hazard Alert Register (Attachment 3) as a means of identifying and controlling hazards in St Joseph's Catholic Primary School. This register contains:

- date
- description of hazard or near miss
- reported by
- reported to

- action taken

### **Slips, Trips and Falls**

To reduce the incidents of slip hazards in the general environment St Joseph's Catholic Primary School uses a checklist to identify slip hazards. See Attachment No 4.

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is aware that accidents happening to employees by slipping, tripping and falling are common accidents in schools and as such, all employees, as a matter of policy, need to take special care in moving around the school. Special attention is drawn to:

- stairs
- tripping
- wet floor/ground
- falls from chairs/tables
- falls from ladders
- falls over mats and ramps
- removal of balls from school building roofs

### **Dangerous goods and equipment**

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School has put into place a system to manage dangerous goods and equipment with the objective of ensuring their use, storage and maintenance are safe and that all persons are aware of any potential safety risks involving the goods and equipment. Attachment No 5 sets out the areas that are closely monitored by our school.

### **Electrical**

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School conducts safety checks of all electrical equipment in the school. Our practices include as part of this policy:

- annual inspection of leads if mobile and 5 yearly if location is permanent. The inspection includes testing and tagging of equipment
- safe use of double adaptors/ power boards
- power points and switches are securely fixed to the wall
- cracked and broken power plates to be replaced
- frayed or damaged leads to be replaced
- no temporary leads on floor

### **Environmental issues**

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School has put into place a system to manage environmental issues with the objective of ensuring that environmental issues are safe and that all persons are aware of any potential safety risks involving environmental issues. Attachment No 6 sets out the areas that are closely monitored by our school.

### **Fire, Explosion and Emergency Management**

The school has a separate policy on fire, explosion and emergency procedures and this policy covers evacuation procedures

## **First Aid Policy**

The policy of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School in respect to first aid is as follows:

- all staff required to provide first aid are to be trained and hold first aid qualifications

- that a first aid officer will be designated to be on duty during lunch breaks, recess etc.

### **AIDS/HIV Policy**

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School:

- provides students with education about AIDS/HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases within the context of a comprehensive health education
- protects students, employees and members of school communities from infection with AIDS/HIV through appropriate hygiene and safety practices
- ensures the right of continued access of students to a high quality and comprehensive education regardless of actual or imputed AIDS/HIV status
- provides appropriate education, school organization and practices that will protect students from discrimination on the grounds of actual or imputed AIDS/HIV infection
- provides appropriate education, professional development and welfare oriented practices that will protect employees from discriminatory attitudes and practices on the grounds of actual or imputed AIDS/HIV infection
- provides a procedure for dealing with blood spills and communicates this procedure to all staff.

### **Hepatitis B Policy and Guidelines**

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is aware of the CECV Policy 1.11 in regard to Hepatitis B. In certain circumstances, which are defined in Guidelines adopted by the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, the provision of immunization against Hepatitis B shall be offered to employees by St Joseph's Catholic Primary School.

### **Skin cancer prevention**

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School protects staff and students from the harmful effects of the sun, especially at lunchtime, when sunshine is strongest. Employees and students are expected to wear a sun hat during outdoor activities. St Joseph's Catholic Primary School provides sun cream for employees to use during school hours.

### **Voice**

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is mindful of the risks to teachers of chronic dysphonia. There may be pain in the larynx together with huskiness. The Principal will keep a close check on teachers who report early problems with the method of voice production. When a case presents itself the Principal shall seek expert advice.

### **Bullying and harassment**

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is aware of the risks to employees of workplace bullying. The school defines workplace bullying as repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed toward an employee or group of employees that creates a risk to health and safety. The Principal provides information to staff on a regular basis to assist in:

- recognising bullying in the workplace
- the possible effects of bullying
- steps to take in elimination of such behaviour

### **Airborne contaminants**

(Asbestos) Regulations 1992

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is mindful of the risks of asbestos. As such St Joseph's Catholic Primary School keeps a record and results of inspections indicating the site and description of materials identified as possibly containing asbestos.

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School holds a copy of the OH&S (Asbestos) Regulations 1992. The Principal is aware of the responsibilities to assess and control any risk associated with asbestos in the school. Initially the Principal will determine, as far as is practicable, whether asbestos or asbestos containing materials are present in the school buildings, or in the contents of the buildings, and if necessary arrange for the control or removal of those materials.

### **Smoke free workplaces**

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School has a smoke free policy. Smoking is not permitted in the school grounds.

## **PHYSICAL HAZARDS**

### **Manual handling**

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School complies with the Manual Handling Code of Practice which requires employers, in consultation with employees and health and safety representatives, to examine and assess manual handling tasks likely to be a risk to health and safety. The Principal is aware of the need to protect employees from the risk of musculoskeletal disorder (MSD). St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Occupational Health and Safety Committee is responsible for the examination of the Manual Handling Code and for the manual handling training of employees. Attachment 7 is used to identify and address manual handling risks in our school

### **Noise guidelines**

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School complies with its obligations as detailed in the Occupational Health and Safety (Noise) Regulations that describe the maximum allowable exposure to noise in a workplace.

## **ACCIDENTS**

### **Collecting information about the accident Notification - Register of Injuries**

When an accident or an injury occurs in St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, details are entered in the Register of Injuries. This is a requirement of the Accident Compensation Act. Attachment No 8 is a copy of a Register of Injuries.

### **Notice of serious injury**

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is aware of its obligations to immediately notify the Victorian WorkCover Authority (VWA) by telephoning 13 13 60 in the event of:

- the loss or partial loss of the use of any part of a person's body
- the loss by any person of a bodily function
- any person being admitted as a patient to a hospital
- any person showing acute symptoms of exposure to any substances
- any other serious bodily injury
- the death of any person
- the amputation of any limb or part of a limb of any person

A written notification of the event (Attachment No 9) will also be sent to WorkCover within 48 hours of the incident. The incident notification form is to be sent to the nearest WorkCover office by facsimile as

a written record of workplace deaths or serious injuries. St Joseph's Catholic Primary School will keep a copy of this record for five years.

A copy of this notification will also be forwarded to the Director of Catholic Education Office

### **Accident Investigation**

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School has put a system in place for the reporting and recording of accidents.

The Principal will advise the OH&S representative when an injury occurs and the OH&S representative in conjunction with the return to work coordinator will ensure that steps are taken to reduce the risk of further injury in the workplace by identifying and, as far as practicable, reducing the risk of subsequent injury of that kind. However, confidentiality for the injured employee will be maintained at all times.

Gathering this type of information is important and involves a whole range of people within our school. Accident data when combined with information from inspections, checklists, and interviews will provide valuable insights into health and safety within the school. Such information allows for making informed decisions as to what action can be taken to reduce risks or hazards.

### **Injured Employees**

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School recognizes that injuries may occur, and in the event that an injury does occur, we are committed to the philosophy and practice of occupational rehabilitation. The school believes that providing a safe, early return to meaningful and productive work is in the best interest of all staff. Consequently, it encourages full and active participation from all levels of management and staff in creating a supportive environment conducive to the rehabilitation process and the speedy return of colleagues to the workplace.

To achieve this, we have the following objectives:

- return to work should be a normal expectation of all employees following a work related injury. The intention is to return the injured employee to work as soon as possible
- all employees are encouraged to report all work related illnesses and injuries immediately
- occupational rehabilitation will commence immediately and be carried out in the appropriate manner with the involvement of all parties
- each employees' occupational rehabilitation program will be developed individually, and on a confidential basis, with the employee concerned

We have appointed a return to work coordinator who is the Principals' delegate:

The role of the return to work coordinator is as follows:

- assist injured employees to remain at work wherever practicable or to return to suitable work as soon as possible after injury
- ensure that a return to work plan is established for each employee who has an injury that involves 20 or more days of total incapacity for work
- liaise with any parties involved in the treatment or occupational rehabilitation of injured employees or involved with the workplace to assist an injured employee to remain at or return to suitable work after injury
- ensure the confidentiality of personal information made available while coordinating return to work activities, organizing occupational rehabilitation services or in any other activity related to the management of an injured employee's claim
- monitor the progress of the return to suitable work of an employee following injury and of any occupational rehabilitation services provided under a return to work plan

- ensure that, where appropriate, an injured employee is referred to an approved occupational rehabilitation provider for assistance to return to suitable work
- with more complex and serious injuries, the return to work coordinator will also be responsible for authorizing on behalf of the school, expenditure of up to \$1,200 on the provision of occupational rehabilitation services

We have also appointed a general practitioner as our medical services provider whose name, address and telephone number is below:

South Morang Medical Centre

31 Gorge Road South Morang Vic 3752

Ph: 9436 4222

### **Occupational Providers**

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School has appointed GIO Workers' Compensation (Victoria) Ltd (Ph: 03 9860 3555) as the preferred WorkCover insurer. The school co-operates with the WorkCover insurer to ensure that appropriate occupational providers are appointed to assist in the rehabilitation of injured employees.

### **Occupational Health and Safety Resources**

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School keeps itself up to date with resources to assist it in understanding its obligation regarding issues by discussing the following:

- Consolidated acts and regulations [www.austlii.edu.au](http://www.austlii.edu.au)
- Department of Education and Training (DET) Guidelines: [www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/hrm/ohs/accprev.guide.htm](http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/hrm/ohs/accprev.guide.htm)
- WorkSafe Victoria: [www.worksafe.vic.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au)
- Information Victoria
- [www.dms.dpc.vic.gov.au](http://www.dms.dpc.vic.gov.au)
- CECV Industrial Relations News (CECV)
- Catholic Church Insurance (CCI) [www.ccinsurances.com.au](http://www.ccinsurances.com.au)

### **Review of policy**

The Principal will seek cooperation from all employees in realizing these health and safety objectives and creating a safe work environment. Consequently the policy will be reviewed regularly in the light of legislative and school changes.

All employees will be advised, in writing, of agreed changes and arrangements for their implementation.

St Joseph's Primary School, Mernda is a school which operates with the consent of the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne and is owned, operated and governed by Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (MACS).

## **Aim of this OHS Policy**

To inform staff, students, visitors, contractors and volunteers that OHS is an integral part of all operations at St Joseph's Primary School, Mernda.

# Who has ultimate authority and responsibility for OHS in this school?

The daily administration of OHS matters has been delegated to the school Principal Marita Richardson.

## Commitment to OHS

St Joseph’s Primary School, Mernda and its management is committed to:

- providing a safe and healthy workplace to staff, students, visitors, contractors and other parties
- ensuring that our school can meet its OHS obligations
- providing OHS information, training and supervision to employees and other relevant parties
- consulting with employees (and their representatives), managers and other stakeholders on OHS issues
- resolving any OHS issues by following the school’s OHS Issue Resolution procedure.

## Responsibilities

St Joseph’s Primary School, Mernda and its senior management is responsible for:

- providing adequate resources for implementing this policy which includes assigning responsibilities for OHS duties
- providing and maintaining safe plant and systems of work
- making and monitoring arrangements for the safe use, handling, storing and transport of plant and substances
- maintaining, so far as is reasonably practicable, a school that it is safe and without risks to physical and mental health
- providing adequate facilities for the welfare of all employees and students
- providing information, training and supervision for employees and contractors enabling them to work in a safe and healthy manner.

Employees, contractors and subcontractors will be responsible for:

- fulfilling their duties under OHS legislation and acting in a safe manner
- taking reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others affected by their actions
- complying with the safety procedures and directions. Acting in accordance with agreed school procedures for accident and incident reporting and reporting potential hazards to the Principal or his/her representative.

## Review

St Joseph’s Primary School, Mernda is committed to continual improvement of its OHS performance.

Authorised  
by:  
Principal

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Signature:

Date:

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Policy ratified by School Leadership Team: July 2021  
Person responsible: Vanessa Fleitas  
Next review date: July 2022

## **Relevant Legislation**

Victorian [Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004](#)

## **Related school policies**

Essential Safety Measures Policy

First Aid Procedures

## **Related documents**

OHS Issue Resolution Flowchart

OHS Induction Checklist

## **External resources**

WorkSafe Victoria 2017 [OHS in schools: A practical guide for school leaders](#)