



SOPHIA
MUNDI

The Inner City Steiner School P-12

Occupational Health and Safety Policy

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1. Policy

Sophia Mundi Steiner School is committed to providing and promoting a workplace that is healthy and safe and in which hazards are minimised and controlled.

All employees of Sophia Mundi Steiner School must take reasonable care at work. The Principal must familiarise himself/herself and employees under his/her control with relevant information about occupational health and safety, and induct new employees in accordance with Sophia Mundi Steiner School's policy and procedures.

Whenever practicable, the resolution of health and safety issues will occur at the school.

The resolution of health and safety issues will be prompt, consultative, follow legislative requirements and the school's procedures.

1.1 Background

The *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (hereafter referred to as 'the Act') is the principal legislation governing occupational health and safety in Victoria. The Act sets out the key principles, duties and rights in relation to occupational health and safety.

The Sophia Mundi Ltd is the employer of all staff at the school. Notwithstanding the duty of care that resides with Sophia Mundi Ltd as the employer, the Act recognises the degree of control exercised at individual work sites by those with management responsibility and assigns duties and responsibilities to these persons accordingly.

1.2 Definitions

1.2.1 *Employees of Sophia Mundi Steiner School*

All employees of Sophia Mundi Steiner School are subject to this policy and its procedures.

1.2.2 *Contract Staff*

Staff engaged on a contract for service fall within the scope of the Act. For the purposes of the Act they are considered to be employees of the person engaging them, in this case Sophia Mundi Steiner School.

1.2.3 *Agreed Relevant Procedure*

The Act specifies that an employer's attempts to resolve occupational health and safety issues shall follow an agreed relevant procedure. A flow chart of the agreed relevant procedure employed Sophia Mundi Steiner School appears at Appendix A. In summary, the procedure specifies the resolution process to be followed by all staff members.

1.2.4 *Health and Safety Representative (HSR)*

The Act allows employees at a particular workplace to require their employer to arrange for the election of a health and safety representative (HSR).

1.2.5 *Health and Safety Committee*

The function of a consultative committee is, amongst other things, to facilitate consultation and cooperation between an employer and employees in initiating, developing and implementing measures to ensure the health and safety of employees at the workplace.

1.2.6 *Workplace*

The workplace encompasses places where employees are, or are likely to be during the course of their work. This includes places attended during activities sanctioned by the school.

1.3 Relevant Legislation or Authority

The *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* is the principal legislation governing occupational health and safety in Victoria, such as the general provisions relating to occupational health and safety (including the duties of employers and employees); health and safety representatives and committees; inspectors and improvement and prohibition notices; and right of review.

The objects of the Act are to:

- Promote and secure the health and safety of persons at work;
- Protect persons at work against hazards;
- Assist in securing safe and hygienic work environments;
- Reduce, eliminate and control the hazards to which persons are exposed at work;
- Foster cooperation and consultation between and to provide for the participation of employers and employees and associations representing employers and employees in the formulation and implementation of health and safety standards to current levels of technical knowledge and development;
- Provide for formulation of policies and for the coordination of the administration of laws relating to occupational health and safety; and
- Promote education and community awareness on matters relating to occupational health and safety.

The *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007* (hereafter referred to as ‘the Regulations’) are made under the Act. They specify the ways duties imposed by the Act must be performed, or prescribe procedural or administrative matters to support the Act, such as requiring licenses for specific activities, keeping records, or notifying certain matters. The Regulations provide some more specific obligations in order to assist in carrying out the purposes of the Act. Amongst other things, the Regulations specify general workplace safety requirements, and safety requirements for dealing with plant and hazardous substances.

2. Procedures

While the Act assigns the predominant duty of care to the employer, all employees are responsible for their own health and safety and must avoid harming the health and safety of others through any act or omission at work. The level of responsibility is dependent on the degree of control the employee has at the workplace. The Principal has delegated responsibility for the implementation of these procedures. The procedures are concerned with both prevention and resolution of accidents and incidents.

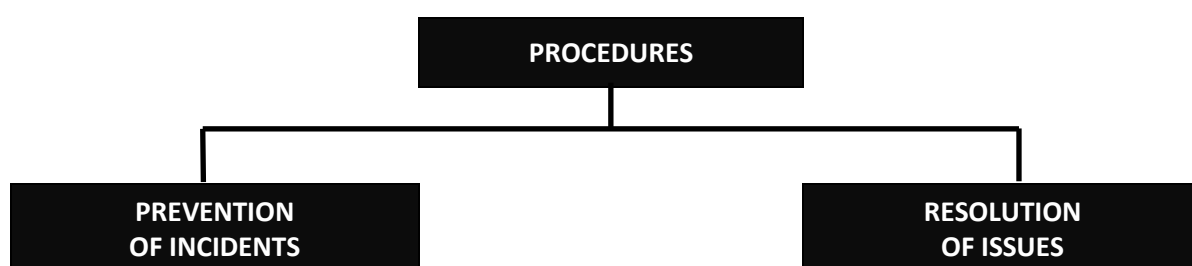


Table 1: The procedures are composed of two main elements.

Prevention encompasses matters such as planning, risk assessment and control, training, the dissemination of information, induction and contract management.

Resolution procedures set out a clear process that allows health and safety issues and disputes to be dealt with by Sophia Mundi Steiner School in accordance with the Act, Regulations and school policies. This process promotes a consultative approach where the issues are discussed with all parties concerned and resolved at a local level where possible.

2.1 Roles and Responsibilities

The Act specifies a number of responsibilities that fall upon employers and employees.

2.1.1 Responsibilities of the Principal

It is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that this policy and other policies and procedures relating to occupational health and safety are implemented effectively. In order to accomplish this, the Principal must be familiar with, and have ready access to, the Act and Regulations.

This can be accomplished by accessing an electronic copy published on the websites of either Victorian Law Today (www.legislation.vic.gov.au/) or WorkSafe Victoria (www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/). However, an official hard copy may be more practical in that it can easily be made available to members of staff, should they require one.

In general, the Principal must:

- provide and maintain workplaces, plant and systems of work such that staff members are not exposed to hazards ;
- provide adequate supervision, information and training such that staff, students and visitors are not exposed to hazards;
- provide personal protective equipment (PPE) where required ;
- ensure the provision of competent instruction to staff members in the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and ensure workers maintain the equipment in good working condition
- ensure that where hazardous substances such as chemicals are present in the workplace, that their handling, labelling, processing, storage, transportation and disposal is carried out in such a manner as to avoid exposing students, staff or contractors to hazards;
- ensure that new staff members are properly inducted into the workplace, the induction process includes discussion of the workplace's procedures for crisis management ;
- consult with health and safety representatives (HSR) and other employees at the workplace in order to resolve issues, where they arise ;
- provide the necessary time for health and safety representatives (HSR) to complete their designated functions (time allocations are negotiated between the health and safety representative (HSR) and the Principal;
- ensure that all reports of hazards, incidents or accidents at the workplace that have caused, or may cause injury, are investigated and recorded (the investigation report form provided at Appendix D should be used for this purpose), the Principal is then to notify the person reporting the hazard, incident or accident of the outcome of the investigation and the intended action to be taken ;
- advise visitors, where practicable, that they are required to comply with directions given by the employer for health and safety reasons and to report any hazards, incidents or accidents that come to their attention.

Care must be taken to ensure contractors are appropriately licensed to carry out their functions, are aware of potential hazards and are able to comply with the school's policy and procedures.

2.1.2 Other School Based Staff with Supervisory Responsibilities

Faculty Heads must have sufficient knowledge that will allow them to discharge their duties as supervisors in accordance with the Act. They are expected to cooperate in the implementation of this policy and associated procedures. They must:

- conduct regular workplace safety inspections with health and safety representatives (HSR);
- investigate and report on accidents or near accidents and ensure that relevant action is taken to eliminate or minimise risks;
- make relevant training recommendations for consideration by the Principal; and
- assist, where appropriate, with the rehabilitation of injured staff members.

2.1.3 Responsibilities of all Staff Members

The Act places various responsibilities on employees. At Sophia Mundi Steiner School all staff members are required to:

- take all reasonable care for their own safety and health and to avoid harming the safety and health of other people through any act or omission at work.
- follow all instructions and safe working procedures established to protect their safety and that of others;
- cooperate with the development of local safety and health policies and safe working procedures;
- ensure that plant and equipment is only used for the purpose for which it is intended and use all safeguards, safety devices, protective equipment and clothing and other appliances provided for safety purposes, as instructed;
- report all hazards or potential hazards of which they are aware and cannot correct themselves and assist with the implementation of strategies for the avoidance, elimination or minimisation of those hazards or potential hazards ; and
- report all accidents and near misses to the Principal.

2.1.4 Functions of Health and Safety Representatives (HSR)

Health and safety representatives (HSR) are not mandatory but Sophia Mundi Steiner School encourages their election. Staff can request the election of representatives, as may an employer.

The functions of representatives are to:

- inspect the workplace or any part of it:
- at such times as agreed with the Principal or;
- when the workplace has not been inspected for the previous 30 days and following reasonable notice given to the Principal;
- investigate accidents and other dangerous occurrences in a timely manner with a view to prevention of further incidents;
- familiarise themselves with health and safety information provided by the school, and other approved bodies;
- report to the Principal any workplace hazard or potential hazard which comes to their notice, to which any person is or might be exposed;
- refer to a workplace safety committee, where such a committee exists, any matter they believe should be considered by the committee or remains unresolved;
- consult and cooperate with the Principal or other staff members as required, on all matters relating to the safety or health of persons in the workplace; and
- liaise with all staff on matters relating to the safety or health of persons in the workplace .

2.1.5 Functions of Occupational Health and Safety Committees

Whilst committees are not mandatory under the Act, Sophia Mundi Steiner School supports their formation where they are required. The Principal may request the formation of a committee, as may staff members.

Where such a committee is requested, one must be formed. The functions of a health and safety committee are to:

- facilitate consultation and cooperation between an employer and his/her employees in initiating, developing, and implementing measures designed to ensure the health and safety of employees at the workplace;
- keep itself informed as to standards relating to health and safety generally recommended or prevailing in workplaces of a comparable nature and to review, and make recommendations to the employer on rules and procedures at the workplace relating to the health and safety of the employees;

- recommend to the employer and employees the establishment, maintenance, and monitoring of programmes, measures and procedures at the workplace relating to the health and safety of the employees;
- keep in a readily accessible place and form such information as is provided under the Act by the employer regarding the hazards to persons that arise or may arise at the workplace;
- consider and make such recommendations to the employer as the committee sees fit in respect of any changes or intended changes to or at the workplace that may reasonably be expected to affect the health or safety of employees at the workplace
- consider such matters as are referred to the committee by a health and safety representative (HSR); and
- perform such other functions as may be prescribed in the regulations or given to the committee, with its consent, by the employer .

2.2 Induction and the Provision of Information

The Act states in its objects the rationale for preventative action in achieving healthy and safe work environments. The Principal is responsible for inducting new staff, and where practicable, regular visitors and contractors in accordance with the following procedure. Induction of new employees, visitors (where practicable) and contractors is to occur as soon as possible after their arrival.

Not all aspects of the induction procedure will be relevant in all workplaces. The Principal is to exercise discretion in determining what is required in the context of the workplace and the role to be performed. A copy of the procedure is provided as Appendix B.

In summary, induction is to cover:

- discussion of safety issues, OH & S issue resolution process, including protective clothing, fire and evacuation procedures, gardener and hired hand duties, use of chain saws, school playgrounds and ovals, security, manual handling and safe work practices, and dealing with contractors;
- communicable disease procedures, provision of Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for on-site chemicals, sun (UV) protection, administration of student medication, policy on smoking in the workplace, hearing protection, first aid facilities, emergency procedures; and
- summary of the work area orientation.

2.3 Occupational Health and Safety Issue Resolution Procedures

The following procedures have been developed to assist Sophia Mundi Steiner School staff to resolve issues at the workplace, in accordance with the Act.

All staff members must be made aware of and use these procedures to manage the risks to the health and safety of all persons at the workplace. A flow-chart of the procedures is provided at Appendix A.

2.3.1 Resolution at the Workplace

If a staff member identifies or has been informed of a potential health or safety problem he or she must either:

- report the issue to the health and safety representative (HSR) if one exists; or
- report the matter directly to the Principal.

If the matter is reported to the health and safety representative (HSR), they must promptly report the issue to the Principal. Following this, the Principal together with the health and safety representative (HSR) must investigate the issue and endeavour to arrive at a mutually agreed resolution. The Principal or health and safety representative (HSR) must report back to the staff member(s) concerned.

If there is no agreed resolution following this action, the health and safety representative (HSR) shall refer non-urgent issues to the health and safety committee (if one exists) for the committee to attempt resolution.

If there is no health and safety representative (HSR), the Principal must investigate the matter and endeavour to resolve the issue through consultation with staff members.

If there is no health and safety committee and an agreed resolution cannot be reached between the Principal and employees, then the matter is to proceed to the next stage (Appendix A).

In attempting to resolve the issue at the workplace, informal advice and assistance may be sought from the following sources:

- WorkSafe Victoria for informal discussion;

All attempts to resolve the issue at the school level must be made before proceeding to the next stage (Appendix A).

2.3.2 Provisional Improvement Notice (PIN)

- A PIN is similar to an improvement notice issued by a WorkSafe inspector, except for its 'provisional' nature. PIN's can only be issued by health and safety representatives (HSR) who have completed the relevant training.
- After completing the accredited training course, an elected and qualified health and safety representative (HSR) is able to issue a PIN only when:
 - they are of the opinion that the person to whom they are issuing the PIN is breaching a provision of the Act or Regulations or;
 - the person has contravened a provision of the Act or the Regulations in circumstances that make it likely that the breach will continue to be repeated.
- Before issuing a PIN, the health and safety representative (HSR) must consult with the person to whom they are issuing the PIN about the matter that needs remedying. The consultation provides an opportunity for the alleged breach to be addressed without the need to issue the PIN. If applicable, the health and safety representative (HSR) must also consult with another health and safety representative (HSR) at the workplace.
- More than seven days must be given to rectify the problem set out in the PIN.
- Failure to comply with a PIN within the given time is an offence under OH & S legislation. However, before the PIN expires, a request may be lodged with WorkSafe to review the PIN.

Guidelines

More information on PINS is available from the WorkSafe Victoria website (www.worksafe.vic.gov.au).

2.3.3 Intervention of WorkSafe

Where attempts to resolve the issue through the occupational health and safety issue resolution procedures have not been successful and where there is a risk of imminent and serious injury or harm to the health and safety of persons, the staff member concerned, the Principal, or health and safety representative (HSR) may notify WorkSafe.

The Act requires an inspector from WorkSafe to attend the workplace and take such action he or she considers appropriate. After attending a workplace, an inspector may take one of three possible courses of action allowable under the Act. He or she may:

- issue an improvement notice specifying the remedial action to be taken by the school within a specific time ;
- issue a prohibition notice if in his or her opinion the activity involved will involve a risk of imminent and serious injury to, or imminent and serious harm to the health of any person (once a prohibition notice has been issued, all activities identified by the notice will cease until the conditions of the notice are complied with) ; or
- take no action if he or she is of the opinion that no section of the Act has been breached or there is no risk to the health and safety of staff, students or other persons .

2.3.4 Refusal to Work

If an employee considers that there are reasonable grounds to believe that to continue work would result in exposure to a risk of imminent and serious injury or imminent and serious harm to health, the employee is entitled to refuse to work. Should an employee take such action the employee must notify the employer and, if one exists, the health and safety representative (HSR).

In the event of this action being taken, the Principal will endeavour to provide the employee with reasonable alternative work, until the issue is resolved in accordance with the approved procedure.

2.3.5 Procedure for Reporting and Investigating Incidents

The Principal must immediately advise the health and safety representative (HSR) of any accident or dangerous occurrence that occurs at the workplace. It is one of the functions of a health and safety representative (HSR) to investigate such incidents and arrangements need to be made to allow them to do so.

The Accident/Incident Investigation Report Form (Appendix C) should be used to investigate reported accidents and incidents. All workplace accidents should be recorded on the above form, and the form retained at the workplace.

It is important to learn about how, when and why injuries occur by recording accident/incident information. This information can provide a factual record in the event of further enquires or litigation. It can also be used to identify hazards, determine causative factors and assist in the development of preventative strategies.

3. Guidelines

3.1 Identifying Issues

Given the complexity of relationships in the school environment it is sometimes difficult to determine what matters may constitute occupational health and safety issues or risks. For example health issues can also encompass physical health and mental wellbeing. Assessing the extent of those risks and their likely impact is a matter of professional judgement that must take into account the particular circumstances and, given the requirements of the legislation, what action is reasonable in those circumstances.

3.2 Record Keeping

Good record keeping is an essential part of the management of occupational health and safety issues in the workplace. It is important to keep records of all issues and incidents that may become the subject of a claim, complaint, grievance or resolution procedure. The Accident/Investigation Report Form (Appendix C) should be used to record incidents, accidents and the outcomes of investigations. If a student is injured it is advisable to place a copy of the investigation report on the student's file.

Where a witness or third party offers evidence or information, records should be kept. It is important that such records are specific, and the dates of events and receipt of any information are recorded.

Appendix A Occupational Health and Safety Issue Resolution Procedures

Please also refer to section 5 for more detailed advice.

Resolution of Safety Issues

The Act requires that there be a process agreed between employer & employees regarding the resolution of safety issues.



EMPLOYEE

Issue identified, reported to Principal and/or Health & Safety Representative (HSR).



PRINCIPAL AND/OR HEALTH & SAFETY REPRESENTATIVE (HSR)

Attempt to resolve issue. Involve workplace OH & S Committee where possible. Principal to provide feedback on intended action to the person concerned. If required, the Health & Safety Representative (HSR) may issue a Provisional Improvement Notice (PIN) after consultation with the Principal, or another workplace Health & Safety Representative (HSR). Health & Safety Representative (HSR) to feedback to colleagues at all stages of issue resolution. If there is no resolution any of the above parties may refer the matter to WorkSafe.



WORKSAFE INSPECTOR

Employee, Health & Safety Representative (HSR), or Principal may request a further opinion from WorkSafe if they consider the matter to be unresolved or the action taken to be inappropriate.

Appendix B Induction

SAFETY ISSUES

Protective clothing and/or allowance for staff

The Act provides that protective clothing must be provided where it is not practicable to avoid the presence of hazards in the workplace. The issue, use, storage and maintenance of protective clothing should be discussed with staff requiring personal protective equipment.

Emergency management procedures

Staff members must be informed of fire, evacuation, and any other relevant emergency procedures that have been developed for the workplace and in particular the role they must undertake in the event of an emergency.

Gardener/handyperson and cleaner duties

Information and adequate training must be provided to all gardeners and cleaners in chemical and equipment safety and general safe work practices. For example, Material Safety Data Sheets must be provided, and kept up to date for chemicals; handbooks should be provided for equipment; and attention should be drawn to protected electrical outlets and the use of residual current devices (RCD).

Use of chainsaws

Chainsaws must not be used by employees, unless they have been trained in the use of chainsaws.

Playgrounds and ovals

The Principal should ensure that the school's playgrounds and ovals are maintained and hazards are eliminated or minimised.

Security

Staff and student safety is the primary concern of the school. Staff should be aware of the school procedure for dealing with breaches of security and with working after hours.

Manual handling and safe work practices

Where manual handling activities are a substantial part of a staff member's duties, advice and training should be made available. Staff should be informed of school policies and procedures concerning the use of ladders and the movement of furniture.

Contractors

The Principal should bring any perceived risks in the workplace to the attention of all contractors. Contractors should be made aware of the relevant school policies and procedures. A designated staff member should liaise with contractor representatives to ensure a coordinated approach to safety issues.

Issue Resolution Process

Staff members should be informed of the school's issue resolution process

HEALTH ISSUES

Communicable disease procedures

New staff members should be provided with information on all school developed policies and procedures on communicable diseases. They should also be made aware of the perceived risks in the school and what procedures are in place to minimise any risks. Discussion with new staff members should include:

- Hepatitis A & B Immunisation (in accordance with Department of Health advice);
- direction for the control of measles;
- head lice;
- procedures for dealing with students who may have contracted an infectious illness; and
- standard precautions for minimising the risk of acquiring blood borne infections as outlined in the First Aid Policy.

Consideration should be given to the confidentiality of any information obtained in regard to the Hepatitis and/or the HIV/AIDS status of any staff member or student. Further information is available from the National Health and Medical Research Council in the publication *Staying Healthy in Childcare* (2001) available on <http://www.health.gov.au/nhmrc/publications/chhome.htm>.

Provision of Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for all on-site chemicals

Inform the new staff member of what chemicals are kept on site and where up to date Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) are kept. Provide information, training and instruction on the use of chemicals in the workplace including handling and storage and disposal procedures.

Sun (UV rays) protection

Provide information on school policy and personal protective equipment for protection from UV light.

Administration of student medication

Provide information on school procedures and the school's Student Health Care Policy.

Smoking in the workplace

Smoking on school premises is not permitted.

Hearing protection

If a staff member may be exposed to noise consistently above the Action Level (85dB(A)) in the workplace, they are required to have their hearing tested prior to commencing work, e.g. gardeners and selected teachers). It is also recommended that they have a test within 6 months of leaving employment with the school.

First aid facilities

Indicate where the school first aid facilities are and who is responsible for the function.

Emergency actions

Procedures and actions for dealing with emergency situations including first aid and sickness should be discussed with the staff member. This should include how to summon assistance.

Work area orientation

The orientation should include:

- introduction to health and safety representative/s, first aid officers and evacuation team;
- any known hazards in the work area and how they are controlled;
- location of emergency exits;
- evacuation procedures and assembly points;
- location of first aid facilities; and
- critical incident management procedures.

Accident/Incident Investigation Form

INCIDENT REPORT (2011)

Please complete this report and provide copies to the Principal and the Head of Faculty.

NOTE: Where an injury has occurred a **FIRST AIDE INJURY REPORT FORM** must also be completed

1 Date of incident: _____ **Time:** _____ **Location:** _____
Witnesses : (1) _____ (2) _____

2 Incident detail: (describe the situation, what happened and the nature of any injuries/ property damage)

3 Injured Person:
Name: _____ **Age** _____ **Student / Teacher / Staff / Other** _____

Type of injury (please check):
(a) minor cut/abrasion
(b) first aid treatment
(c) medical treatment
(d) other (please specify): _____

Treatment given by: _____ at _____ Date _____

4 Further action required:
1. Notify Faculty Yes / No
2. More detailed investigation Yes / No
3. Other: _____

5 Factors that may have contributed to incident?


6 Recommendations to prevent recurrence / other comments

7 Have parents been informed: Yes / No If yes: **Who / When** _____

8 This report written by: _____ **Date:** _____

9 Reviewed by the Principal: _____ **Date:** _____

10 Included in OH&S Register: Yes/No **Date:** _____

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