

# HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY & PROCEDURES

## Rationale:

We believe that the health and safety of all students, parents and employees within the school community is vital to the successful functioning of our school and is the responsibility of the management. In order to fulfil this responsibility, management has a duty of care to maintain and provide a work environment that is free of risk to the health and safety of the school community.

## Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the work environment at our school will be maintained in such a manner that the health and safety of all members of the community will be free of risk as far as is practicable.

## Implementation:

### Responsibilities:

This policy recognises that the health and safety of all employees, students, contractors and visitors within St. Thomas the Apostle 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:

- i. providing and maintaining safe plant and systems of work
- ii. making and monitoring arrangements for the safe use, handling, storing and transport of plant substances
- iii. maintaining the work place in a safe and healthy condition
- iv. providing adequate facilities to protect the welfare of all employees and students
- v. 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 Thomas the Apostle 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. Thomas the Apostle 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 fulfil 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 Brigid's, 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 wilfully 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. Thomas the Apostle 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 contractor's policy.

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

At St. Thomas the Apostle Primary School, Contractors need to be:

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

St. Thomas the Apostle Primary School is developing 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 Sub-contractors 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 work place 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 OHS at various stages.** St. Thomas the Apostle P.S. has a process for involving employees in identifying hazards, reporting problems and providing possible solutions to OHS issues.

St. Thomas the Apostle P.S. encourages employees' participation in reporting health and safety risks in their area of employee expertise.

## Induction of new staff

All new staff at St. Thomas the Apostle P.S. 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:

Brendan Marrinon

The representative's responsibilities include:

- inspecting the whole or any part of the work place:
  - 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. Thomas the Apostle P.S. recognises that the OHS 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 OHS 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. Thomas the Apostle P.S. has established a health and safety committee. The names of the committee members are:

Brendan Marrinon  
David Williams  
Amy Gullifer  
Cecilia Hildago

The role of the committee is:

- to facilitate co-operation 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 OHS representative and the Principal to ensure the OHS responsibilities of management and staff are met on a regular basis
- to assist in the communication of staff of OHS 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.

## **OHS and Risk Management Policy**

St. Thomas the Apostle P.S. 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. Thomas the Apostle P.S. 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. Thomas the Apostle P.S. This register contains:

- a) date
- b) description of hazard or near miss
- c) reported by
- d) reported to
- e) action taken

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

To reduce the incidents of slip hazards in the general environment St Thomas the Apostle P.S. uses a checklist to identify slip hazards. See **Attachment No 4**.

St Thomas the Apostle P.S. 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 Thomas the Apostle P.S 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 Thomas the Apostle P.S 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 Thomas the Apostle P.S 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.

## **Health**

### **First Aid Policy**

The policy of St Thomas the Apostle P.S 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 Thomas the Apostle P.S:

- 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 organisation 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 Thomas the Apostle P.S 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 immunisation against Hepatitis B shall be offered to employees by St Thomas the Apostle P.S.

### **Skin Cancer Prevention**

St Thomas the Apostle P.S 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 Thomas the Apostle P.S. provides sun cream for employees use during school hours.

### **Voice**

St Thomas the Apostle P.S. 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 Thomas the Apostle P.S. 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 Thomas the Apostle P.S. is mindful of the risks of asbestos. As such St Thomas the Apostle P.S. keeps a record and results of inspections indicating the site and description of materials identified as possibly containing asbestos.

St Thomas the Apostle P.S holds a copy of the OHS (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 Thomas the Apostle P.S has a smoke free policy. Smoking is not permitted in the school grounds.

## Physical Hazards

### Manual handling

St Thomas the Apostle P.S 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 Thomas the Apostle P.S 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 Thomas the Apostle P.S. 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 Thomas the Apostle, 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 Thomas the Apostle P.S. is aware of its obligations to immediately notify the Victorian WorkCover Authority (VWA) by telephoning 131360 in the event of:

- the death of any person
- the amputation of any limb or part of a limb of any person
- 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

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 online as a written record of workplace deaths or serious injuries. St Thomas the Apostle P.S. will keep a copy of this record for five years. Notification of an event will also be entered online to CEVN.

## Accident Investigation

St Thomas the Apostle P.S. has put a system in place for the reporting and recording of accidents.

The Principal will advise the OHS representative when an injury occurs and the OH&S representative in conjunction with the return to work co-ordinator 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 Thomas the Apostle P.S. recognises 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 co-ordinator** who is:

Anthony Preston.

The role of the return to work co-ordinator 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 co-ordinating return to work activities, organising 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 co-ordinator will also be responsible for authorising 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:

Narre Warren Medical Centre, Webb St. Narre Warren.

Phone: 9704 6812

### **Occupational Providers**

St Thomas the Apostle P.S. has appointed Gallagher Basset Pty Ltd, 2/333 Collins Street, Melbourne, (telephone 1300 975 609) as the preferred WorkCover insurer. The school cooperates 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 Thomas the Apostle P.S. 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)
- Catholic Church Insurance (CCI) - [www.ccinsurances.com.au](http://www.ccinsurances.com.au)

### **Evaluation**

The Principal will seek cooperation from all employees in realising 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.

Ratified by B. Marrinon, October, 2013.