

Occupational Health and Safety Policy



Date Approved by Committee of Management:	18/08/2021
Date for Review:	18/08/2024

PURPOSE

Occupational health and safety is an integral part of Beechworth Montessori School's operations and the purpose is to:

- protect the welfare, health and safety of its staff, students, volunteers, contractors and others at work
- ensure that the public is not put at risk by school-based activities.

The duty of care extends to off-site activities and events, such as camps, excursions and routine outings.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the welfare, health and safety of the staff, students, parents, volunteers, visitors, contractors and others to ensure that the public is not put at risk by school-based activities.

POLICY STATEMENT

Beechworth Montessori School fulfils their occupational health and safety duties and obligations by following the key principles of *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 Vic (OHS Act)* and complying with the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 Vic*.

To manage health, safety and wellbeing in schools, the principal has certain accountabilities and the Committee of Management has a specific, non-delegable duty to ensure that the school complies with the *Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004 (Vic)*. Under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, the staff must take reasonable care for their own health and safety, and the health and safety of others for whom they are responsible.

Beechworth Montessori School recognises that employee health, safety and wellbeing is integral to the school achieving excellent educational and work performance outcomes.

PROCEDURE

The school must provide a safe and healthy workplace, so far as is reasonably practicable to do so. The most effective way to do this is through identifying and eliminating risks and if elimination is not possible, minimising or mitigating the risks.

1. Occupational Health and Safety Duties

The principal must

- a) Ensure buildings, facilities, equipment, resources and the work itself is safe and includes monitoring and keeping records of the state of buildings and grounds
- b) Ensure that staff receive training and instruction to enable them to work safely and without risks to health
- c) Inform staff and all other workers—including contractors—of the school's safety requirements, this includes maintaining a record of how the school has communicated these requirements
- d) Consult with health and safety representatives and employees to draw on their knowledge and expertise and to help identify risks and hazards
- e) Notify WorkSafe Victoria if any notifiable incidents occur involving a member of staff, a student or a member of the public. This must be done immediately after becoming aware an incident has occurred. Notifiable incidents are those that result in death or a person needing immediate hospital treatment. Serious incidents involving, for example, the collapse of a building, spills of dangerous substances, an explosion, fire, falls from high places are also notifiable. WorkSafe publishes a full list of notifiable incidents.
- f) Maintain an accident and incident register, including a record of notifiable incidents.

Staff and others at the school classified as 'responsible persons' have a specific, non-delegable duty to ensure that the school complies with the *Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004* (Vic). Responsible persons include:

- the members of the governing body
- the principal
- anyone else who is in a position of authority in relation to the management or governance of the school.

2. Risk assessment - identify risks and hazards

To manage health, safety and wellbeing in schools, the principal must:

- a) identify and reduce OHS risks through a documented process of hazard identification, assessment, implementation and review of controls.
- b) prevent risks and injuries through embedding school operational management and supervision practices for health, safety and wellbeing.
- c) recognise that employees have significant knowledge and expertise about the hazards and risks in the workplace, and can make a significant contribution to improving health and safety, therefore ensuring regular consultation with employees when dealing with hazards and risks in the workplace.
- d) respond to risks/hazards, injuries and near misses, including investigating incidents and acting to prevent re-occurrence www.worksafe.vic.gov.au.

- e) assist with returning injured staff members to work including preparing an individual return to work plan and a risk management plan.
- f) protect the health and safety of independent contractors and their employees (such as cleaners, CRTs, tradespersons and grounds contractors) in the same way as that of any other staff – to the extent that the hazards and risks are under the control of the school
- g) protect the health and safety of staff and students to activities away from school, such as school excursions and camps.

To take reasonable care for their own health and safety, and the health and safety of others for whom they are responsible, the staff must:

- h) conduct a daily inspection of the playground prior to the children's attendance using the *Daily Outdoor Hazard Identification Checklist*. If the daily inspection identifies any problem, staff are to correct the problem. If this is not possible, temporary measures are put in place to ensure the children's and employee's safety and the Principal notified.
- i) report any hazard identified on the Maintenance Request Form and/or principal
- j) participate in OHS training, follow OHS procedures and act in a healthy and safe manner at all times.

3. Risk assessment - address the key risks

- a) The most common types of injuries and illnesses in schools result from manual handling and slips, trips and falls as well as psychological injury/illness. To address the key risks in schools the following resource is referenced: A handbook for workplaces, OHS in schools, a practical guide for school leaders <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/resources/occupational-health-and-safety-ohs-schools-practical-guide-school-leaders>

Other common hazards and risks include:

- b) Plant and equipment
Wherever it is reasonably practicable, plant and equipment that has a lower level of risk must be used as well as personal protective equipment.
- c) Hazardous substances and dangerous goods
A register must be kept of all the hazardous substances in the school, and safety data sheets (SDS) must be obtained and be available for each hazardous substance.
- d) Electrical Safety
Electrical Safety Standard AS/NZS 3760-2010 requires that all electrical equipment is tested prior to initial use as well as after servicing and repairs, and periodically from then on. Test and tag of all electrical equipment is tested annually and reports are stored in the maintenance register.

LEGISLATION

Dangerous goods:

Dangerous Goods (Storage and Handling) Regulations 2012 (Vic).

Occupational health and safety:

Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)

Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 (Vic)

School buildings, facilities and grounds:

Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic) sch 4 cl 13

RELATED POLICIES

- Risk Management Policy
- Hazardous Substances and Dangerous Goods Policy

ATTACHMENTS

- Beechworth Montessori Maintenance Plan

Beechworth Montessori Maintenance Plan

Routine Maintenance

The school cleaner is responsible for the day-to-day cleaning of school buildings and maintenance of the school grounds including rubbish removal, grass cutting, trimming trees and shrubs, and tending to the gardens.

The staff are responsible for conducting the following daily safety checks:

- Cycle 1 & Ruby Room: Daily outdoor and indoor hazard identification checklist
- Cycle 2 & 3: Daily outdoor hazard identification checklist

Responsive Maintenance

There will always be maintenance emergencies that need to be attended to. Maintenance request forms are kept in the staff room. School staff must make requests for maintenance through the request form.

Preventative Maintenance

The principal is responsible for arranging the following:

- Quarterly workplace inspections
- Annual checking of electrical equipment by professional trades people.
- Annual pest control treatment.
- Security system, as issues arise.
- Bi-annual filter checks and cleaning for air-conditioning units.
- Annual inspection of ceiling, floors, paving, plumbing, internal painting, door hinges, hooks and locks.
- Bi-annual fire equipment testing and repairs / replacement.

Long Term Maintenance

Protection of the School's assets and safety of School staff and students requires a regular cycle of upkeep of School buildings, grounds, plant and equipment. This includes checking:

Every 2 years:

- Replacement of glass where necessary.
- Powder coated finishes where necessary.
- Furniture replacement where necessary.

Every 5 years:

- Internal painting where necessary.

Every 10 years:

- External painting where necessary.
- Replacement of floor coverings where necessary.
- Replacement of notice boards where necessary.
- Replacement of guttering where necessary.
- Replacement of electrical wiring where necessary.

Every 25 years:

- Roof refurbishment/replacement where necessary.