Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) Policy

Birchip P-12 School recognizes 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 OH&S issues will be encouraged.

This policy is consistent with:

(a) The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) Mission Statement that schools provide a safe and appropriate teaching and learning environment for both staff and students and

(b) The school’s legal obligations under the Victorian OH&S Act 1985 and Common Law duty of care.

Policy Objectives

- To comply with OH&S related legislation and DEECD directives or guidelines relating to health and safety.
- To set and measure OHS performance against identified targets.
- 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 OH&S activities undertaken.
- To implement staff health and wellbeing strategies.
- To provide a ‘Return to Work’ 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 fulfilled and that the necessary resources are provided to achieve effective implementation.

Employers’ direct duties under the OH&S Act also include:

- Providing and maintaining safe plant and systems of work.
- Making arrangements for the safe use, handling, storage and transport of plant 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 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 as OH&S Management Representative and with OH&S Representative acting as the employer’s representative.

(The Principal is the OH&S management representative by default, however a management team member with appropriate seniority may be nominated by the Principal to act as the employer's OH&S representative in an operational capacity (ie. OH&S Co-ordinator) but the overall responsibility cannot be delegated. The nominated OH&S management representative may not also act in the role of elected staff Health and Safety Representative (HSR) as per section 21 (4ca) OH&S Act).

Unit Co-ordinators and/or Key Learning Area 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 hazards identified
- actively promoting and implementing agreed OH&S procedures
- identifying OH&S 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 and the 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.

Birchip P-12 School is committed to ensuring this policy is publicized and implemented and will regularly monitor and review its effectiveness.

John Richmond
Principal

David Smith
School Council President

Date:  30/01/2008

Review Date/Cycle:  January 2009
Implementation

1. The role of OH&S Management Representative will be allocated to a senior member of the teaching staff.
2. Relevant OH&S responsibilities will be included in all job descriptions and responsibilities will be publicized at least annually.
3. Staff will be encouraged to elect a staff Health and Safety Representative (HSR).
4. The elected OH&S Representative will be provided with training and practical support to fulfill his/her role effectively (as stipulated in the OH&S Act) and will be consulted on changes in the school which may affect staff health, safety or wellbeing.
5. OH&S Issue Resolution Procedures will be developed in consultation with staff or their representatives and these will be documented and publicized in accordance with the OH&S (Issue Resolution) Regulations 1999.
6. OH&S considerations will be integrated into the financial and human resources practices of the school for example:
   - purchasing guidelines
   - facilities design, upgrades and maintenance
   - contractor management
   - staff welfare
   - professional development and induction procedures
   - staff allotment and timetabling
   - curriculum design
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 OH&S Regulations and DEECD 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 plant and equipment
   - provision of appropriate first aid facilities and trained personnel
   - emergency management procedures which are documented, publicized and practiced
   - staff support programs
8. A Return to Work Co-ordinator (RTW) will be nominated and given appropriate training. RTW policy and procedures will be developed, documented and publicized.
9. Effectiveness of implementation of the policy will be monitored informally on an ongoing basis and evaluated formally at least once a year.
10. OH&S targets will be set and performance against these targets will be measured.
11. OH&S initiatives and performance should be included in the Schools Charter