



# ROCKDALE PUBLIC SCHOOL

## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

### **1. Reference Documents**

- OHS and Injury Management – a guide for the principal or manager. Department of Education and Training, 2000
- The Occupational Health and Safety Act 1983
- The Workers Compensation Act 1987
- The Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998
- The School Supervision Plan

### **2. Rationale**

The Principal and staff acknowledge that they have a shared responsibility for keeping the school buildings and grounds safe for all students, staff, cleaners, contractors, parents and visitors. In acknowledging this responsibility, the principal and staff give the highest priority to health, safety and welfare.

### **3. Responsibilities**

#### **3.1 The principal and supervisors will:**

- encourage a responsible attitude among and between staff to Occupational Health and Safety
- provide a safe and healthy environment for staff, students and others which is conducive to working and learning
- develop systems and procedures to implement DET policies
- develop guidelines to prevent injuries and to secure a safe and healthy working environment

- provide access to information, education and appropriate training necessary to ensure health and safety at work
- monitor and review the working environment
- ensure that staff maintain high levels of awareness of health, safety and welfare issues
- establish procedures for effective occupational rehabilitation
- foster a working environment which encourages staff to contribute to the development and delivery of occupational rehabilitation programs
- notify workplace accidents as required by DET policies or legislation.

### **3.2 The staff will:**

- take reasonable care for the health, safety and welfare of themselves and others at the workplace
- cooperate with their supervisors to ensure a safe healthy working environment
- report potential and actual health, safety and welfare hazards to the principal and supervisors
- not wilfully interfere with or misuse items or facilities provided in the interests of health, safety and welfare of staff, students, contractors, parents and visitors
- cooperate with the principal in the development and delivery of return-to-work and support programs in occupational rehabilitation.

### **3.3 The OH&S committee will:**

- establish policy and procedures for safe work practices
- develop procedures to identify hazards and assess and control risks
- review action taken to reduce hazards identified on the *Hazards Register*
- establish an employee support program for people returning to work
- bring to the attention of the principal, and investigate, any situation which is reported as unsafe
- develop purchasing procedures which reduce health and safety procedures such as *quiet* mechanical equipment.

- develop procedures on key issues in the workplace, such as chemical hazards, accident reporting and smoking
- identify health, safety and welfare problems through a review of injury and illness statistics and regular workplace inspections
- develop priorities and plans for action based on the incidence and severity of injury or illness, such as improved procedures to reduce accidents
- promote occupational health and safety by displaying safety material, distributing minutes of committee meetings and mounting campaigns, such as safe manual handling
- monitor procedures for ensuring the proper use and maintenance of protective equipment, and for ensuring the replacement of protective equipment when needed
- lead the design and development of a workplace program that will relate to all aspects of OHS including:
  - ⌘ duties of the employer and employees
  - ⌘ role of the occupational health and safety committee
  - ⌘ contractors
  - ⌘ identification, assessment and control of hazards
  - ⌘ instruction and training
  - ⌘ communication
  - ⌘ auditing and review.

## **4. Major Hazards**

### **4.1 Stress and morale**

Teachers work closely with colleagues, students, visiting support people, parents and visitors. Effective interpersonal relationships are essential to minimise conflict and to maintain positive morale.

To ensure that staff feel that they are a worthwhile part of an effective team, this school will aim to achieve:

- effective communication procedures and consultative processes

- clear and realistically defined procedures and responsibilities
- administrative and organisational procedures which ensure the programs run smoothly and efficiently
- well structured professional development programs to ensure that the individual and specific training and development needs of staff are met
- an ongoing learning environment and culture that encourages collegial support, positive feedback and guidance
- appropriate training programs for staff in conflict management, dispute resolution and mediation
- procedures for the measurement of complaints, where they are acknowledged and incorporated into reviews for workplace improvement.

## **4.2 Physical Hazards: Buildings and grounds**

The elimination or control of hazards will focus on:

- repairing slippery surfaces, broken paving, exposed electrical wiring
- improving techniques in the use of ladders, manual handling, design and purchase of office equipment and furniture
- ensuring the safe storage and handling of chemicals and petroleum products
- using personal protective equipment where necessary (e.g. eye, skin, respiratory protective equipment)
- avoiding exposure to cigarette smoke, UV radiation and chemical fumes.

**The OHS committee will design and implement a risk management system including:**

- hazard identification
- risk assessment
- risk control
- monitoring and review.

### **4.3 Electrical equipment**

Under WorkCover, all machinery and equipment must:

- be of commercial or industrial standard and not the domestic / handyman type which may have safety items deleted
- be fitted with all standard and optional safety items provided with that equipment such as guards
- be used in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications
- be serviced and maintained as prescribed in the documentation.

### **4.4 Safety equipment**

The OHS committee will lead staff in the development of guidelines for safe work practices in each classroom and office.

These guidelines will cover the safe handling of chemicals and equipment, the requirements for using personal protective equipment and the training of staff to use fire extinguishers. The guidelines will be issued to each employee and displayed in the workplace.

### **4.5 Power tools**

The school will use appropriate hazard identification procedures for all power tools. Power tools can include chain saws, lawn mowers, edgers, shredders, garden vacuum cleaners and various kitchen appliances.

In particular, we will ensure that:

- students do not use power tools unless the principal has given approval for their use under teacher supervision
- risk management processes cover the range of power tools in the workplace
- supervisors develop work instructions for all potentially hazardous machinery under their control that are followed by all employees, students and voluntary workers
- all permanent and casual employees have adequate training in each power tool related to their work. Special attention must be given to the use of power tools by voluntary workers.

## **4.6 Hazardous substances and chemicals**

Chemical safety is based on the three key OHS principles of hazard identification, risk management and risk control.

Prior to use, staff will always seek technical information from *material safety data sheets* that relates to the correct use and disposal of chemicals and substances.

The general assistant and cleaners will ensure that areas where hazardous substances and chemicals are stored, are locked at all times when they are not present.

## **4.7 Emergency situations**

The principal will ensure that emergency and evacuation procedures are developed and regularly reviewed.

Trial emergency evacuations will be held to assess the effectiveness of procedures. When the procedures have proved to be effective, ongoing practice will be held on a six-monthly basis.

## **5. Review**

This policy will be regularly reviewed in the light of legislative and school changes.

The next scheduled review date is February 2005.

## **Composition of the Rockdale Public School OHS Committee**

The committee will comprise of:

- The employer representative, the Principal.
- One member of the Clerical Staff.
- The General Assistant.
- Two employee representatives.
- Election will be performed by nomination or by ballot as required.
- An employee representative will hold office for a period of two years.
- Chairperson to be elected from employee representatives.

- If a casual vacancy for an employee representative occurs, the chairperson may appoint a person to the position for the remainder of the term of office unless otherwise determined at a meeting of employees.

## **Meetings**

- The committee will meet at least once every school term.
- The chairperson will circulate an agenda prior to any meetings
- Minutes of each meeting to be recorded by the person designated by the committee.
- Records of the committee including minutes will be kept in the administration file, a copy also to be kept with the Principal.
- Copies of meeting minutes will be displayed in the staffroom.

## **ROCKDALE PUBLIC SCHOOL**

## **OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE**

# MINUTES

**Date:**

**Members present:**

**Apologies:**

**ROCKDALE PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE**

**AGENDA**

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# ROCKDALE PUBLIC SCHOOL

## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

### CONSTITUTION

It is DET's policy that each of its employees shall be provided with a safe and healthy place in which to work. To achieve this policy, management will make every reasonable effort in the areas of accident prevention, hazard control and removal, injury protection and health preservation. These aspects of working conditions will be given top priority in school plans, procedures, programs and job instructions.

In conjunction with this policy, a series of rules, procedures, programs and policy statements on specific individual safety and health matters will be prepared and issued.

Safety at work is both an individual and shared responsibility of all employees (thereby providing opportunities for various forms of employee participation).

The following areas of responsibility are essential to the success of the policy:

**1. Principal.** The principal is required to actively pursue the goals set out in the first paragraph of this policy through the following approaches:

- devising and administering a comprehensive safety and health program
- holding regular executive meetings to discuss safety
- taking effective action to provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions for all employees.

**2. Executives.** Executives will be held accountable for working conditions under their control and to the degree of information given on safety and health matters to employees. They are to provide the initiative and follow-up action to maintain this policy.

**3. All Employees.** The success of a safety and health program ultimately rests on the willingness of everyone to cooperate and collectively with a "team spirit"

**Signed:**

**Dated:**





# ROCKDALE PUBLIC SCHOOL

## Consultation Statement

### Commitment

Rockdale School recognises the rights and duty of care responsibilities of everyone at the workplace under the *NSW Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000* and *OHS Regulation 2001*. The school is committed to promoting a proactive and positive safety culture by providing resources, procedures and consultation arrangements to ensure a safe, healthy and harmonious workplace for all.

The school will consult with all employees in implementing safe practices and work systems. An OHS Committee has been established to enable effective consultation to occur.

### OHS Committee

The OHS Committee shall consist of 2 employee representatives (Rod Lloyd and Rodney Ward), 1 employer representative (Vera Bosevski), 1 Administrative representative (Sue Bingham) and the General Assistant (Brian Cowley). The employee representatives will be elected for a maximum period of 2 years by democratic vote and are eligible for re-election. All committee members will receive training in the OHS consultation course if they have not been previously trained. The chairperson of the OHS Committee is Rod Lloyd.

The OHS employee representatives are responsible for raising specific health and safety issues in relation to employees. Employees should raise OHS issues directly with their supervisors or with the relevant OHS Committee representative.

The OHS Committee will meet once a Term within normal working hours. If an urgent OHS issue arises between meetings then an extraordinary meeting will be organised.

The OHS Committee will assist with the development and monitoring of safe work practices and systems and discuss issues that affect the health, safety and welfare of employees at Rockdale Public School. The Committee will conduct workplace safety inspections prior to every OHS Committee meeting. The Committee will review accident investigations and risk management in consultation with the workgroup. The principal will respond to OHS Committee recommendations within a timeframe agreed to by the Committee based on the particular issue and its complexity.

### How employees will be consulted about OHS

When an OHS issue is raised by the employer, an employee or the OHS Committee, the OHS Committee will consult with the workgroup. Hazards and issues that are relevant to the whole workgroup will be reported to the school's OHS Committee. The OHS Committee will report to the workgroup on the outcomes of OHS Committee meetings.

The method of consultation will be via Staffroom Folder, General Assistant's workbook and notices prior to OHS Committee meetings. The OHS consultation arrangements will be publicised among existing and new employees.

Staff will be advised one week before the next OHS Committee meeting for inclusions in the agenda. A draft agenda will be distributed to the OHS Committee members one week prior to the meeting. The agenda will then be distributed to all staff. Minutes will be taken by a committee member. All staff will have access to the minutes via noticeboard flyer.

Consultation on OHS matters should also occur as part of daily work activities within stage teams, between staff and with supervisors in particular when planning and implementing new work systems and practices.

### Establishment of consultation arrangements

A representation on OHS consultation arrangements under the new legislation was given to staff during a Staff Meeting. At subsequent meetings staff members discussed the types of consultation arrangements and decided on the formation of an OHS Committee as appropriate for the school.

### Review of consultation arrangements

It has been agreed by the school that these OHS consultation arrangements will be monitored and reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure that consultation with all employees is effective and that all safety issues are being addressed.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Principal.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_