



MENTONE GIRLS'
GRAMMAR

Work Health and Safety Policy

Effective

Version 2 - October 2020

I. INTRODUCTION

Health and safety impacts everyone in the School Community – not only staff and students, but parents, contractors, and visitors.

The legal requirements in relation to health and safety are set out in the **Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (OHS Act)**, the Dangerous Goods Act 1985 (Dangerous Goods Act) various Dangerous Goods Regulations, the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 (OHS Regulations). All employers have a legal obligation to provide a healthy and safe workplace so far as it is reasonably practicable to do so.

Schools also have a legal duty of care towards their students. In most cases, establishing a health and safety culture with effective Work Health and Safety policies and processes will assist us in meeting this duty of care.

2. AIM AND SCOPE

This document outlines the School's health and safety obligations and how it will implement these obligations to protect its Students, Staff and School community whilst on the School premises and during school events and excursions. It provides the mandate for:

- The development of work systems, practices, policies, and procedures that promote a healthy and safe environment within Mentone Girls' Grammar for all staff and students.
- The promotion and open discussion of health and safety within the School.
- Compliance with all laws, regulations, and standards relevant to health and safety in Victoria.
- The creation of a positive and robust Health and Safety culture.

This policy applies to all staff, students, parents, contractors, volunteers, and visitors.

3. STATEMENT OF COMMITTEMENT

Mentone Girls' Grammar is committed to providing a healthy and safe environment for staff, students, contractors, and visitors. This will be achieved through strong health and safety leadership, safe and healthy behaviour, safe workplace environment and continual improvement to our health, wellbeing, and safety program.

The School regards health and safety of staff, students, contractors, and visitors with the utmost importance and as such, is committed to:

- Providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant health and safety legislation, codes of practice and other requirements.
- Providing and maintaining safe plant and equipment, safe systems, and a safe environment.
- Establishing procedures and controls regarding the safe use, handling, storage and transport of chemicals (such as dangerous goods and other harmful materials);

- Maintain the workplace in a safe, secure, and sound condition and provide adequate facilities.
- Providing the required training, instructions, information and supervision to staff and contractors so that they can work safely and without a risk to health. Providing new staff with health and safety information as part of their induction and when commencing a new activity or task.
- Encouraging a behaviour of accurately recording, reporting, and investigating all workplace incidents.
- Developing and implementing measurable objectives and targets to promote continual improvement in health, wellbeing, and safety.
- Effectively consulting and communicating with our people to minimise risk associated with workplace hazards to eliminate injury and illness.
- Ensure staff, students, contractors, and visitors are supported by the Health and Safety Committee and appointed Health and Safety Representative/s.
- Ensure a system exists for rehabilitation and return to work of employees.
- Monitoring and evaluating our health, wellbeing and safety compliance and performance through regular reviews.

4. DUTIES OF EMPLOYERS

Section 22 of the OHS Act 2004 imposes duties on the people who control risks in the workplace. The Act requires employers to provide a healthy and safe working environment for their employees so far as is reasonably practicable.

This means that any risks must be eliminated, and those risks which cannot be eliminated must be reduced and controlled so far as is reasonably practicable.

5.1 Employer Definition

A person or organisation who employs one or more other persons under contracts of employment or contracts of training. In this case the employer is Mentone Girls' Grammar School.

5. DUTIES OF EMPLOYEES

Under Section 25 of the OHS Act 2004, all employees must:

- take reasonable care for his or her own health and safety.
- take reasonable care for the health and safety of others who may be affected by their actions or omissions at a workplace.
- not intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided at the workplace in the interests of health and safety or welfare.
- co-operate with the employer with respect to any action taken by the employer to comply with a requirement imposed by or under the OHS Act and regulations.

5.1 Employee Definition

Means a person employed under a contract of employment or contract of training. (s5 OHS Act 2004).

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

Health and Safety is everyone's responsibility.

At Mentone Girls' Grammar all members of the Mentone Girls' Grammar School Council, members of School Governance Committees, staff, contractors and visitors, have a shared responsibility for contributing to the health, wellbeing and safety culture, Specific responsibilities include:

6.1 School Council

Each member of the Mentone Girls' Grammar School Council is required to ensure that appropriate resources are made available to allow Mentone Girls' Grammar School's Health and Safety Policy to be effectively implemented within the School and are responsible for holding the Principal and Strategic Management Team accountable for effective implementation.

6.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible, and will be accountable for, taking all practical measures to ensure that this Health and Safety Policy is implemented effectively and that a strong and sustainable health, wellbeing and safety culture is maintained within the School.

6.3 Staff Members

Staff are in the first instance, responsible for their own health and safety and for those working around them.

All staff are required to be familiar with the content of our Health and Safety Policy and Program. The Policy is included in all Staff induction/ welcome packs which is provided upon their commencement with the School. It is everyone's responsibility to raise any concerns they may have relating to health and safety issues or hazards, participate in hazard identification, risk assessments, control planning and training.

In addition, staff should:

- Make proper use of all safety devices and personal protective equipment,
- Participate in inspections and cooperate with the Health and Safety Committee members with any inspection, accident investigation and assist with implementation of appropriate controls; and
- Follow safe work procedures.

6.4 Contractors

All contractors (service providers) engaged by the School are responsible for contributing to the health and safety in the work environment which includes being familiar with our Health and Safety Policy. This policy will be provided to all Contractors as part of their induction with the School.

The School may include this requirement in written agreements between it and the contractor.

The contractor should:

- prepare Job Safety Analysis, Safe Work Statement or Safe Operating Procedures before commencing work.
- report hazards promptly to the School.
- wear appropriate personal protective equipment; and
- rectify hazards that are within the control of the contractor

4.5 Visitors

All visitors to the School, including parents and guardians, are expected to:

- take reasonable care for their own health and safety;
- take reasonable care that their acts or omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of other persons; and
- comply, so far as is reasonably able with any reasonable instructions given to enable the school to comply with their health and safety obligations.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT APPROACH

Health and safety issues can relate to a variety of topics in the workplace, from identifying workplace hazards or breaches to introducing new equipment or work processes.

As with any other issue that must be managed in the complex school environment, OHS risks, incidents and hazards are regularly monitored and evaluated.

Risk Management is a key aspect of the School's Health and Safety control management program.

The School manages Health and Safety risks in the Assurance System and employs several risk strategies to controls OHS risks and identified hazards:

- Risk Mitigation
- Risk Acceptance
- Risk Transference
- Risk Avoidance

7.1 Analysis

In addition to regular workplace inspections, monthly assessments of the School's Risk and Incident registers enable the School to continuously analyse and improve its practices. The follow indicators are used to assist in this analysis:

- the number of injuries, illnesses, near misses, sick days because of an injury and WorkSafe claims,
- where most injuries are coming from (Student or staff),
- what activities seem to be causing most incidents,
- issues raised by the WHS committee,
- issues raised by any WorkSafe or internal inspections.

7.2 Monitoring Reports

The Risk and Compliance manager provides the following management committees with Health and Safety reports:

7.2.1 FGRM

A monthly report to the Finance Governance and Risk Management (FGRM). The FGRM is a subcommittee of the School council. Information regarding Health and Safety Incidents and Risks are provided to this committee for review and discussion.

7.2.2 Risk Management Committee

The Risk Management committee reviews all incidents and risks on a quarterly basis.

7.2.3 SMT

The Strategic Management Team reviews Health and Safety Incidents on a fortnightly basis to ensure trends indicating Hazards have been identified and addressed.

7.2.4 WHS Committee

The Work Health and Safety committee review all Incidents reported within the school. These incidents are reviewed to further identify trends and potential controls to prevent further risks and hazards developing around the School.

Each Designated Work representative (HSR) is then able to communicate this information to their Designated Work Group and create awareness of certain risks and what compliance is expected of staff to minimize the risk of potential injuries in the workplace.

8. COMMON HEALTH AND SAFETY RISKS IN SCHOOLS

The most common types of injuries and illnesses in schools can be summarised as psychological injuries and illnesses, and injuries resulting from manual handling and slips, trips, and falls.

As such, the School has the following policies that address these common risks:

Hazard	Description	Policy
Manual Handling	<p>Manual handling means using the body to exert force to handle, support or restrain any object, including people.</p> <p>It includes lifting, pushing, pulling, holding, lowering, throwing, carrying, typing, cleaning, and using tools.</p> <p>The term is not limited to handling heavy objects. Stacking photocopying paper on a shelf, carrying a laptop computer, moving sporting equipment, assisting, or restraining a student with special needs, moving maintenance equipment in the school grounds, and even using a keyboard are all examples of manual handling.</p>	Manual Handling Policy
Working at Heights	<p>Many workplace accidents can occur as a result of falling from heights, dropping items from heights which hits a person below, falling into openings, or unstable surfaces breaking.</p> <p>This hazard differs from Slips and Trips as falling from heights usually involves a fall from one level to another whereas a slip or a trip involves falling over at the same level.</p>	Working from Heights Policy

<p>Psychological and physical health/ Wellbeing</p>	<p>Risks to psychological and physical health can result from work-related stress, violence, harassment, and bullying.</p> <p>It is important to focus attention on the risk factors that can be addressed at the school level. If there are issues that cannot be raised or dealt with at the school level, they should be referred for resolution to the appropriate level of management outside the school.</p> <p>Some of the risk factors in the school environment that may lead to harm include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of control over workload and work demands (such as pressure to work long hours and timetabling issues) • challenging behaviour of students, parents, or colleagues • bullying and workplace violence • poor leadership skills • poor communication • lack of clarity around roles, processes, and procedures • perceptions that processes, such as promotion processes, are not procedurally fair • concerns about career development, social status and pay, and • conflicting demands of home and school • psychological distress • emotional exhaustion • physical health symptoms • taking frequent sick leave • a sense of low morale and a low level of engagement with work • deteriorating work performance, and • an intention to resign from work. 	<p>Please refer to the HR Policies for Staff policies.</p> <p>Student Wellbeing Policy</p> <p>Student Welfare and Duty of Care Policies.</p>
<p>Slips, Trips and Falls</p>	<p>Slips, trips, and falls in the school environment can result in a wide range of injuries, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fractures of the forearm and wrist from breaking a fall, falling on uneven ground, slipping on wet floors or being knocked over. • muscle stress from kneeling, slipping on wet floors, tripping on uneven ground or damaged flooring. • traumatic joint or muscle injury from falling during physical activity, slipping on wet or uneven surfaces, or tripping over objects. <p>It is important to avoid Human factors such as wearing inappropriate footwear, students and staff rushing about, carrying large objects, becoming distracted while walking (for example using a mobile phone or holding a hot drink whilst rushing around).</p>	<p>Slips and Trips Policy</p>
<p>Hazardous Substances and dangerous goods</p>	<p>Hazardous substances are substances that have the potential harm human health. In the school environment they include chemicals used in science rooms, technology rooms, art rooms and swimming pools, as well as cleaning agents.</p> <p>Any risk associated with hazardous substances must so far as is reasonably practicable be eliminated.</p>	<p>Hazardous Substances Policy</p> <p>Chemical Spills Policy</p>
<p>Plant and Equipment</p>	<p>Plant and equipment in the technology rooms, science rooms, maintenance sheds, facility sheds and other parts of the school pose significant risks of injury (such as open wounds, amputations, lacerations, and burns).</p> <p>Wherever it is reasonably practicable, plant and equipment that has a lower level of risk must be used.</p>	<p>Asset Management Policy</p>

School Excursions and Camps	<p>The obligation to protect the health and safety of staff and students extends to activities away from school, such as school excursions and camps. An assessment of the risks that may arise from any proposed excursion or camp should be prepared well in advance. The School cannot rely only on the risk assessment of the provider.</p> <p>The assessment should cover any foreseeable hazards and risks and set out the ways in which the risks will be managed (including the supervision arrangements).</p>	Excursion Management Policy and Procedural Manual
Infectious Diseases	<p>Schools have a legal responsibility to help manage infectious diseases in their facilities and have an important role to play in supporting prevention and control of disease transmission.</p> <p>We need to ensure that Staff and Students are safe and protected from Diseases that could cause harm to the School Community.</p>	<p>Infectious Diseases Policy</p> <p>Pandemic and Epidemic Policy</p>
Classroom Safety	<p>Classrooms, labs and Art rooms may present a variety of safety risks, such as faulty furniture and slip and trip hazards, each of which have the capacity to pose a risk to the health and safety of students, teachers, other workers, and visitors.</p> <p>We to ensure, as reasonably practicable, that students and staff are safe in their classrooms. The School has developed a series of policies and inspection procedures to ensure that our classrooms are safe as possible.</p>	Classroom Safety Policy
Workstations	<p>Poor workstation ergonomics contributes to office and desk bound musculoskeletal injuries in the workplace. The School is conscious of this and has developed a WHS Guide on ergonomic workstations and classroom safety.</p>	WHS Guide – Ergonomic Workstation set up
Food Preparation and Handling	<p>Food preparation and handling can pose several safety hazards.</p> <p>If food is not handled, prepared, and stored correctly biological organisms may give rise to food borne illness.</p> <p>Equipment within kitchens can also expose staff and students to safety hazards such as cuts, burns, electrocution, and exposure to hazardous substances.</p>	Food Preparation and Handling Policy

9. WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

Whilst the OHS Act 2004 does not impose any responsibility or duty on a HSR, the Act recognises the important role that Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) play in representing the health and safety interests of employees. The HSR role is a voluntary one that is supported by the School to ensure health and safe outcomes are achieved in the School.

While employers have the duty to provide a safe workplace, HSRs play an important role in helping to keep the School workplace safe. HSRs can facilitate communication and consultation and provide a crucial link between Management and staff.

Each area of the school (Designated Work Groups) requires a HSR to represent them at the Work Health and Safety Committee. Staff who become HSRs will not be disadvantaged for taking on this role.

9.1 HSR Responsibilities

The role of a HSR is one of representation – not one of responsibility for meeting health and safety obligations.

Each non-management member of the WHS committee is considered a HSR. However, all committee members are required to:

- attend WHS committee meetings
- participate in any relevant WHS training

- represent their DWG in health and safety communication and consultation processes
- assist in resolving health and safety issues
- participate in workplace inspections
- be present (when required) at interviews concerning health and safety matters between their DWG members and employer or inspector (if they consent to this)
- identify and report hazards regarding their DWG and within the School to the WHS committee to discuss and resolve
- assist in complying with the requirements of any OHS legal notices

A HSR Role outline can be found on the Risk and Compliance m-Connect page under the WHS section.

9.2 Nominations and Applications

To become a HSR please email your request to join with details about the Designated Work Group (DWG) you wish to represent to the Risk and Compliance Manager by clicking [here](#).

The Risk and Compliance Manager in conjunction with the Committee Secretary will review the request to determine if the DWG that the HSR is intending to represent already has a HSR and a deputy HSR. If not, the applicant will be invited to attend the next meeting to observe and determine if they would like to still become a member of the WHS committee.

Where there are more than 1 applicant for a particular DWG the WHS Committee will call an election to be held by the DWG to select their representative.

9.2.1 No Nominations

If no nominations for HSRs are received, the Work Health and Safety committee will:

- record that no nominations were received
- communicate to all employees that no nominations were received
- schedule another call for nominations in twelve months, or within an agreed time frame
- the non-management WHS committee members become the temporary HSRs until there are nominees for a particular DWG.

In the absence of a HSR, the WHS Committee will ensure that:

- information about alternative avenues of support is provided to all employees (e.g. WorkSafe, EAP, OHS Advisory Service etc.)
- employees are fully aware of how to report incidents, hazards and WHS issues/concerns,
- internal communication processes are in place, and utilised, in relation to the ongoing identification and management of hazards and risks and their associated controls.

9.3 Election of HSRs

HSR elections will occur:

- after the establishment or change to a DWG
- when a HSR ceases to hold office
- when the term of office expires

- when there is more than one candidate for each HSR position.

To be eligible for election as a HSR for a DWG, the employee must be a member of the DWG and not have been previously disqualified. All members of the DWG are entitled to nominate themselves and to vote and may determine how an election is to be conducted.

If there is more than one DWG in the workplace, separate elections should be held to elect one or more HSRs for each DWG.

The Work Health and Safety Officer will communicate the available HSR positions to staff and call for an election where required.

An election process flow chart can be found in appendix I.

9.4 Designated Work Groups (DWG)

A DWG is a group of employees that perform similar jobs or have similar occupational health and safety concerns. There can be more than one DWG in a workplace.

The Work Health and Safety Committee have identified two DWG within the School:

- Academic and Support Staff (Anyone on an Enterprise Agreement)
- Professional Support Staff

10. WORKPLACE INSPECTIONS

The School will conduct workplace inspections annually. Each section of the School has been allocated a specific inspection checklist that the WHS committee will inspect and report on. Any hazards identified will be reported to the SMT for remedial action.

These inspections are co-ordinated by the Risk and Compliance Manager. A schedule of inspections will be presented the WHS Committee at the first meeting of each school year for approval.

10.1 Types of Inspections

Workplace inspections can take various forms:

- regular physical inspections of the School
- regular inspections of particular activities or processes
- specific inspections and investigations arising from complaints, incidents, or a near miss
- inspections before and following substantial facility, building or grounds changes within the School
- inspections initiated by WorkSafe

There are Workplace Inspection checklists developed for each section of the School. These are housed in Assurance.

A copy of the WHS Workplace Inspection Program can be found in the Risk and Compliance m-Connect page.

11. PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

When hazards in the workplace can't be eliminated or reduced by other risk controls, employers must provide personal protective equipment and clothing (PPE). Where PPE is provided, individuals must use it as instructed.

12. TRAINING AND AWARENESS

Staff will be provided with information and training so that they can work safely and without risks to health. This information and training will cover:

- hazards and risks in the school environment,
- the consultation and representation arrangements in the school, ie WHS committee and membership
- and the measures that are in place to control risks.

Training and awareness information will be provided annually at staff days throughout the School year.

10.1 New Staff

All new staff will be provided with a copy of this policy in their Staff Handbook during their induction.

The HSRs and WHS committee members will also be advised to new employees at this induction.

10.3 Specialist Training

In addition to the general training provided, staff in specific roles within the School may require additional specialist training in certain areas to ensure health and safety is maintained within the School.

Training such as: first aid, Work Health and Safety representatives, playground inspection and assessments, anaphylaxis, auto-injector training are all examples of specialist training that may be required of staff in specific roles.

10.4 Posters

Throughout the School, there are numerous posters to alert staff and students to hazards and risks. These posters assist our students and staff to identify specific hazards and how to avoid or control them.

The HSRs will be responsible for ensuring the latest posters are in place around the School. Where these are found to be out of date, the HSRs will contact the WHS Officer to organise replacements.

11.5 Dedicated WHS Board

The Oak staff room has a dedicated Health and Safety board where WHS committee minutes and other relevant health and safety information is available. Staff should check this board regularly.

11.6 m-Connect

The WHS committee minutes and other Health and Safety news can be found in the Risk and Compliance m-Connect page.

13. INCIDENTS AND HAZARDS

Staff and students are encouraged to lodge a workplace incident through the online incident form that is accessed through the Policy Management Portal or the incident lodgement button on the Risk management page in m-Connect. These must be **reported within 24 hours** of any incident occurring or hazard identified. This includes when on camp and excursions.

13.1 Reporting

Incident and Hazards should be reported through the Assurance system forms. These can be accessed from the Risk and Compliance m-Connect page. Staff on excursions and camps can access this form through the mobile app m-Connect form.

Hazards that require immediate attention should be logged through the maintenance system in m-Connect so the property team can attend to it immediately.

Incident reports are monitored by the Risk and Compliance Manager. All Incidents are reported to the SMT, FGRM and WHS committee on a regular basis by the Risk and Compliance Manager.

13.2 Immediate Health and Safety Threat

If a workplace issue presents an immediate threat to anyone's health and safety, then under section 74 of the OHS 2004 Act, following consultation between management, the Risk and Compliance Manager, the DWG HSR (whose area is affected), the School Principal or the WHS Committee Chair, the School may issue a direction to cease work immediately.

If an employee or student dies or suffers a specified serious injury, the School must immediately notify **WorkSafe** by **telephone on 13 23 60**. The School Principal will either make this call or delegate this to a senior member of the SMT and issue a communication to the appropriate stakeholders.

14. WORKSAFE

WorkSafe inspectors work with employers and others in workplaces to keep Victorian workers safe. They might come into our School because someone has reported unsafe working conditions, or after an incident.

13.1 WorkSafe Inspectors

When a WorkSafe inspector enters the School, they will tell the School Principal and any health and safety representatives, why they are there. Section 98 the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (OHS Act) empowers an inspector to enter a place that the inspector reasonably believes is a workplace at any time during working hours.

WorkSafe inspectors can enter the School during working hours, or when there is an immediate risk to the health or safety of a person. They must carry official WorkSafe identification and produce it for inspection.

In addition, it is reasonable to request to see their WWCC if they are entering the School. The WWCC Check must follow the verification process outlined in the School's Working With Children Policy. If they do not have a WWCC they must be always accompanied through the school.

It is an offence to refuse or fail, without reasonable excuse, to provide such assistance as the inspector may reasonably require for the performance of his or her functions or exercise of his or her powers under the OHS 2004 Act or OHS Regulations.

The School will co-operate with a WorkSafe inspector's reasonable requests for information and assistance.

Inspectors have the right to:

- ask the Principal, management, staff, or other people questions
- take photographs, recordings, and measurements
- take items away with them for examination, testing or for use as evidence
- take samples of substances or objects
- ask to see School documents, make copies, or take the documents
- call in other people to assist them, including technical or scientific experts, interpreters, or police officers.

13.2 Incident Notification to WorkSafe

Under Part 5 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 employers and self-employed persons have a duty to notify WorkSafe of a notifiable incident which has occurred at a workplace under the employers or self-

employed persons management or control. This duty extends to incidents involving students, teachers, and members of the public.

The Risk and Compliance Manager will notify WorkSafe for all incidents at the School.

Notification is required where an incident at the School results in:

- death, or
- serious injury, or
- exposure of a person in the immediate vicinity to an immediate health or safety risk.

13.2.1 Serious Injuries

Serious injuries include, but are not limited to, incidents that result in a person requiring:

- Medical treatment within 48 hours of exposure to a substance
- Immediate treatment as an in-patient in a hospital (treatment required without delay)
- Immediate medical treatment for:
 - amputation
 - serious head injury - scalping, penetrating object, skull fracture, loss of consciousness, chemical or hot metal burn, significant loss of blood
 - serious eye injury - loss of sight, penetrating object, chemical or metal hot burn
 - separation of skin from underlying tissue - degloving or scalping
 - electric shock
 - spinal injury - spinal fracture with or without any limb weakness or paralysis
 - loss of bodily function - loss of consciousness, loss of movement of a limb or a loss of the sense of smell, taste, sight or hearing or loss of function of an internal organ.
 - serious lacerations - for example one or more deep and/or extensive cuts, tears or wounds to the flesh or tissue.

15. RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

The following documents relate to this policy:

- Child Protection Policy
- Complaints Resolution Policy
- Return to Work Policy
- Student Duty of Care Policy and Procedural Manual
- Enrolment Agreement Terms and Conditions
- Anaphylaxis and Asthma Policies
- Incident Management Policy
- Critical Incident Management Manual
- Model Code of Practice: How to manage work health and safety risks

16. DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

Approved: SMT July 2019

Next Review required: July 2021

APPENDIX

I. HSR Election Process Flow Chart

