

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

PURPOSE

This policy will provide guidelines and procedures to ensure that all people who attend the premises of Melbourne Montessori School, including employees, children, parents/guardians, students, volunteers, contractors and visitors, are provided with a safe and healthy environment.

Melbourne Montessori School has a moral and legal responsibility to provide a safe and healthy environment for employees, children, parents/guardians, students, volunteers, contractors and visitors. This policy reflects the importance Melbourne Montessori School places on the wellbeing of employees, children, parents/guardians, students, volunteers, contractors and visitors, by endeavouring to protect their health, safety and welfare, and integrating this commitment into all of its activities.

Melbourne Montessori School is committed to ensuring that:

- the management group, staff and volunteers are aware of their health and safety responsibilities as employers, employees and volunteers
- systematic identification, assessment and control of hazards is undertaken at the School
- effective communication and consultation form a fundamental part of the management process to encourage innovative ways of reducing risk in the School environment
- training is provided to assist staff to identify health and safety hazards which, when addressed, will lead to safer work practices at the School
- it fulfils its obligations under current and future laws (in particular, the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*), and that all relevant codes of practice are adopted and accepted as a minimum standard.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisors, Responsible Persons in day-to-day charge, educators, staff, children, parents/guardians, students on placement, volunteers, contractors and visitors attending the programs and activities of Melbourne Montessori School.

1. Business Manager
2. Nominated Supervisor
3. Teachers
4. Students on placements, volunteers, contractors and parents/guardians

The legal duties of an **employer** under the OHS Act are:

- to provide and maintain a workplace that is safe and without risk to the health of employees. This responsibility extends to contractors for routine tasks over which the employer has management. For contractors completing non-routine tasks, the employer must ensure that the School's daily operations and layout do not pose unreasonable risks
- to ensure other individuals, such as families and visitors, are not exposed to health and safety risks arising from the organisation's activities
- to consult with employees about OHS matters that will, or will likely, affect employees directly, including identifying hazards and assessing risks, and making decisions about risk control measures.

The OHS Act places the responsibility on **employees** for:

- taking care of their own safety and the safety of others who may be affected by their actions
- cooperating with reasonable OHS actions taken by the employer, including following guidelines, attending OHS-related training, reporting incidents, cooperating with OHS investigations, encouraging good OHS practice with fellow employees and others at the School, and assisting the employer with conducting OHS inspections during operating hours
- not interfering with safety equipment provided at the School, such as fire extinguishers.

Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Accident Compensation Act 1985*, as amended 2007
- *AS/NZS 4804:2001 and 4801:2001 Occupational health and safety systems*
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety
 - Standard 2.3: Each child is protected
 - Element 2.3.1: Children are adequately supervised at all times
 - Element 2.3.2: Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 3: Physical Environment
 - Standard 3.1: The design and location of the premises is appropriate for the operation of a School
 - Element 3.1.1: Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, furniture, equipment, facilities and resources are suitable for their purpose
 - Element 3.1.2: Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 7: Leadership and Service Management
 - Standard 7.1: Effective leadership promotes a positive organisational culture and builds a professional learning community
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007*

DEFINITIONS

Duty of care: A common law concept that refers to the responsibilities of organisations to provide people with an adequate level of protection against harm and all reasonable foreseeable risk of injury. In the context of this policy, duty of care refers to the responsibility of schools to provide children, staff, students, volunteers, contractors and anyone visiting the School with an adequate level of care and protection against reasonable foreseeable harm and injury.

Hazard: An element with the potential to cause death, injury, illness or disease.

Hazard identification: A process that involves identifying all foreseeable hazards in the workplace and understanding the possible harm that each hazard may cause.

Hazard management: A structured process of hazard identification, risk assessment and control, aimed at providing safe and healthy conditions for employees, contractors and visitors while on the premises of Melbourne Montessori School or while engaged in activities endorsed by Melbourne Montessori School.

Harm: Includes death, or injury, illness (physical or psychological) or disease that may be suffered by a person as a consequence of exposure to a hazard.

Material safety data sheet: Provides employees and emergency personnel with safety procedures for working with toxic or dangerous materials. The data sheet includes all relevant information about the material such as physical properties (e.g. melting/boiling point, toxicity and reactivity), health effects, first aid requirements and safe handling procedures (e.g. personal protective equipment, safe storage/disposal and management of spills).

OH&S Committee: A committee that facilitates cooperation between an employer and employees in instigating, developing and carrying out measures designed to ensure the health and safety of employees in the workplace.

Risk: The chance (likelihood) that a hazard will cause harm to individuals.

Risk assessment: A process for developing knowledge/understanding about hazards and risks so that sound decisions can be made about the control of hazards. Risk assessments assist in determining:

- what levels of harm can occur
- how harm can occur
- the likelihood that harm will occur.

Risk control: A measure, work process or system that eliminates an OHS hazard or risk, or if this is not possible, reduces the risk so far as is reasonably practicable.

PROCEDURES

1. THE BUSINESS MANAGER and Approved Provider (Grange Road Campus only) is responsible for:

- 1.1 Once per month, the Business Manager and maintenance person will inspect the whole school environment with the purpose of providing and maintaining a work environment that is safe and without risks to health (OHS Act: Section 21). This includes inspecting:
- indoor and outdoor environments
 - all equipment, including emergency equipment
 - playgrounds and fixed equipment in outdoor environments
 - cleaning the School
 - garden and tree maintenance
 - pest control;
- 1.2 Ensuring that:
- there are safe systems of work
 - all plant and equipment provided for use by staff, including appliances and tools etc., are safe and meet relevant safety standards
 - substances, and plant and equipment, are used, handled, and stored safely
 - material safety data sheets are supplied for all chemicals kept and/or used at the School (refer to www.ohsinecschools.org.au)
 - there are adequate welfare facilities e.g. first aid facilities etc.
 - there is regular information, instruction, training and supervision for employees
 - ensuring there is a systematic risk management approach (refer to www.ohsinecschools.org.au) to the management of workplace hazards. This includes ensuring that:

1	URGENT	To be addressed within 24 Hours
2	LOW RISK	To be completed within 14 Days
3	BENEFICIAL	Low Priority
 - a Risk Register is maintained and speed of response determined by the Business Manager and maintenance person and categorised as follows:

1	URGENT	To be addressed within 24 Hours
2	LOW RISK	To be completed within 14 Days
3	BENEFICIAL	Low Priority
 - so that all hazards and risks to health and safety are identified, assessed and eliminated or, if it is not possible to remove the hazard/risk completely, effectively controlled
 - measures employed to eliminate/control hazards and risks to health and safety are monitored and evaluated regularly;
- 1.3 protecting other individuals from risks arising from the School's activities, including holding a working bee etc., or any activity that is ancillary to the operation of the School e.g. contractors cleaning the premises after hours (OHS Act: Section 23);
- 1.4 developing procedures to guide the safe use of harmful substances, such as chemicals, in the workplace;
- 1.5 implementing/practising emergency fire drills and containment procedures; identifying and providing appropriate resources, induction and training to assist educators, staff, contractors, visitors, volunteers and students to implement this policy;
- 1.6 consulting the OH&S Committee at least once per term to address matters including:
- identification of hazards
 - making decisions on how to manage and control health and safety risks
 - making decisions on health and safety procedures
 - proposed changes at the School that may impact on health and safety

- fire drill or containment practice
 - review of the policy where necessary;
- 1.7 notifying WorkSafe Victoria about serious workplace incidents, and preserving the site of an incident (OHS Act: Sections 38–39);
 - 1.8 holding appropriate licenses, registrations and permits, where required by the OHS Act;
 - 1.9 attempting to resolve OHS issues with employees or their representatives within a reasonable timeframe;
 - 1.10 allowing access to, and cooperating with, an authorised representative of a staff member who is acting within his/her powers under the OHS Act;
 - 1.11 displaying this policy in a prominent location at the School premises;
 - 1.12 ensuring that OH&S accountability is included in all position descriptions;
 - 1.13 allocating adequate resources to implement this policy;
 - 1.14 reporting to the Board on a monthly basis.

2. THE NOMINATED SUPERVISOR is responsible for:

- 2.1 ensuring that excursions are booked with current legislation on child restraints in vehicles if transporting children;
- 2.2 facilitating the implementation of emergency, fire and containment practice and procedures;
- 2.3 Ensuring daily, weekly or monthly safety checks are carried out to ensure reasonable measures are taken to ensure the safety of students and staff
- 2.4 keeping up to date and complying with any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy.
- 2.5 informing the Approved Provider and School of potential risks and hazards

3. TEACHERS are responsible for:

- 3.1 taking care of their own safety and the safety of others who may be affected by their actions;
- 3.2 co-operating with reasonable OH&S actions taken by the Business Manager, including:
 - 3.2.1 following OH&S rules and guidelines,
 - 3.2.2 helping to ensure housekeeping is of the standard set out in School policies,
 - 3.2.3 attending OH&S training as required,
 - 3.2.4 reporting OH&S incidents,
 - 3.2.5 reporting potential risks and hazards to the business manager or Nominated Supervisor (Grange Road Campus only)
 - 3.2.6 cooperating with OH&S investigations,
 - 3.2.7 encouraging good OH&S practices with fellow employees and others attending the School,
 - 3.2.8 assisting the Business Manager, Approved Provider or nominated Supervisor with tasks relating to OH & S, such as conducting OH&S inspections during working hours,
 - 3.2.9 not interfering with safety equipment provided by the Business Manager or the Administration staff,
 - 3.2.10 practising emergency, fire and containment procedures,
 - 3.2.11 ensuring the physical environment at the School is safe, secure and free from hazards for children,
 - 3.2.12 maintaining a clean environment daily, and removing tripping/slipping hazards as soon as these become apparent,
 - 3.2.13 helping with the implementation and review of this policy in consultation with the Principal, Business Manager, Nominated Supervisors, all staff, contractors and parents/guardians.

4. STUDENTS on placements, VOLUNTEERS, CONTRACTORS and PARENTS/GUARDIANS at the School are responsible for:

- 4.1 being familiar with this policy
- 4.2 cooperating with reasonable OH&S rules implemented by the School and offsite campus
- 4.3 not acting recklessly and/or placing the health and safety of other adults or children at the School at risk.

SOURCES:

Getting into the Act, WorkSafe Victoria

Getting help to improve health and safety, WorkSafe Victoria

Guide to the OHS Act 2004, WorkSafe Victoria

Managing safety in your workplace, WorkSafe Victoria

OHS in Early Childhood Services (KPV): www.ohsinecschools.org.au

WorkSafe Victoria: www.worksafe.vic.gov.au

REVIEWED 2013, 2016, 2021

Approved by the Board

Next review: 2023

LINKED WITH:

Health and Wellbeing Policy
Risk Management Policy