

Occupational Health and Safety Policy

To outline our commitment to safeguarding the health, safety and welfare of all people who interact with the organisation and discharging our workplace health and safety obligations.

Purpose:

To comply with the Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004 (Vic), Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 (Vic), Food Act 1984 (Vic), Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013, Dangerous Goods (Storage and Handling) Regulations 2012 (Vic). and to comply with VRQA Minimum Standards and Requirements for School Registration

Scope:

School Coordinator (Principal), OHS Grounds Committee, teachers (including casual relief staff), volunteers, parents and students

Implemented by:

School Coordinator (Principal), Teachers

Approved by:

Parent Group, LC Board

Communicated via:

School website, staff induction, enrolment agreement, Staff and Parent Group meetings

Reviewed:

Every two years or as legislative changes or improvements are identified

Definitions and Key Terms

In this policy, '**workplace**' means places where individuals undertake work in connection with our school, whether on-site or off-site. Off-site examples include but are not limited to the following examples, when individuals are directed to undertake duties: work-related conferences and training, school excursions and camps, school organized events, and an individuals home.



For the purpose of this policy, employees and volunteers and any directly engaged consultants or service providers will be referred to as **'staff'** or **'staff members'**.

Overview

Learning Co-operative:

- values its people and recognises that their health, safety and wellbeing is integral to achieving the school's vision and mission
- is legally and morally committed to providing employees, students, volunteers, contractors and visitors with a healthy and safe working and learning environment
- will so far as is reasonably practicable, take action to improve and promote Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) to prevent workplace injuries and illnesses

In the promotion of a healthy and safe workplace, the School will:

- Consult with staff, so far as reasonably practicable, on OHS decisions and changes that affect their workplace
- identify and reduce OHS risks through a documented process of hazard identification, assessment, implementation and review of controls
- comply with relevant legislation, procedures and guidelines relating to OHS
- provide clear accountabilities and responsibilities for staff members across the organization ensuring that workers understand their rights and responsibilities
- strengthen leadership capability and accountability for OHS through clear, up-to-date policies, procedures and professional development in the area of OHS
- actively support the physical and psychological wellbeing of staff by providing support to access relevant external supports and services and to utilise personal leave and annual leave
- monitor, respond and report on OHS performance outcomes to drive continuous improvement
- allocate adequate resources to maintain a healthy, safe and supportive workplace environment
- provide appropriate OHS information and training for staff in order to provide a safe and supportive workplace and to meet the school's legislative obligations, report and investigate incidents where appropriate, and act to prevent re-occurrence.

In the promotion of a healthy and safe workplace, employees, visitors, volunteers and contractors are required to:



- take reasonable care for their own OHS and act in a manner that does not | risk
- actively contribute to identifying, reporting and reducing OHS hazards and risks
- cooperate with the school on OHS matters including following procedures and actively participating in consultation and training as deemed appropriate by the school.

Implementation Guidelines

Responsibilities

Various positions within the school have specific duties and responsibilities in order to ensure the school meets its obligation to provide and maintain a work environment that is safe and without harm to health and wellbeing.

The Board shall:

- ensure policies are created, adopted and reviewed regularly to ensure ongoing and measurable improvement in OHS performance
- be aware that all Board Members hold a non-delegable duty to ensure that the school complies with the Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004 (Vic).
- ensure the Coordinator, OHS Grounds Committee and HR Committee implement this policy and all associated procedures and activities

The Coordinator shall:

- in conjunction with the relevant committees implement and fulfill the School's responsibilities under all relevant legislation and regulations
- in conjunction with the relevant committees be responsible for eliminating or reducing risks so far as is reasonably practicable
- ensure that all specific policies operating within the school, are revised periodically or as required, and are consistent with the school's health, safety and wellbeing objectives
- ensure there is adequate procedures in place so that visitors are informed of their OHS responsibilities
- ensure students are provided with age appropriate OHS information to allow them to take reasonable care for their own safety and the safety of others and so that they understand how to report hazards or incidents
- be responsible for notifying WorkSafe Victoria of any notifiable incidents. This must be done immediately after becoming aware that an incident has occurred
- notify the school's insurer in a timely manner of all relevant accidents and injuries
- ensure there are processes in place to achieve all the requirements in this policy
- be aware that they have a non-delegable duty to ensure that the school complies with the Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004 (Vic).



- ensure that there is regular consultation between the school and staff members such as keeping OHS a regular agenda item at staff meetings and seeking input to relevant policies and procedures

The OHS Grounds Committee shall:

- ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable to do so, that Contractors are suitably qualified for the work they are to undertake, that they use systems of work that are safe and in which there has been adequate instruction, training and supervision, and carry out their work using proper and safe plant and equipment
- ensure all buildings, facilities, equipment and resources used, purchased or acquired by the school are fit for purpose and so far as reasonably practicable without hazards or risks
- ensure adequate risk control measures for any individual undertaking work at height on site at or above two (2m) metres as per Worksafe Victoria (or similar) guidelines
- review the Key Hazard Areas at least once annually
- review and update at least annually the Key Hazards relevant to the school's context
- ensure incidents, injuries and near misses are reported on the Hazard & Incident Report Form, and reviewed annually for trends or improvements

The HR Committee shall:

- provide adequate information, training and supervision for staff members so they are aware of their OHS responsibilities and can do their work safely and without risks to health, safety and wellbeing
- review the relevant HR Key Hazard Areas at least once annually, including but not limited to psychosocial hazards and risks

All Staff Members shall:

- take reasonable care for their own health and safety, as well as the health and safety of other people who may be affected by their work, such as students, visitors and other employees.
- eliminate and reduce risks so far as is reasonably practicable
- cooperate with the school's efforts to comply with its legal duties
- not willfully interfere with or misuse items or facilities provided
- follow all lawful and reasonable workplace health and safety instructions and school policies and procedures
- report potential hazards, injuries, near-misses and incidents to the OHS Officer on the Hazard & Incident Reporting Form
- consider workplace health and safety in project planning and work activities



Contractors must:

- comply with the school's policies and procedures as a part of their contract and/or services provided
- report any hazards, injuries, incidents or accidents on the Hazard & Incident Report Form
- be suitably experienced to perform tasks
- be in possession of all necessary licenses, permits, registrations and insurance to perform the works safely and in compliance with the appropriate regulations
- undertake the works in a responsible and safe manner
- provide copies of licenses & permits, WorkCover currency certificate and proof of Public Liability Insurance prior to commencing work
- perform a risk assessment prior to starting work to ensure the work place is free of hazards
- notify the Coordinator in writing of their risk control measures if working at heights of two (2) metres or more, prior to commencing work

Failure to comply or observe a direction of the school, will be considered a breach of the contract and sufficient grounds for termination of the contract.

Upon the completion of work the school will inspect the works to ensure that the work is completed and the site is left free from hazards and presents no risk of injury to any person who comes in contact with the site.

Consultation with staff

Learning Co-Operative has a number of opportunities for staff members to provide feedback on OHS, along with a process for involving them in identifying hazards, reporting problems and providing possible solutions to health, safety and wellbeing issues. The school also undertakes a Whole School Training Plan on an annual basis which includes OHS training and refreshers.

Induction of new staff

All new staff at Learning Co-operative will be informed of the relevant Occupational Health and Safety policies of the school through the employee induction process. Staff will be trained in safety procedures and be given a working knowledge and understanding of the commitment of the school and employees of the school to safety and the prevention of accidents in the workplace.



Risk & Hazard Management

A systematic process of evaluation is in place to provide information on which to base plans for improvement, risk mitigation, reduction in the risk factors for accidents and injuries. It is the intention of the school that such a process raises the level of consciousness and sensitivity of all involved to issues of workplace health and safety.

Risk and hazard management requires:

- Conducting an Annual OHS Audit
- OHS to be discussed at weekly staff meetings where staff will be encouraged to raise any concerns or areas for improvement and the Coordinator will present relevant information
- OHS to be included in operational reporting at each Board Meeting
- Key Hazard Area Checklist to be completed at least once annually
- Key Hazards relevant to the school's context are reviewed and updated at least annually
- All incidents, injuries and near misses to be reported on the Hazard & Incident Report Form, and reviewed annually for trends or improvements
- The Board, Coordinator and relevant Committee members to stay up to date with changes in the OHS area that are applicable in the school's context and ensuring policies and procedures are updated as required
- That appropriate insurance cover is in place for the operation of the school's activities.



Flammable Materials

All flammable materials (e.g. fuels, solvents and thinners, alcohols, oil-based paints and resins) that are used, handled or stored at the school shall be managed in such a way as to minimise the risks to health and safety associated with those liquids.

This can be done by following these key requirements:

- Store the lowest practicable quantity of any flammable material
- Ensure flammable liquids are stored in appropriate containers and labelled accurately
- Have a material Safety Data Sheet for all flammable and combustible materials on file

Storage of flammable and combustible liquids that exceed minor quantities (Office: 5 Litres, Laboratories: 10 Litres per 50m² floor area, Workshops: 100 Litres) must be stored in a locked metal cabinet in a well-ventilated area.

Key Potential OH&S Hazards

A hazard is a potential source of physical or psychological harm or injury. The following are considered key potential hazards at Learning Co-operative based on its specific context:

- slips, trips and falls
- manual handling
- dangerous goods, flammable materials and hazardous substances
- electrical
- psychological illnesses and injuries
- contagious illnesses
- environmental
- bullying and harassment
- obstruction of building exits
- driving
- sun damage (ultraviolet UV radiation) and heat illness
- cuts and burns
- bushfire and grassfire
- water related hazards
- vehicle traffic on site

To mitigate the risks associated with these hazards, the school uses a checklist to proactively identify items or situations which may need rectification, training or monitoring. All key hazard areas are reviewed a minimum of once annually.

These checklists do not replace the need for all employees to be aware of their surroundings, notice changes or issues that could give rise to an incident or to work safely.



Annual Audit

An annual audit is conducted by the OHS Grounds Committee and a summary reported to the Board. This involves:

- On site review utilising the Key Hazard Checklist, with a summary of risk control and mitigation plans provided to the Board
- a review of all Hazard & Incident Reports for the last 12 months and a summary provided to the Board
- A review of risk assessments for on and off site activities.

Safe Work Practices

Learning Co-operative seeks guidance from sources such as Worksafe Victoria on working safely and providing a safe workplace. Guidance information on relevant hazards and their solutions is reviewed and implemented for specific activities, such as but not limited to manual handling, using ladders, driving, slips, trips and falls.

Illnesses

Learning Co-operative will follow all mandatory Public Health directives, the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019, and the Victorian Department of Health guidelines on infectious and communicable disease control, exclusion periods and community notifications. The privacy of all staff, students and families will be maintained during any exclusions or notifications.

We will notify all staff and parents if head lice are detected at school.

Staff are to use appropriate Protective Apparel when administering first aid or topical medications.

If a child becomes unwell at school, they will be monitored and (if necessary) isolated appropriately until they can be collected.

Bodily fluids such as blood, urine, faeces and vomit will be treated as potentially contagious and staff will utilize Protective Apparel such as disposable aprons, gloves and masks when supporting students or cleaning where bodily fluids are present.



Accidents and Injuries

Notification - Register of Injuries

If an accident or an injury occurs in Learning Co-operative, the Coordinator must be notified immediately, or as soon as practicable and safe to do so. As soon as possible either the affected person or a responding staff member must complete the Hazard or Incident Report Form. In the event of a larger or more widespread incident or emergency, the Emergency Management Plan should be followed in the first instance.

All accidents or injuries should be recorded in the Register of Injuries, and the Board Chairperson notified within 24 hours for a serious injury.

The Coordinator is responsible for notifying the school's insurer of all relevant accidents and injuries.

Notifiable Incidents

Learning Co-operative is aware of its obligations to immediately notify Worksafe Victoria of any Notifiable Incidents, which are specified as:

- the death of any person; or
- a person requiring medical treatment within 48 hours of exposure to a substance; or
- a person requiring immediate treatment as an in-patient in a hospital; or
- a person requiring immediate medical treatment for:
 - the amputation of any part of his or her body; or
 - a serious head injury; or
 - a serious eye injury; or
 - the separation of his or her skin from underlying tissue (such as de-gloving or scalping); or
 - electric shock; or
 - a spinal injury; or
 - the loss of a bodily function; or
 - serious lacerations.

The Coordinator is responsible for making sure the scene of the incident is not disturbed (beyond what is required to provide first aid and make the area safe) and will complete the initial verbal notification via phone on 13 23 60, following up with the Worksafe Victoria Incident Notification Form within 48 hours.



Accident and Injury Investigation

We have put a system in place for the internal reporting and recording of accidents, injuries, hazards and near-misses.

The Coordinator will ensure that steps are taken to reduce the risk of further injury in the workplace by identifying and as far as reasonably practicable, reducing the risk of subsequent injury or accident of that kind. Confidentiality for the injured staff member will be maintained at all times unless not practical to do so.

Gathering information after an event is important and involves a whole range of people within our school. Incident data when combined with information from inspections, checklists, and interviews will provide valuable insights into health and safety within the school. Such information allows for making informed decisions as to what action can be taken to reduce risks or hazards. All those within the school are required to provide information as requested and will not obstruct or interfere with any investigation.

Injured Staff Members

The Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013 (WIRC Act) addresses what happens when a Victorian worker is injured or killed. It covers:

- insurance
- workers compensation
- claims
- rehabilitation
- return to work
- dispute resolution.

We recognise that injuries may occur, and in the event that an injury does occur we are committed to the philosophy and practice of occupational rehabilitation. The school believes that providing a safe, early return to meaningful and productive work is in the best interest of all staff.

Consequently, it encourages full and active participation from all levels of management and staff in creating a supportive environment conducive to the rehabilitation process and the speedy return of colleagues to the workplace. We will abide by the Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013 and advice given by WorkSafe Victoria and our insurer as to specific return to work practices for each situation.



Related Documentation

- School Maintenance Schedule
- Key Hazard Area Checklists
- Register of Injuries
- Worksafe Victoria Incident Notification Form
- Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013
- Victoria Hazards & Solutions - <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/hazards-and-solutions>
- Safety Data Sheets
- Hazard or Incident Notification Form
- Whole School Training Plan
- Committee Terms Of Reference

Related Policies

- Emergency Management Plan
- Privacy Policy
- Whistleblower Policy
- Duty of Care Policy