



ARCHDIOCESE OF BRISBANE
CATHOLIC EDUCATION COUNCIL

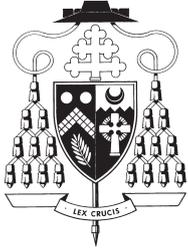
POLICY

STATEMENT-

Occupational Health
and Safety Policy

FOR BRISBANE CATHOLIC
EDUCATION SCHOOLS

DECEMBER 2006



Foreword

The *Occupational Health and Safety Policy* is an integral policy for Catholic Education staff within the Archdiocese. As a Catholic employing authority within the Archdiocese of Brisbane, Catholic Education recognises its obligations under the *Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995*, the Council of Standards Australia and Council of Standards New Zealand, and its responsibilities both in canon and civil law in nurturing employees in the education ministry of the Church.

Those who have responsibility for implementing this policy will be expected to continue to manage health and safety risks within Catholic education facilities according to legislative requirements, where applicable. At all times Catholic Education will take reasonable precaution and exercise proper diligence in this most important area.

This policy statement will assist in that task. It is an indispensable policy that I commend to all staff engaged in Catholic Education throughout the Archdiocese. In his encyclical letter *Centesimus Annus* (1991), Pope John Paul II wrote that he

attributed to the "public authority" the "strict duty" of providing properly for the welfare of the workers, because a failure to do so violates justice.

I have no doubt that this *Occupational Health and Safety Policy* will assist us all in furthering our commitment to total education in the overall mission in our rapidly growing and changing Archdiocese.

Sincerely in Christ

Most Rev John Bathersby DD

ARCHBISHOP OF BRISBANE
DECEMBER 2006

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

POLICY

We in Brisbane Catholic Education provide and maintain occupational environments that are healthy and safe, for the wellbeing of employees, students in our care, volunteers and visitors.

INTRODUCTION

Occupational injuries, which include physical and psychological illnesses and injuries, adversely impact on employee wellbeing and affect not just the individual employee but also their families. In addition, there are financial costs for an organisation, such as the breakdown of relationships, lower morale, employee commitment, increased legal costs and workers' compensation claims.

The factors that contribute to occupational illness and injury include physical hazards, psychological and social aspects of work and their interaction upon the person's wellbeing. An ongoing organisational response to develop, implement and coordinate a variety of preventative and responsive strategies is required for a holistic approach to occupational health and safety. Such an approach is in accordance with the requirement to meet all relevant legislative requirements and duties of care.

RATIONALE

Under the *Workplace Health and Safety Act (1995)* and *Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act (2003)*, we have an obligation to ensure the occupational health and safety of our employees, students, volunteers and visitors to our facilities, with particular emphasis on consultation and the processes of risk management and workplace rehabilitation for employees injured at work. In parish schools and colleges, school and parish share the responsibility of providing healthy and safe working environments, including the maintenance of safe buildings, grounds and equipment.

In the Catholic context, it is not sufficient to ensure that only minimum legal standards are met. As Pope Paul VI stated:

Since economic activity for the most part implies the associated work of human beings, any way of organising and directing it which may be detrimental to any working men and women should be wrong and inhuman¹.

We are committed to achieving the highest practicable standard of occupational health and safety. Through a variety of programs and initiatives, we support schools and colleges by implementing appropriate procedures and strategies to minimise the risk of injury and illness and improve the occupational health, safety and wellbeing of staff, students and visitors. This commitment is founded upon the Church's social justice teachings. Pope John Paul II wrote that he:

attributed to the 'public authority' the 'strict duty' of providing properly for the welfare of the workers, because a failure to do so violates justice².

Contemporary issues impacting upon the provision of healthy and safe workplaces include:

- ~ work and life balance: Catholic social teaching recognises the need for people to rest, to undertake personal and spiritual development, to engage in community and cultural activities and to take time with their family³; and
- ~ the need to manage the complex risks associated with psychosocial hazards which are those aspects of the design, organisation and management of work and its social and environmental context that can cause psychological, social or physical harm.

These issues have been acknowledged within our *Strategic Renewal Framework*, which identifies a commitment to enhance the professional support and pastoral care of staff as a priority to providing high quality teaching and learning outcomes for students. We respond appropriately to these issues and priorities in current occupational health and safety programs and initiatives.

CONSEQUENCES

- ~ we will ensure that all requirements of the workplace health and safety and workers' compensation legislation are met
- ~ we will coordinate and evaluate appropriate strategies to manage physical, psychological

¹ Pope Paul VI (1965)

² Pope John Paul II (1991)

³ Australian Catholic Commission for Employment Relations (2002)

and social aspects of health and safety. Strategies will meet relevant legislative requirements and organisational objectives and standards

- ~ schools, colleges and other workplaces will develop and implement policies and procedures that support this policy and are in accordance with our published standards and guidelines
- ~ regular audits of the occupational health and safety performance of schools, colleges and other workplaces will be undertaken
- ~ support and advice will be offered, where appropriate, to principals, parish priests, other members of school and college communities and staff of our other workplaces, about legislative requirements and the contemporary management of occupational health and safety

- ~ training and awareness programs will be delivered and evaluated to develop and maintain occupational health and safety competencies of principals, managers and employees
- ~ schools, colleges and workplaces will establish and maintain occupational health and safety consultative arrangements in accordance with legislative and organisational requirements
- ~ the responsibilities with regard to buildings, grounds and equipment in parish schools and colleges will be clearly defined and communicated
- ~ employees, students, volunteers and visitors will continue to have shared responsibility for their own health, safety and wellbeing and that of others who may be affected by their actions.

References

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