

OHS CHEMICALS POLICY

Rationale

Schools are required by law to manage the risks associated with all chemicals that they store or use. The majority of these chemicals will be classified as Dangerous Goods and/or Hazardous Substances (DGHS), the handling and storage of which are controlled by specific legislation, regulations and codes.

DGHS are materials that can cause serious harm to the health of humans and cause property and environmental damage. The risks associated with the storage and use of all chemical irrespective of DGHS status need to be effectively controlled.

Aims

- to ensure that appropriate standards of workplace safety at Whittlesea Secondary College (WSC) are maintained at all times
- to ensure the risks associated with all chemicals are effectively controlled.

Implementation

Definitions

Dangerous Goods

- are items or substances that may present an immediate safety hazard through exposure to their explosive, flammable, radioactive, corrosive or toxic properties. They are easily recognisable by the diamond shaped sign displayed on the substance label. They are designated into nine classes according to their immediate physical or chemical effects.

Hazardous Substances

- are classified on the basis of their health effects, both short and long term. They can enter the human body in a number of ways including inhalation, ingestion and contact through the skin and mucous membranes such as the eyes. The level of risk depends upon both the substance itself and the nature of the work being done with it.
- Dangerous Goods can also be classified as a Hazardous Substance.

Responsibilities

- Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) is a shared responsibility of School Council and all Staff.
- An OHS committee will be established and it will meet at least monthly consistent with an OHS committee Charter that it develops.
 - An OHS Representative (HSR) will be elected by staff.
 - The HSR and the Assistant Principal will be key members of the OHS committee.
- The OHS committee in consultation with staff will create a work place appropriate OHS Risk Register which will identify, locate and describe potential workplace hazards. This will include the recording of all dangerous and hazardous chemicals used or stored at our school, on a Chemical Register.
- In addition, the school will obtain Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for all chemicals stored and used on site.
 - The MSDS must be not less than 5 years old, kept in the same location where the chemicals are stored to provide information on how to manage the risk associated with their use and in the event of an incident or emergency.
 - MSDS must also be stored in a central location.
 - MSDS can be obtained from the chemical manufacturer, supplier or [Chemwatch MSDS Database](#)

- The Principal will ensure that staff members wishing to purchase chemicals do so consistent with our school's 'OHS – Purchasing Policy', so that risks are understood and controlled before chemicals are introduced into our school
- The OHS committee will ensure Safe Work Procedures are established for chemicals in accordance with the [DET Chemical Management Procedure](#)

Risks and Controls

- The OHS committee will refer to the hierarchy of controls (eliminate, substitute, isolate, engineering, administration, personal protective equipment) and establish a series of controls that eliminate or effectively minimise and manage the risk associated with chemical hazards.
- Appropriate risk controls may include:
 - safe lockable fireproof storage cabinets
 - segregation of chemicals according to the dangerous goods segregation chart
 - storage of minimal chemical quantities
 - provision of fire detection and fighting equipment
 - appropriate ventilation including exhaust fans and fumes cupboards
 - spill kits and containment equipment
 - proper training, manual handling techniques and equipment
 - emergency management procedures
 - personal protective equipment.
- Chemicals are to always be decanted into properly labelled, sealable chemical containers.
- The condition of chemical containers will be regularly reviewed, and expired chemicals or those no longer required will be properly disposed.
- Flammable or combustible chemicals will be stored greater than 5 metres from an ignition point.
- Chemicals will be properly placarded, and warning and hazard signs will be correctly displayed.
- Safe Work Procedures will be developed and implemented for handling of dangerous or hazardous chemicals as appropriate.
- The OHS committee will, in consultation with employees, establish an OHS Activities Calendar to schedule and conduct regular workplace inspections of all areas of the workplace containing chemicals using appropriate Workplace Inspection Checklists in order to monitor, review and assess the safety systems and controls in place.
- The OHS committee will ensure the OHS Risk Register is kept up to date, reflects the phased introduction of hazard controls, reflects changes in the workplace, is communicated to staff, contractors, visitors or volunteers as appropriate, and is reviewed consistent with the OHS Activities Calendar.
- School Council will provide sufficient funds to ensure that the control measures (including Training) as identified in the OHS Risk Register are implemented in accordance with timelines established in the OHS Activities Calendar.
- The Principal should seek advice from the OHS Advisory Service on 1300 074 715 for information regarding any areas of concern.

Incident Review

- An annual OHS review will be conducted by the appointed HSR in consultation with the Assistant Principal and nominees from the OHS committee after any serious incident or near miss.
- The outcomes of this review will be placed on the OHS notice board and will be included within the Buildings and Grounds committee's report to School Council and the community.

Related Legislation and Policies

- [DET Health Safety and Workers Compensation](#)
- [DET Chemical Management Procedure](#)
- [Chemwatch MSDS Database](#)
- WSC Incident Management Policy
- WSC OHS Purchasing Policy

Appendices

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

This Policy was last ratified by School Council in: 2017