

# Occupational Health & Safety Policy

## Policy Statement & Commitments

Brunswick East Primary School Outside School Hours Care Service (BEPS OSHC Service) protects the health and safety of children, educators, staff, families, students, volunteers and visitors by keeping informed about and complying with *Occupational Health & Safety Act (2004)* and complying with the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (Vic)*.

Children's safety is paramount. BEPS OSHC Service endeavours to provide children with a safe and healthy environment in which to play and learn, and with reassurance that health and safety standards are maintained at BEPS OSHC Service. BEPS OSHC Service recognises that it has a responsibility to provide and maintain a working environment that is safe and without risks to individuals' health and welfare. This responsibility extends to all employees, students, parents, caregivers, contractors and other visitors to the program.

All employees, children and families, visitors and contractors within BEPS OSHC Service have a right to a safe and healthy workplace. The School Council (as the provider of BEPS OSHC Service) has legislated obligations to provide a safe and healthy workplace. Employees and contractors also have obligations under law to take reasonable care to protect themselves and others in the workplace.

Every reasonable effort is made to provide and maintain, as far as practicable, an environment that is safe and without risks to health and safety. Educators must report any damage to equipment or the general work environment to the Coordinator.

### BEPS OSHC Service is committed to:

- providing a safe working environment through the implementation of risk prevention and reduction strategies that are integrated into all program activities
- ensuring a consultative, cooperative approach between employees and management of occupational health and safety issues.
- implementing occupational health and safety (OHS) practices to support its duty of care responsibilities, which include:
  - developing and implementing OHS risk management systems
  - regularly evaluating and updating OHS procedures and practices
  - consulting and communicating widely with all stakeholders on OHS matters
  - maintaining OHS records in accordance with the *Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004*
  - providing orientation and professional development for educators on OHS
  - ensuring appropriate return to work programs are in place for injured employees.

Approved	June 2017	Review date:	May 2019
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**This policy has been designed to assist BEPS OSHC Service to:**

- comply with OHS related legislation and DET directives or guidelines relating to health and safety.
- minimise the occurrence of injury and illness at the program through systematic hazard identification, risk assessment and control
- investigate accidents (including serious near misses) with a view to preventing recurrence
- maintain written records on all OHS activities undertaken
- implement staff health and wellbeing strategies
- provide a return to work program for employees in the event of injury or illness.

Adequate resources will be provided to assist the implementation of this policy.

### **Definitions**

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**OHS** – Refers to occupational health and safety.

### **Procedures**

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- The OSHC Service follows the schools policies and procedures on OH&S where applicable
- An **Occupational Health & Safety Handbook** concerning policies and procedures regarding the OHS of educators, visitors, children and families of BEPS OSHC Service will be produced and followed. All educators and the OSHC Management Sub-committee members will be provided with a copy of the handbook.
- The Coordinator will ensure that information about OHS legislation, codes of practice and guidelines are made available to educators and families of children attending BEPS OSHC Service.
- Employee and employer responsibilities for OHS are included in the **Occupational Health & Safety Handbook**. These responsibilities are highlighted to new educators and new OSHC Management Sub-Committee members as part of their induction.
- Educators must report all incidents leading to risk of injury including those leading to high stress levels, and positive steps will be taken to remove hazards and understand and minimise stress suffered by individual educators.
- Play areas and equipment will be checked daily by the educators to ensure they are in a hygienic, clean and safe condition and do not pose a hazard to children; and that soft fall surfaces under and around outdoor play equipment are adequate and evenly spread.
- Educators and staff will notify the Coordinator and the School's OHS representative of any equipment and/or area that is not clean or in a safe condition, and will write details on a Hazard Report form.
- All new equipment will be checked against Australian Standards.

Approved	June 2017	Review date:	May 2019
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- The Coordinator, through consultation with the OSHC Management Sub-committee, will ensure that furnishings and equipment used will limit risk of injury or ill health in the workplace i.e. adult-size chairs for educators, appropriate storage systems, safe electrical appliances and circuit breakers installed etc.
- The OSHC Management Sub-Committee will ensure that health and safety practices comply with OHS legislation and will allocate sufficient resources in the annual budget to ensure a healthy and safe environment. This will cover direct costs such as provision of safety equipment, maintenance of buildings, fittings and equipment, purchase of safety and health advice, training and resources.
- All work-related injuries and diseases, or ‘near misses’, will be investigated to determine the causes, and action taken to prevent similar events in the future.
- Educators with particular needs will be given special consideration of their OHS needs. This will be achieved through careful consultation with the employee, and documentation, monitoring and review of the strategies established to ensure their special needs are met and training to enable them to work safely. These needs may include:
  - English as a second language
  - pregnancy
  - a medical condition such as epilepsy or asthma
  - physical or intellectual disabilities
  - dyslexia or any other condition that means the person is unable to read
  - people who are young and/or inexperienced.
- OHS issues and incidents will regularly be discussed at educator and staff meetings.
- When the BEPS OSHC Service is operating, educators and visitors will not be affected by alcohol or drugs that adversely affect the person’s ability to educate and care for children.

**It is the personal responsibility of educators, including students and volunteers to:**

- comply with the OHS policy and procedures and follow safe working practices in performing their duties, with due concern for the safety of their fellow employees, themselves, and others and to contribute to a safe working environment
- to do everything possible to avoid accident or injury to themselves or to others, and to maintain the property and equipment entrusted to their care
- not wilfully or recklessly interfere with or misuse safety equipment that is provided and wilfully put at risk the health, safety, or welfare of others.

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## Professional Development

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Professional development opportunities are regularly made available to ensure the Coordinator and all educators at BEPS OSHC Service can identify:

- key elements of the *Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004*, including the content in general terms, responsibilities that apply to them, and consequences of failing to comply
- BEPS OSHC Service’s health and safety policies and procedures
- safe and healthy workplace practices, including immunisations, hygiene practices, special requirements for employees with special health needs, pregnancy, young employees etc.
- how to report hazards
- how to have a say in safe work practices and procedures.

## Health & Safety Education

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The educators at BEPS OSHC Service take an active approach in educating the children on health and safety issues. This includes activities ranging from personal hygiene to discussions about matches and what to do in the event of a fire. BEPS OSHC Service liaises with other community groups, such as the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, to obtain materials and information on health and safety issues.

### OHS Record Keeping

- Educators will record their daily checks on a daily safety checklist.
- Educators will record all injuries to children or illnesses on the service’s accident and illness records. Details entered will include: date, time, place of incident, injury or condition, brief description of events, adult witnesses, any anticipated treatment or outcome.
- Injuries or illness to educators and any visitors to the Centre must be recorded on an Employee Injury, Accident or Illness Record.
- Educators will record all incidents with the potential to cause injury or illness on a Hazard Report form.
- The OSHC Management Sub-committee, through consultation with the Coordinator, will ensure any records required to be kept in compliance with OHS legislation and regulations will be maintained as appropriate.

## Manual Handling

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Manual handling and lifting form an integral part of work at BEPS OSHC Service. Manual handling means any activity requiring the use of force exerted by a person to lift, lower, push, pull, carry or otherwise move, hold or restrain any people, animals or objects. Ways to reduce the risk of injury should be followed, including:

- identifying potential hazards (e.g. heavy or long pieces of equipment, high or low shelves, unpredictable actions of children), and assessing the risk of each hazard (e.g. how often is the

Approved	June 2017	Review date:	May 2019
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equipment used? How awkward is it to carry? Which children may become distressed or angry?)

- ensuring whenever an educator or staff member has to lift something they:
  - bend their knees and tuck in their bottom
  - keep their back straight
  - keep load close to the body
  - avoid twisting the body as they lift.
- moving heavy or awkward equipment when children are not around (if possible).

Staff are expected to adhere to manual handling guidelines by:

- making sure students are not overloaded when carrying things (bins, boxes, books etc.), and making two trips if necessary
- not overloading themselves
- using their legs when lifting, rather than their back
- storing heavy items above mid-thigh and below shoulder height
- using a trolley where appropriate
- seeking assistance with moving very heavy objects.

All manual-handling tasks should have a risk assessment completed. This will include safe procedures for carrying out the task.

### **Trips and Falls Prevention**

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Staff are expected to adhere to act with care to prevent trips and falls by:

- using safety steps to climb
- not standing on chairs or tables to hang displays
- only using ladders less than two metres in length
- storing ladders away when not in use
- only using ladders higher than two metres if specially trained personnel
- reporting trip hazards
- wearing appropriate footwear.

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### **Worker’s Compensation and Rehabilitation**

- The OSHC Management Sub-committee will ensure that appropriate workers compensation cover is available to all employees of BEPS OSHC Service, and that employees understand the importance of reporting injuries or illness that occurs during the course of their work.
- Educators will be informed about the time deadlines for completing workers compensation forms, and be provided with information about what can be compensated.
- The Coordinator will ensure that injured employees are provided with appropriate rehabilitation and health care services and that a flexible rehabilitation program is implemented in BEPS OSHC Service until they are fully recovered.

### **Specific Hazards**

WorkSafe identifies some of the common hazardous tasks in the children’s services sector as follows:

<b>Working at low levels</b>	Awkward postures, tripping or falling due to sitting on children’s furniture or the floor.
<b>Moving equipment</b>	Lifting, moving, carrying, pushing or pulling heavy or awkward indoor and outdoor play equipment.
<b>Storing supplies and equipment</b>	Tripping, falling or being hit by falling objects due to overcrowded or poorly designed storage areas. Bending, lifting, twisting and using high or unexpected force to move heavy or awkward objects.
<b>Using office areas</b>	Awkward body postures due to poorly designed, cluttered or inappropriate office areas. Tripping, falling or being hit by falling objects due to poorly designed office areas.
<b>Maintaining indoor and outdoor areas</b>	Falling from a height while standing on chairs and tables to display artwork. Tripping or falling over toys. or on poorly maintained, uneven or wet floor surfaces.

### **This policy should be read in conjunction with:**

- General Service Information Policy
- Code of Professional Conduct
- Emergency Management
- Incidents, Injury, trauma & the Administration of First Aid
- Partnerships with Families
- Establishing a Protective Care Environment

<b>Approved</b>	<i>June 2017</i>	<b>Review date:</b>	<i>May 2019</i>
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Providing a Child Safe Environment  
[Record Keeping & Confidentiality Policy](#)

**Sources & Legislative References**

WorkSafe Victoria *Children’s Services Occupational Health & Safety compliance kit*; Victorian Work Cover Authority, August 2015

National Professional Support Coordinator Alliance (2012) *Getting started with policies for the NQF: Policies in Practice template – Occupational Safety & Health*, [www.pscalliance.org.au](http://www.pscalliance.org.au)

Business.gov.au, *Occupational health and safety – topics for business* [www.business.gov.au](http://www.business.gov.au)

Rowell, P – *As safe as houses: Occupational Health and Safety in child care* – extract from *Putting Children First*, the Newsletter of the National Childcare Accreditation Council – Issue 37, March 2011, Retrieved August 2015 from [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au)

WorkSafe Advisory Service: phone 1800 136 089, or email [info@worksafe.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@worksafe.vic.gov.au). Additional resources are available from WorkSafe Victoria [www.worksafe.vic.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au)

<i>Education &amp; Care Services National Law Act 2010 (Vic) - Section 3 (2)(a); 167 &amp; 179</i>
<i>Education &amp; Care Services National Regulations (2011) – Regulations 77, 85-101, 103, 104, 105-114 &amp; 165</i>
<i>National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care &amp; School Age Care (2010) – Standards 2.3 &amp; 3.1, Elements 2.3.1, 2.1.4 &amp; 7.1.4</i>
<i>DEEWR Child Care Service Handbook 2011–2012 – Section 6.7</i>
<i>Occupational Health &amp; Safety Act 2004 – OH&amp;S Regulations 2007</i>
<i>Victorian Workcover Authority– Risk Management</i>
<i>Australian Standards – Building Code &amp; Equipment Standards</i>

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