



St Francis Primary School Nathalia

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St Francis will provide a child safe environment where all children have the right to be treated with respect and will be protected from harm.



OCCUPATIONAL REHABILITATION & RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY

Commitment to Child Safety

All students enrolled, and any child visiting, have a right to feel safe and be safe all of the time. The wellbeing of children in our care will always be our first priority and we have zero tolerance for child abuse. At St Francis we strive to maintain a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and are free to enjoy life to the full without any concern for their safety. We are committed to continually reviewing our Child Safe policies and practices to ensure that every effort is made for ongoing improvement of our Child Safe environment.

We at St Francis recognise that some groups of children are particularly vulnerable and we are committed to promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal/linguistically diverse children and also promoting the safety of children with a disability.

RATIONALE

The health and welfare of all employees at St. Francis' Primary School is of major concern and to that end, we are committed to the provision of a workplace that is safe and without risk to health, and to the prevention of workplace injury and illness.

It is however recognised 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.

To achieve this, we have the following objectives:

- Return to work should be a normal expectation of all employees following a work related injury. The intention is to return the injured employee to work as soon as possible.
- All employees are encouraged to report all work-related illnesses and injuries immediately.
- Occupational rehabilitation will commence immediately and be carried out in the appropriate manner with the involvement of all parties.
- Each employee's occupational rehabilitation program will be developed individually, and on a confidential basis, with the employee concerned.
- The Principal acts as our Return to Work coordinator. The most suitable provider will be nominated from the recommended list as our nominated approved Occupational Provider.

AIMS

(i) Employer Commitments:

- Prevention of occupational injury and illness by providing safe and healthy working environments for all employees.
- To ensure early reporting and early intervention at the workplace to enable staff to stay at work, if appropriate.

- To ensure that remaining at, or returning to work, as soon as possible after an injury, is a normal expectation and practice.
- To assist employees to return to suitable duties employment where possible.
- To consult with employees and representatives to ensure that the occupational rehabilitation of any injured employee is effective.
- To ensure that occupational rehabilitation is provided for injured employees as soon as possible, especially for those injured employees that are expected to be off work for more than a short period of time.
- Our commitment also includes informing employees of their rights under the Accident Compensation Act, notably:
 - Participation in rehabilitation and return to work program is voluntary, but non-participation may remove the right of receipt of weekly and/or medical benefits.
 - Participation in occupational rehabilitation will not of itself, prejudice or disadvantage an employee in either job security or promotion.
 - No termination of employment within twelve months of an injury solely or principally because of that injury unless that injury means that the employee is unfit to return to the workplace.

(ii) Employee Obligations:

- Taking reasonable care in the performance of designated duties and other workplace activities so as to prevent work related injuries to themselves and others.
- Reporting to their employer without delay any injury/illness or incident, which may be work related or which affects their ability to perform their work.
- Cooperating with the school authority to enable it to meet its rehabilitation obligations.
- Cooperating in reasonable workplace changes designed to assist the rehabilitation of a fellow employee.
- Submitting promptly all relevant accident/incident reports, claim forms, medical certificates and reports, together with leave applications for work absences.
- Liaising with the school's Return to Work coordinator in relation to a rehabilitation program.

AGREED IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

1. Consultation with employees

Occupational Rehabilitation and Risk Management is a cooperative and consultative process between the employer and the employees. Such consultation and the commitments outlined above should ensure that the occupational rehabilitation of an injured employee will be effective. All employees will be regularly informed of their rights and responsibilities and the school's current policy on Occupational Rehabilitation and Risk Management.

2. WorkCover authorised insurer

The WorkCover Insurer for St. Francis' Primary School is Catholic Church Insurances Limited.

3. Return to work coordinator

The Principal acts as the Return to Work coordinator for St. Francis' Primary School.

The role of the coordinator includes the following:

- assist injured workers to remain at work wherever practicable or to return to suitable work as soon as possible after injury.

- ensure that a return to work plan is established for each worker who has an injury that involves twenty or more days of total incapacity for work.
- liaise with any parties involved in the treatment or occupational rehabilitation of injured workers or involved with the workplace to assist an injured worker to remain at or return to suitable work after injury.
- ensure the confidentiality of personal information made available while coordinating return to work activities, organising occupational rehabilitation services or in any other activity related to the management of an injured worker's claim.
- monitor the progress of the return to suitable work of any worker following injury and of any occupational rehabilitation services provided under a return to work plan.
- ensure that, where appropriate, an injured worker is referred to an approved occupational rehabilitation provider for assistance to return to suitable work.
- with more complex and serious injuries, the Return to Work coordinator will also be responsible for authorising on behalf of the school, expenditure of up to \$1,200 on the provision of occupational rehabilitation services.

The selection criteria are attached as Appendix 1.

4. Medical services provider

The preferred medical provider for St. Francis' Primary School is the employee's own doctor.

5. Occupational rehabilitation provider

The employee may be referred to an Occupational Rehabilitation Provider when external assistance with return to work planning is considered to be reasonably necessary.

The Occupational Rehabilitation Providers will be nominated from the recommended list of preferred Occupational Rehabilitation Providers.

Occupational Rehabilitation Providers offer a wide range of services and have expertise in workplace rehabilitation. They will assess and plan each person's rehabilitation individually, and ensure the employee's confidentiality.

6. Reporting of injuries

All injuries must be reported to the Employer/Principal as soon as possible; Injuries must be entered in the Register of Injuries book located in the Principal's office.

On receiving notification of an injury or illness the Employer/Principal should immediately contact the Return to Work coordinator.

7. Treatment

Initial treatment is available from our First Aid officer. If further treatment is required, an injured employee will be referred to his or her own doctor.

8. Return to work plan

A return to work plan is a statement of the support and employment opportunities that will be available to assist a worker to return to work following injury. It must be prepared for each injured worker within ten calendar days of a claim reaching twenty days of total incapacity. However, the likelihood that an injured worker is returned successfully to work will increase if a return to work plan is developed earlier than this, preferably as soon as an injury occurs.

The Return to Work coordinator should therefore ensure that a return to work plan is prepared as soon as possible after an injury if it is likely that the worker will be incapacitated for twenty or more days.

The worker's medical certificate should indicate the expected time a worker will be unable to work following injury. Where this time is expected to be greater than 20 days, a return to work plan should be established immediately.

9. Suitable duties

Suitable duties will be made available to all injured or ill employees as far as is practicable, and within the medical guidelines provided.

If the injured employee is unable to return to his/her previous duties for the present time, the Return to Work coordinator will consult with the Employer, the Medical Service Provider, the Worker, the Rehabilitation Provider and, should the employee choose, an union representative, on the question of suitable alternative duties. Recommendations will be sought regarding the nature of suitable alternative duties, the number of hours to be worked, the appropriate salary and conditions, and the anticipated period of employment of such duties. However, the practicality of suitable duties will have to take into consideration a duty of care to students and a responsibility to other staff. Where a suitable employment offer can be made, the appropriate form is attached.

When the employee is declared fit to return to work, his/her entitlement to a position of the same or equivalent office will be recognised.

10. Occupational health and safety risk management program

The Occupational Health and Safety procedures and guidelines currently operating within schools is in no way diminished by this policy and program and the responsibilities and duties of the Occupational Health and Safety representative remain as previous and as stated under the Occupational and Safety Act 1985 and guidelines distributed by this Office.

The school in cooperation with the Occupational Health and Safety Representative will endeavour to provide advice aimed at minimising the incidence of injury. It is the responsibility of the employer, in conjunction with the designated Occupational Health and Safety Representative, to identify potential risk areas within their respective areas of responsibility and seek advice and assistance with the development of appropriate training programs and/or workplace changes.

The employer will advise the Occupational Health and Safety Representative when an injury occurs and the representative in conjunction with the Return to Work coordinator will ensure that steps are taken to reduce the risk of further injury in the workplace by identifying and, as far as practicable, reducing the risk of subsequent injury of that kind. However, confidentiality for the injured employee will be maintained at all times.

11. Disputes

Every endeavour should be made to solve any dispute in relation to a rehabilitation program by discussion between the parties to the rehabilitation process. If there is disagreement between the parties about the rehabilitation needs of an incapacitated employee the matter should be referred to the authorised insurer. If the matter remains in dispute, the Victorian WorkCover Authority conciliation process should be used.

12. Conclusion

This Occupational Rehabilitation Policy and Risk Management Program and all of its contents will come into effect on 1 October 1993.

The policy and procedures of this Program will be reviewed periodically.

Reviews

Policy Created: 2009

Reviewed: 2018

Next Review: 2021

APPENDIX 1

SELECTION CRITERIA: RETURN TO WORK COORDINATOR

Each employer will need to give careful consideration to the selection of their Return to Work coordinator. The employer will need to formally appoint the Return to Work coordinator after consultation with all staff.

The coordinator should be someone already employed who has a particular interest in or responsibility for the welfare of employees and is committed to Occupational Rehabilitation of staff.

In medium to large schools the coordinator may be the Principal, first assistant to the Principal, Business Manager, or any other member of staff that meets the above requirements.

In small country schools the coordinator may be the Principal, the Zone Educational Consultant or any other member of Diocesan staff.

To facilitate a particular claim an employer/employee has the freedom to request that the Diocesan Director nominate an alternate Return to Work coordinator.

The coordinator will need to have the skills to communicate with all parties involved and have the full support of staff and the employer in order to design, implement and monitor specific occupational rehabilitation programs.

The appointment of the Return to Work coordinator should be reviewed every twelve months.