

# DUST

## POLICY

### Rationale:

Dust poses a health and safety hazard to all people. Certain types of dust, particularly asbestos, ceramics and wood dusts that can be found in schools can be particularly hazardous. It is therefore essential for the health of all staff, students and visitors that the hazards posed by dusts are well known, and eliminated or controlled.

### Aims:

To eliminate or manage dusts effectively and to provide an environment that is safe and free of dust related health risks.

### Implementation:

- **OHSR for the Underbool Primary School refers to the Principal.**
- All staff and students will be made aware of the potential hazards associated with dusts.
- Dusts will be eliminated, monitored and controlled at school as part of the school's regular Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) workplace practices.
- The Principal in consultation with staff will create a work place appropriate OHS Risk Register which will identify, locate and describe potential workplace hazards, including dusts.
- The OHS Risk Register will detail the types of dusts, the location of dusts, the controls that are to be implemented for each dust, as well as a schedule indicating implementation timelines for each proposed hazard control.
- The OHSR will refer to the hierarchy of controls (eliminate, substitute, isolate, engineering, administration, personal protective equipment) when establishing the series of controls that eliminate or effectively minimise and manage the risk associated with dusts.
- Likely places where hazardous dusts may be located in our school include the ceramics art room, the woodwork room, the heater rooms and asbestos.
- All matters related to asbestos dust management are our outlined in the school's 'Asbestos' policy and our 'Hazardous Building Materials' policy.
- In order to reduce risk of injury from other dusts, particularly ceramics and wood dusts, the school will undertake the following:-
  1. Establish a risk assessment team including the principal, the OHSR, ceramics and woodwork teacher representatives, and other members of the OHS committee to undertake a consultative process of identification, assessment and control of dusts.
  2. Identify areas of suspected dust hazard about the school – eg: ceramics and woodwork rooms etc.
  3. Undertake risk assessments of each identified area in order to identify the dust hazards (and sources) to which the staff or students may be are exposed, using a Risk Assessment checklist.
  4. Located hazardous dusts will be detailed on the OHS Risk Register along control strategies based on the following hierarchy of control:-
    - The elimination where possible of practices that produce dusts eg: purchasing premixed clay rather than dry powders to be mixed, purchasing pre-cut timber.
    - The substitution of dusty practices for less dusty alternatives eg: planing wood instead of sanding, wet mixing clays rather than dry mixing, mopping rather than sweeping, smooth plastic aprons that are cleaned after use etc.

- The isolation or enclosure of equipment that generates dust.
- The modification or redesign of curriculum, buildings or equipment that produce dust. This may include the use of exhaust fans, vacuum extractors, dust collectors, dustless saws, and effective flues or programmed maintenance etc.
- The use of administrative controls such as timetable refinements that eliminate or minimise exposures to dusts, rotating teachers or activities, limiting time exposed to dust, ensuring foods are not eaten in certain rooms.
- Personal Protective Equipment eg: AS 1716 dust masks when mixing glazes.

The risk assessment team will consult widely in the development of the dust control plan, which will be implemented as soon as practicable.

- Training relating to the effects of dust exposure, reasons behind dust control measures, the fit and maintenance of personal dust protection equipment will be provided to all staff and supervisors who work in areas assessed as a high dust risk, and the training recorded.
- The OHSR will, in consultation with employees, develop an OHS Activities Calendar to schedule and conduct regular workplace inspections of all areas of the workplace using appropriate Workplace Inspection Checklists. Workplace inspections will also be regularly completed for each specific hazard identified in the OHS Risk Register including areas that contain dusts.
- Further dust related issues that may arise and are considered to be a safety concern are to be brought to the attention of the OHSR and the principal.
- The OHSR will ensure the OHS Risk Register is kept up to date including registering hazardous dusts, reflecting the phased introduction of dust hazard controls, reflecting changes in the workplace, is communicated to staff, contractors, visitors or volunteers as appropriate, and is reviewed consistent with the OHS Activities Calendar.
- Dust hazard posters will be displayed in appropriate locations.
- The principal should seek advice from the OHS Advisory Service on **1300 074 715** for information regarding any areas in concern.

#### **Evaluation:**

- An annual Occupational Health and Safety review will be conducted by the appointed OHSR in consultation with the principal and nominees from the OHS committee or 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. This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

This policy was last ratified by School Council on....

**February 2015**