

# OHS – NOISE

## POLICY

### Rationale:

Noise in schools is unavoidable and at times desirable. Excessive noise however can be aggravating; can be detrimental to teaching and learning, and can be a safety issue causing hearing loss or injury.

### Aims:

To manage noise effectively and to provide an environment that is pleasant, conducive to quality teaching and learning, and that is safe for all concerned.

### Implementation:

- **OHSR for the Underbool Primary School refers to the Principal.**
- Minor noise issues that are not a health and safety issue but cause aggravation or that interfere with teaching and learning are to be brought to the attention of the principal for resolution.
- Excessive noise that exceeds 85dB(A) continuously over an eight hour period, or 140dB(lin) for impulse noises are hazardous.
- All staff and students will be made aware through formal training of the effects of excessive noise on themselves and others.
- Excessive noise hazards will be minimised or eliminated at school as part of our regular Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) workplace practices.
- An OHSR will be established and it will meet at least monthly consistent with an OHS committee Charter that it develops. An OHS Representative (OHSR) will be elected by staff. The OHSR and the principal will be members of the OHS committee.
- The OHSR in consultation with staff will create a work place appropriate OHS Risk Register which will identify, locate and describe potential workplace hazards, including risks and hazards associated with excessive noise.
- The OHS Risk Register will detail the types of excessive noise, the locations of excessive noise, the controls that are to be implemented for each excessive noise, as well as a schedule indicating implementation timelines for each proposed excessive noise 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 excessive noise.
- Likely places where hazardous noise levels may be located in our school include the music room, instrumental music room, the metal work rooms, the wood working rooms, the automotive prac rooms, mowers, maintenance equipment etc, and the technology rooms.
- In order to reduce risk of injury from excessive noise, the school will undertake the following:-
  1. Employ the services of a competent person to undertake a risk assessment of each identified area in order to quantify the noise levels to which the staff are exposed, and to identify high risk noise sources or excessive noise locations.
  2. Excessive noise hazard controls will be detailed on the OHS Risk Register based on the following hierarchy of control:-
    - The elimination where possible of practices that produce excessive noise.
    - The substitution of noisy practices for less noisy alternatives.
    - The isolation or enclosure of equipment that generate excessive noise.

- The modification or redesign of curriculum, buildings or equipment that produce excessive noise. This may include the use of dampers, baffles, carpets, screens, curtains, noise absorbent materials, or programmed maintenance etc.
- The use of administrative controls such as timetable refinements that eliminate clashes of noisy/quiet adjoining classes, rotating teachers or activities, limiting time exposed to noise.
- Personal Protective Equipment such as quality earmuffs, ear plugs etc that comply with AS 12670 will be required to be worn by employees and/or students in areas with excessive noise.

The OHSR will consult widely in the development of the OHS Risk Register noise controls, which will be implemented as soon as practicable, but not greater than 6 months after its development.

3. Training relating to the effects of noise exposure, reasons behind noise control measures, the nature of audiometric testing and the use, fit and maintenance of hearing protection devices will be provided to all staff and supervisors who work in potentially excessive noise locations as identified on the OHS Risk Register. All training will be recorded.
  4. All staff members exposed to excessive noise or required to wear hearing protection will be provided with audiometric testing and every 2 years thereafter.
- 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 potentially have excessive noise levels.
  - The OHSR will ensure the OHS Risk Register is kept up to date including registering sources of excessive noise, reflecting the phased introduction of noise 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.
  - 'Noise Nasties' and 'Noise Control' posters will be displayed in appropriate locations.
  - Further noise 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 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**