(2) CHILD SAFETY POLICY

The Beehive Montessori School Inc. is committed to providing a safe physical environment, where the child is free from physical harm, injury or death, within the day to day activities of the School. The School will adhere to the necessary current safety regulations and acts, and will continuously promote safe conduct and behaviour amongst children, staff and the community.

- Duty of care
- Excursions, field trips and camps

Rationale

The environment related to any School activity is inherently dangerous, fundamentally because children do not generally or frequently understand the consequence of unsafe behaviour. Potentially unsafe environments include the physical environment around the School pathways, equipment, etc, School activities and equipment in the School, excursions, fields and camps.

Objectives

The School’s objectives are to prevent exposure of children to any physical harm (injury or death) by providing a safe physical environment, procedures and encouraging safe behaviour. In the event of an accident the impact of injury or damage will be minimized. Safe conduct and behaviour amongst children, staff and the community will be continuously promoted.
Links to School and Strategic Plan

The Constitution and the Strategic Plan upholds the rights and education of young people with the Montessorian holistic approach to the development of young people at School, at home and in society.

Risk of injury can be reduced by training and supervision, and by catering for the needs of the individual child. Injuries are unlikely to materialize when proper risk management, control and responsible behaviour prevail.

Other Related Issues

The Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia (AISWA) recommends that Schools follow the 3-point ‘SAM’ approach suggested by WorkSafe for ensuring safety at work:

- Spot the hazard;
- Assess the risk; and
- Make the changes necessary.

The ‘SAM’ approach is critical for duty of care and occupational safety and health.

In cases where external providers provide venues and equipment, run or assist in running excursions, camps, etc. it must be remembered that duty of care by the School is not delegable and does not release the School from its obligation to ensure the safety of its pupils, staff and volunteers. The legal effect of disclaimer and indemnity clauses will depend upon the particular circumstances, and the School needs to be aware that such clauses may result in the School becoming liable for the negligence of persons not under its control.

Any liability the School may incur under disclaimer and indemnity clauses may not fall under the standard cover of its insurance policies.
Levels of Responsibility

The concept of ‘duty of care’ does not prescribe what steps are required of the person who owes the duty of care beyond a requirement that the person take reasonable care in all the circumstances. There is therefore no checklist or instruction manual. In addition, the question of whether the duty has been breached is determined with the benefit of hindsight. Reasonable care will depend upon all the circumstances.

The School Board is responsible to the School community for:
- developing and adopting the policy.
- ultimately ensuring that all measures have been adopted by the Principal and staff, that the policy is in place.

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that:
- all staff are appropriately trained to assess risks and be able to impose appropriate controls and safeguards, are fully briefed and vigilant.
- volunteers fully understand their responsibilities of care, and in the case of camps, ensure that compliance to the Procedures is maintained in gender appropriateness, and number of carers with bathroom and sleeping accommodation.
- all staff and volunteers are aware that their responsibilities of care are not delegable.
- the appropriate adult/child ratio is maintained, dependant on the risk of activity, age of children, etc.
- the current insurance policies are adequate for the purposes of the excursion/camp.
- in the case of injury, appropriate medical attention is given immediately and recording details in the Incident Register.
- appropriate contingency plans have been made to deal with emergencies.
- parents are made aware of all details of excursion/camp, as detailed in the Procedures.
- one copy of the signed consent and medical forms are held by the teacher in charge of the excursion/camp and one copy is retained in administration.
- parents are informed of the retention of information at the School (Privacy Act).
- staff police clearances are maintained in administration/staff files.
- volunteers ‘Confidential Declaration’ (in lieu of police clearance) are maintained in administration files.
Levels of Responsibility (cont’d)

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that:
- School Board is fully briefed in the event of any alleged breach of duty of care
- the safety officer identifies and records all potential hazards around the School, and ensures that all risks are analysed and assessed. Controls must be put in place to eliminate, reduce or minimize that risk.

The Vice Principals are responsible for:
- those duties as delegated by the Principal
- vigilance and assisting the teachers and volunteers with advice and guidance

The Staff is responsible for:
- those duties as delegated by the Principal
- assessing risks and being able to impose appropriate controls and safeguards
- vigilance
- supervising and assisting volunteers in their understanding of protocol at excursions and camps as set out in the Procedures
- maintaining the appropriate adult/child ratio at excursions and camps, dependant on the risk of activity, age of children, etc.
- awareness that responsibilities of care are not delegable
- appropriate medical attention in the case of injury and recording in the Incident Register
- appropriate contingency plans to deal with emergencies on excursions/camps
- signed consent form and medical form to be retained by the teacher in charge on the excursion/camp along with contact details for hospitals and doctors in the area in which they are traveling
- ensuring all excursion and camp Procedures contingent with the duty of care are carried out diligently
- ensuring that students are educated about safety and their responsibility for themselves and their peers
- clear and precise reporting of any concerns judged to be a safety risk or breach of care
- enacting their ‘duty of care’ responsibilities in dealing with all forms of abuse, bullying and drug use and reporting as necessary
Documentation

- The Policy, as well as Procedures on protocol of excursions and camps, is documented in the Parent Handbook.
- The Policy, Procedures and Guidelines for staff on ‘duty of care’ and protocol of excursions and camps are documented in the Staff Handbook.
- The Policy, Procedures and Guidelines for Volunteers on ‘duty of care’ and protocol are documented in the Volunteer’s Handbook.
- The Safety Report is to be reviewed twice yearly by the School Board. The Incident register is to show a detailed record of each incident.

Performance Review and Measurement

There will be no incidents of child injury or lapses in safety risk on the School grounds or outside the School, whilst under staff or volunteer ‘duty of care’. Reasonable care for the safety of the children is of paramount importance to the Principal, Staff and volunteers.

All potential hazards around the School are to be identified, recorded, analysed and assessed. It is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that controls are put in place to eliminate, reduce or minimize that risk.

Activity

Annual review of the Policy is required at the School Board. Procedures and Guidelines will be updated in accordance with the Policy. Twice yearly review of the Safety Report is to be conducted by the School Board as a responsibility for risk management.

Related Documents

- Child Conduct Policy
- Child Health and Safety Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Crisis Management Policy
- Discrimination and Equal Opportunity Policy
- Occupational Safety and Health Policy
- Parent Information Policy
- Privacy Policy