

Yarrabah school

RISK MANAGEMENT

POLICY

Rationale:

- All schools need to work towards meeting the safety needs of their respective communities as effectively as possible. A systematic process of evaluation will provide information on which to base plans for improvement, by reducing risk factors for accidents.

Aims:

- To ensure that appropriate standards of workplace safety are maintained at all times.
- To create a team approach to risk management and safety issues within our school.
- To prevent accident, injuries and disease in the workplace.

Implementation:

- The overall responsibility for risk management in schools rests with the Principal and Council.
- A Risk Management committee has been established with responsibility to monitor and coordinate progress on the school's risk management, improvement and accountability processes.
- The risk management process is broken down into a sequence of steps as outlined below.

1. Establish the context

- The context for risk management in the school needs to be established by considering the internal and external environment, understanding the needs and expectations of all stakeholders, and agreeing that risk management needs to incorporate both operational risks and strategic risks affecting the school's achievement of objectives, goals, targets and priorities.
- The potential impact of risks in relation to key initiatives and functions in the school should be reviewed. Project briefs for major initiatives should also include a review of risks that might impact on the achievement of project objectives.
- To enable effective school governance the school council's role in overseeing the risk management of key initiatives must be agreed.
- At minimum the Principal should regularly report to the school council on risks which may affect the achievement of objectives, goals and targets, and how these risks are being managed.

2. Identify the risk

- Once the context for risk management is understood, the process for identifying risks and documenting them on a risk register can commence. In brief this involves:
 - Identifying (brainstorming) the range of possible risks, their causes and consequences,
 - Classifying risks under broad categories (e.g. teaching and learning, student safety, legal, assets/environment, finance, IT, public and community relations, staff, governance),
 - Identifying the existing risk controls, or in other words, the existing formal mechanisms in the school by which risks are being managed.

3. Assess the risk

- Risks can be assessed in terms of their consequences and likelihood, i.e. is the consequence low, medium or high, and is the likelihood of occurrence unlikely, likely or almost certain?

4. Assess controls which are already in place

- Existing controls can be assessed as to whether they are:
 - adequate (and thus should be maintained),
 - inadequate (and thus should be improved or fixed) or rated as
 - undecided adequacy (requiring a further review of the control).
- Sometimes when existing controls are adequate (ie they are well designed and operationalised) the risk related to those controls needs only to be regularly monitored.
- In other cases we will assess existing controls as inadequate, and in those cases the risk may warrant the development of new controls, or in other words, a risk treatment strategy.
- We may also assess that some risks are ‘over-controlled’ given their low likelihood and low consequence, if the risk event were to occur. In such cases the assessment may result in freeing up resources for higher priorities.

5. Rank risks

- Risks should be prioritised, or ranked, according to their relative consequence and likelihood, in the context of the effectiveness of controls that are already in place.
- If controls are not adequate, or the risk is too high, a risk treatment strategy will be developed.
- The risks most in need of risk treatment are those that have serious consequences and/or are most likely to occur.
- Lower order risks should be monitored and all risks should be regularly reviewed.

6. Treat Risks

- An action plan detailing risk treatment strategies, timelines, resources and responsibilities should be developed, agreed and implemented. Treatment types include:
 - a. reduce the risk (sometimes known as ‘risk mitigation’),
 - b. accept the risk (and develop a contingency plan),
 - c. avoid the risk (by stopping an activity or using a new strategy) and
 - d. share or transfer the risk (to another party, using insurance, contracts or other formal risk transfer mechanisms).

7. Monitor, review and improve

- A schedule for monitoring progress on the implementation of treatment strategies should be established. Regular review of risks should also be undertaken to redefine, refresh, upgrade or modify the risk ratings and risk treatments as appropriate.

8. Resources

- The Portfolio Risk Branch, Corporate Planning, Strategy & Audit Division in the Department of Education and Training is able to provide risk management assistance and advice to schools.

Evaluation:

- An annual Risk Management review will be conducted by the appointed representative in consultation with the Principal and nominees from the OH&S committee, or after any significant incident.
- The outcomes of this review will be included within the Risk Management 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 in....

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