



St Joseph's Catholic School

Queenstown

OCCUPATIONAL REHABILITATION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

RATIONALE

Injuries and accidents are preventable. It is our intension to do everything reasonable to prevent accidents and injuries to students, employees and the public, and damage to property at St Joseph's Catholic School.

The school is committed to preventing injury and illness by providing a safe and healthy working environment which is as fas as reasonably practicable, without risk to personal health and safety.

In the event of serious injury or illness arising out of the course of employment, the school authorities will undertake a review and implement measures to prevent reoccurrence.

The school is committed to the rehabilitation of employees who may be injured or contact an illness arising from their employment. Rehabilitation programs and plans will be developed in consultation with an injured/ill employee and other relevant parties.

AIMS

- ✓ To ensure that the rehabilitation process is commenced as soon as possible following injury/illness to ensure a speedy recovery and to avoid long term problems.
- ✓ To encourage and maintain a positive work environment for the affected employee, including the provision of appropriate alternative duties where it is reasonably practicable to do so.
- ✓ To cooperate in the provision of appropriate rehabilitation services when required and to foster communication between all parties involved in the treatment of the injured/ill employee, to ensure that all parties involved in the occupational rehabilitation process are working with a common purpose towards a positive outcome and allow the progress of the rehabilitation process to be monitored and objectives reset where required.

- ✓ To ensure that participation in a rehabilitation program will not, in itself, prejudice an injured worker.

PROCEDURES

GENERAL

The responsible officer at St Joseph's Catholic School is the Principal, who is authorised to be responsible for health and safety in the workplace.

All employees have an important role to play to ensure the best possible outcome for their injure/ill colleague. Successful occupational rehabilitation requires involvement and commitment from everyone in the workplace.

Occupational rehabilitation, as a part of the total injury and claim management process, can play an essential role in reducing and controlling the human and economic cost of workers compensation claims.

Rehabilitation aims to maximise an individual's physical, social, psychological and occupational status. Rehabilitation has a distinct focus: that of return to work. It aims at maintaining an injured worker at work or returning them to suitable employment as soon as possible following injury.

Occupational rehabilitation is a cooperative model of return to work. Employers must assume responsibility for protecting the health and safety of their employees whilst at work. Occupational rehabilitation is an integral part of this and the injured worker must actively participate in their rehabilitation program.

SPECIFIC

- ✓ Early reporting of symptoms of injury or illness is encouraged.
- ✓ Employees are to be looked after when injured.
- ✓ Injured employees will be contacted within 2 hours of injury and the commitment to assess with safe maintenance at work or return to work will be restated.
- ✓ If lost time injury occurs they are helped to return to work safely and promptly as the workplace is the most effective place for rehabilitation to occur.
- ✓ While employees are off work contact with them will be maintained.
- ✓ When the injured employee is ready to return to work, there will be involvement by all those necessary to identify a suitable and meaningful job.
- ✓ Supervisor involvement is essential.

- ✓ Staff will be prepared for their colleagues return to work.
- ✓ Regular review dates for Return to Work Plans will be set.
- ✓ Injured employees will be encouraged to actively participate in their rehabilitation.
- ✓ There will be close communication, co-operation and consultation with all relevant parties at all stages of the rehabilitation process.
- ✓ Accurate, up-to-date and confidential records will be made of all contacts made in relation to a work related incident of injury.
- ✓ Rehabilitation processes will be linked to wider injury management and health and safety programs at St Joseph's Catholic School to ensure optimal efficiency and durable outcomes.

IMPLEMENTATION OF REHABILITATION PROCEDURES

1. Section 139 of the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act requires employers to prepare a Return to Work (RTW) plan for all injured workers, who are totally or partially incapacitated for work for a period exceeding 14 days. The Act requires that the RTW plan be prepared as soon as practicable but no later than 5 days after the 14th day of incapacity. Steps will be taken to facilitate the return to work of an injured or ill worker within the plan.
2. The Return to Work Plan will be prepared in consultation with the worker and will contain the following information:
 - a. The name of the injured worker
 - b. The estimate of the date the injured worker should be fit to return to work
 - c. An offer of suitable alternative duties
 - d. The steps taken to facilitate the worker's return to work.
3. Rehabilitation plans will be developed in consultation with all relevant parties including the injured / ill worker and hi/her medical practitioner, the employer, the rehabilitation service provider and, if applicable, the insurer and the worker's union representative.

4. Injured/ill workers have the right to choose their treating medical practitioner and have the right to participate in the selection of their rehabilitation service provider.
5. The Return to Work Plan must be complied with 5 days of the 14 day limit being reached and then forwarded to CCI to assist in the effective management of the claim.
6. The appointed Rehabilitation Return to Work Coordinator will have responsibility for the preparation of a Return to Work Plan and it will be done in consultation with the injured worker. It is recommended that the injured worker and their treating doctor receive a copy of the plan.
7. The Return to Work Plan will be revised as often as necessary during the worker's period of incapacity for work, or at a suggested minimum of monthly intervals and CCI advised accordingly.

NOTES ON THE LEGISLATED ACT

The Workplace health and Safety Act 1995, and the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Reform Act 1991, substantially amends the Workers Compensation Acts and replaced a number of prior acts. The emphasis is on prevention and rehabilitation. The Act consolidates existing law re industrial safety and mines inspections and covers all industries and workplaces both public and private.

Workplace Standards Tasmania promotes injury and disease prevention, best practice in rehabilitation of injured employees and prudent management of the workers compensation scheme.

The major part of the act centres on duties and obligations of parties with a duty of care. Employer's duty of care extends to employees, contractors performing work for the employer, other persons (the public) including visitor to the workplace and the employer has a duty to take reasonable care for the safety of the employee in all circumstances of employment.

As with the duty of care of teachers, the duty of care of employers has been extended even to where the employee injured was partly responsible: another employee was totally responsible; the accident happened because something was not done rather than because of a positive wrong doing and the employee had the authority and discretion to determine how the work could be done.

The employer must provide and maintain so far as is reasonable practicable a safe work environment, safe plant and substances and information, protective clothing if required, instruction, training and supervision.

'Reasonably practicable' has regard to the severity of the hazard or risk, the state of knowledge of the risk, the availability of ways to remove or mitigate the hazard or risk. What could/would a reasonable employer be expected to do.

Duties of the employer (Section 9) are to:

- ❖ Maintain safe working environment and plant
- ❖ Provide information, training and supervision
- ❖ Keep records of work related injuries and illness
- ❖ Provide information in relation to workplace health and safety to employees
- ❖ Monitor working conditions in the workplace.

Employees must take reasonable care for his or her own safety and for others who may be affected by their actions or omissions in the workplace and comply with any direction relating to health and safety given by the employer or a responsible officer.

Duty of Care also extends to employees. Employees are to responsibly use equipment supplied in accordance with any instruction given and to wear the necessary protection, equipment and clothing if required.

HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEES: Employers with more than twenty persons at their workplace must, if requested by a majority of those persons, establish a Health and Safety Committee for the workplace within two months of a request to do so. The committee is to consist of employees elected by the employees and persons appointed by the employer.

Serious accident i.e. ones which require admission to hospital as in-patient must be reported to the Inspector immediately and no person is allowed to interfere with the site where a serious accident or incident has occurred except to save a life or prevent suffering or injury to persons or damage to property.

This policy and associated practices will be reviewed as part of the St Joseph's Catholic School policy review cycle.

Implemented March 2006; Reviewed 2008