



Penola  
CATHOLIC COLLEGE  
EST. 1995

## SAFETY POLICY

### Introduction

A teacher has a duty of care to students at all times while working on behalf of the school (during school hours or out-of-school hours). If the teacher fails this duty of care, or if the duty of care exercised is found to be not sufficient, then the teacher may be found to be negligent by a court of law and therefore liable for injuries caused. The duty of care requires that the teacher always acts in a reasonable way for the safety and welfare of the student. Teachers must always consider the safety of students in their care and protect them from both known hazards and from hazards that could be reasonably foreseen and in which preventative measures could have been taken. The duty is a considerable one but it is not absolute. That is to say, a teacher may not be able to stop all accidents from happening. Thoughtful and thorough preparation, knowledge and understanding of accepted standards of safety, awareness of risks, and vigilance will lessen the possibility of an incident or accident occurring.

### Supervising students in class

The duty of the teacher includes exercising reasonable supervision in the classroom. In order to respond responsibly and reasonably, teachers need to be aware of group dynamics within the particular class, especially situations that may develop into harassment, intimidation, victimisation, physical violence, fighting, misbehaviour, throwing objects or argumentation. Among younger students, the teacher needs to be vigilant that none of the students leave the room without permission.

Teachers are responsible for the group of students that they have been allocated to teach and/or supervise at a particular time. This includes the time when a student may be in class or has withdrawn from the class for a reason. Eg:

- If a student is ill and goes to the sick bay,
- If a student leaves class to be collected by a parent/guardian, that student is still under the supervision of the teacher until the parent/guardian takes over the supervisory role. The time that a student waits in an area to be collected is a time that the teacher still has a duty of care,
- If a student goes to the toilet, then that time is within the supervision of the teacher.

The supervisory duty of a teacher is never replaced by the presence of a non-teaching staff member or a student teacher.

## **Classroom rules**

All classrooms, laboratories and preparation rooms and specialist rooms should be safe areas for students and staff. All staff and students should follow the rules outlined for the classroom that they are in. Staff should be aware of the potential hazards and dangers that may occur in classrooms and take all reasonable steps to avoid them. Teachers should always look at potential hazards and risks from the child's point of view.

In the science learning area there should be signs and rules stating:

- Guidelines for the storage of chemicals
- Rules for the disposal of residue and waste chemicals
- Guidelines for student behaviour in risk areas
- Requirements for protective clothing and body protection
- Details about the location of safety and first aid equipment, including locations of fire extinguishers
- Emergency evacuation procedures
- A comprehensive risk management plan

In the workshop area there should be signs and rules stating:

- The machines that the students are not allowed to use without teacher supervision
- All long hair must be securely covered or fixed and confined to the head before going near machinery or in the work area
- All protective equipment should be worn at all times
- All students are to comply with the displayed classroom rules in this area

For safety in the arts area, it is important that:

- The work areas are adequately ventilated and kept clean
- Protective clothing is worn by students
- Washing facilities for students are available
- There is an awareness that some materials can be potentially dangerous to the health and safety of students

In the food technology area:

- Protective clothing must be worn by all students
- The rules about using the equipment and stoves must be displayed and followed.

## **Risk management**

Evaluation of risks about the school property should be part of the continuing assessment of management responsibilities.

These three steps should be followed and applied in a Risk Assessment for potentially hazardous situations:

- Collect information about hazards
- Analyse the risks associated with possible hazards
- Prevent future accidents through risk control.

### **Information**

Staff should be familiar with the emergency evacuation plan and the critical incidents policy that the College has developed and be able to follow these if the need arises.