1. Rationale
Dignity, safety and well being of people are central to the Church’s teaching. The Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia (CECWA) acknowledges this and recognises that it is obligated under the Occupational Safety and Health Act (WA) 1984 (the OSH Act) to ensure the safety and health of all school-based workplace participants. Therefore, all Catholic schools shall endeavour to:

- ensure the safety, health and welfare of all employees, students, their parents, community members and other persons who are legally present on school premises. School premises include places away from a school campus such as a campsite or where school excursions may take place from time to time
- develop, promote, and maintain a safe and healthy working environment that seeks to minimise the risk of injury or illness for such people
- create a culture of safety that precipitates the development, maintenance and promotion of a healthy working environment
- ensure that adequate financial, physical and human resources are available to support the management of occupational safety and health in the school

2. Definitions
Nil

3. Scope
This policy applies to all Catholic schools in Western Australia.

4. Principles

4.1 According to the provisions of the OSH Act and the Code of Ethical Conduct, all Catholic schools in Western Australia have a legal and ethical responsibility to put in place procedures and processes to develop, promote and maintain a safe and healthy working environment for all members of staff including teachers, students, their parents, guardians, caregivers, community members and other persons who are legally present on school premises.

4.2 As the authority to employ is delegated to the principal by the Bishop of each Diocese or the Congregational Leader, the principal shall, so far as is practicable, provide and maintain a working environment where the staff, students and community members are not exposed to hazards.

4.3 When engaged in workplace activities, school employees are required to take reasonable care for their own health and safety. Further, they have a responsibility to avoid situations and practices (including acts or omissions) that may precipitate danger to the health and safety of others.

4.4 In accordance with the OSH Act, an employee may give notice to the employer requiring the election of a safety and health representative. The OSH representative (s) may be member(s) of the
teaching and/or non-teaching staff.

4.5 School-based OSH representatives must be elected to their position in accordance with the OSH Act.

4.6 As school-based OSH representatives are not OSH managers, they are not liable for accidents/incidents that occur in the workplace.

4.7 To meet the consultative requirement of the OSH Act, the cycle of continuous improvement inherent in the Australian and New Zealand Standards for Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems: Specification and Guidance for Use [AS/NZS 4801:2001] and in the interests of building a culture of safety, all schools may establish and effectively operate a whole-of-school OSH committee.

5. Procedures

5.1 Each school shall develop and communicate to staff its own OSH Policy based on the CECWA Policy statement 2-C14 ‘Occupational Safety and Health in Schools’. It is not sufficient for a school to state that it complies with or uses the CECWA policy.

5.2 Specifically, all school employees shall:
- follow the principal’s safety and health instructions
- appropriately utilise personal protective clothing and equipment where appropriate (i.e. as intended)
- take care of and appropriately maintain equipment
- report suspected or actual hazards to the school-based OSH representative and/or principal
- immediately report work-related injuries or near miss or concerning incidents to the principal and school-based OSH representative and complete requisite paperwork
- cooperate with the principal, members of the school management team, the school-based OSH representative and whole-of-school OSH committee members (where applicable) to enable the employer to execute its obligation under the OSH Act

5.3 Any person employed by the school may request the election of a school-based OSH representative. All employees are eligible to be elected. A person who is elected as a safety and health representative is elected for a period up to 2 years.

5.4 The OSH representative is entitled to paid time off to attend the compulsory Catholic Education Office training course.

5.5 To meet the employer’s obligations under the OSH Act, the principal may work collaboratively with the school-based OSH representative(s) to form a whole-of-school OSH committee. Membership of this committee will vary from school to school and will depend upon many factors including staff size and student numbers. At a minimum, the committee shall consist of:
- the principal or a delegated representative (e.g. an assistant or deputy principal)
- the school-based OSH representative(s)
- a member(s) of staff
- parent/school based representation

5.6 As detailed in the OSH Act, WorkSafe Guidelines and the AS/NZ Standards 4360:2004 Risk Management and AS/NZ Standards 4801:2001 Occupational Health & Safety Management Systems, school-based OSH representatives have the following functions:
- carry out regular workplace inspections
• immediately carry out an appropriate investigation of any accident or any near miss to any person engaged in work or study or any approved activity; at the school premises
• keep abreast of health and safety information provided by the employer and relevant external bodies (e.g. WorkSafe)
• liaise as necessary with WorkSafe, the Department of Industry and Resources and other relevant Government or private bodies
• consult and cooperate with the employer on all matters relating to workplace health and safety
• liaise with employees regarding work-based safety and health issues
• promote a culture of safety amongst all school participants including the principal, members of the management team, students, their parents and community members
• immediately report to the principal any potential or actual hazard that poses a danger to the safety and health of staff, students, community members or visitors to the school
• issue provisional improvement notices (PINs) where they believe existence of a breach of the OSH Act or Regulations. A PIN is similar to an improvement notice issued by a WorkSafe inspector, except for its 'provisional' nature. Before issuing a PIN, the school-based OSH representative shall liaise with the principal to discuss the issue. These discussions shall canvas risk assessment of the identified hazard and control measure options. The principal shall take appropriate corrective action upon receipt of a PIN

5.7 In accordance with the OSH Act there are penalties for breaches of the OSH Act. Penalties may be applied to employers, persons having control of premises and employees.

5.8 The principal shall inform WorkSafe and the Workforce Relations Team if an employee or a person at the school who is not an employee incurs an injury or disease at the school premises that results in the death of the employee or person.

A proforma Policy statement is attached.

6. References

Government of Western Australia. 1984. Occupational Safety & Health Act 1984
Government of Western Australia. 1996. Occupational Safety & Health Regulations 1996