



POLICY IN OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY IN SCHOOLS

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1. POLICY OBJECTIVE

This policy provides clear statements on the responsibilities of those in authority in schools. It details procedures and guidelines on safety measures and sound practices in the workplace. The primary objective of this policy is to safeguard the welfare and safety of teachers and children as they carry out their daily school activities. The health and safety of other school employees and visitors is also an important component of this policy. Compliance with the procedures and guidelines as outlined through this policy will ensure that schools in Fiji become safe as well as healthy environments for teaching learning.

2. POLICY

- 2.1 The Ministry of Education is totally committed to ensuring that all its offices and all schools are maintained as safe and healthy workplace and environments for its employees, school children, customers and visitors.
- 2.2 The Ministry will ensure that the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work Act (1996) and the Regulations are complied with. In this respect, it will also involve employees in the development and promotion of health and safety programmes and procedures.
- 2.3 The Ministry rates highly the importance of health and safety matters which are seen as ranking equally with results, productivity, costs and achievement of corporate goals.
- 2.4 The Ministry will ensure that everything possible and practicable is done to eliminate risks to health or safety and to provide hazard free workplaces and learning environments.
- 2.5 Minimum standards required for the school facilities and in the learning environment must be met to minimize the occurrence of accidents and sickness and also to improve classroom performance.
- 2.6 The Ministry will at all times support and encourage employees participation in OHS matters through the Health and Safety Committees and Health and Safety Representatives with whom it will establish and undertake regular consultations. The Ministry expects its employees to contribute positively by reporting all potential health and safety hazards to their Supervisors, Health and Safety Committees or Representatives or Heads of Sections.
- 2.7 The occupational Health and Safety Manual for Schools, developed by the Ministry, provides guidelines for safety measures and good practice for healthy work environments. Its primary aim is to ensure that all teachers, workers, students, employees, customers and visitors are not exposed to any health and/or safety risks while they are in a school compound.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Introduction

The Health and Safety at Work Act (HSAWA) 1996 came into force on 1st November 1997. The Act applies in full to all schools because they fall within the definition of a workplace. The Act clearly identifies the roles, responsibilities and functions of employers, workers, persons in control of workplace, manufactures and health and safety inspectors. The Act is administered by the Occupational health and Safety Division of the Ministry of Labour.

The Ministry of Education is deemed to be an employer under the Act, and therefore has legal responsibilities in ensuring compliance with the said Act.

The implementation of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1996 in schools is the shared responsibility of the Ministry of Education, school committee, school principals, vice principals, head teachers, assistant head teachers and heads of department. The responsibilities also filter down to teachers when they are in control of a class whether inside the classroom or outside.

The school management should realize that they are primarily responsible for the health and safety of all workers and students at their school and are therefore liable for any injuries caused on their school premises or workplaces under their control. This basically means that schools must manage occupational health and safety and ensure that it is without any risk to participant's health and safety. This can be achieved in consultation with workers through developing the school's OHS policy and programmes.

Schools are workplaces and the maintenance of safe work environment in schools is important. All schools plan for and document their policies, strategies and actions on safety at school and school-related excursions. There is an urgent need for schools to make greater efforts to educate and train teachers and students to safeguard their own personal safety and to prevent accidents on school premises and on school-related excursions.

Accidents that have occurred in recent relating to fires, sports injuries, or slips on slippery surfaces highlight the need for school managers, head teachers, principals, teachers and all others concerned to improve their efforts in the promotion of the safety of students and staff.

In this regard, Head Teachers and Principals should teach students and staff about the importance of safety and to inculcate in them habits and skills conducive to their own personal safety.

Heads of schools, first and foremost, have a 'duty of care' to their staff and students. They are requested to be personally involved as leaders of their schools in the formulation and implementation of safety programmes in schools. Heads of schools may delegate aspects of the work to their staff, but the responsibility for preparing and implementing suitable programmes is theirs.

3.2 Historical Background of Fiji's OHS Legislation

Fiji inherited its Health and Safety legislation from the British Colonial government. The history of this legislation was focused mainly on control over manufacturing industries and factories.

After Fiji's independence in 1970, the Fiji Factories Ordinance established since January 1958, was updated in 1971. A new Factories Act, 1971 replaced the Factories Ordinance, 1958. This law reflected the early changes in Fiji's industrial needs related closely to Occupational Health and Safety.

Recent changes in OHS legislation had reflected the consultative process under which the new OHS legislation framework was established. Some important changes include the following:

- (a) The new OHS Act is an enabling single legislation designed to ensure self-regulatory management approach to the enterprise and also at national levels.
- (b) This approach is designed to ensure that *“those who create the risks in the workplace and those who work with them, (rather than relying on the government inspectors to deal with OHS issues in the workplace”*.
- (c) The employers 'duty of care' to ensure that employers primary responsibility was to provide healthy workplaces.
- (d) Employer and worker relationship are fostered through consultative arrangements in the workplace, i.e. OHS Committees and OHS Representatives.
- (e) The workers responsibilities under the Act e.g. under Section 25 (on immediate threat issues etc) are classified.

The OHS Act defines and covers all workplaces in Fiji (i.e. on water, land or air) except those workplaces under the mining and quarries industry), the dangerous operations of the Fiji Military force or Police Force, and domestic servants.

The Act also covers workplaces within a Fiji registered or government owned ships or aircrafts, whether the ship or aircraft is within or outside Fiji's territorial waters, land or airspace.

The new OHS legislation is a 'change agent', a reform which promotes better people management practice in the workplace and helps Fiji's industries to improve their productivity and international competitiveness. Further, it enhances and promotes employment opportunities and sustains Fiji's small and vulnerable workforce.

4. RELAVANT LEGISLATION AND OTHER LINKS

Fiji Government. 1996. **Health and Safety at Work Act**. Government Printery, Suva.

Fiji Government. 1997. 'Health and Safety at Work (Representatives and Committees) Regulations'. **Fiji Republic Gazette Supplement**. 49: 520 – 525. Government Printery, Suva.

Fiji Government. 1997. 'Health and Safety at Work (Training) Regulations'. **Fiji Republic Gazette Supplement**.

Fiji Government. 1997. 'Health and Safety at Work (Administration) Regulations'. **Fiji Republic Gazette Supplement**. 49: 529 – 535. Government Printery, Suva.

Ministry of Education. 1994. 'Safety of Students'. **Education Gazette**. LXVI (2): 9 – 13.

Stellman, J. M. 1998. **Encyclopaedia of Occupational Health and Safety**. 4th Edition. Vol. I-IV. International Labour Organisation.

5. PROCEDURES

5.1 Short Title

5.1.1 These procedures may be cited as the Health and Safety at Work Regulations for Schools and Education Workplaces.

5.2 Application

5.2.1 These procedures shall, except where otherwise stated, apply to: -

- (a) Classrooms including all buildings used for teaching and learning.
- (b) Teacher's Quarters.
- (c) Hostel, Dining room, kitchen and associated facilities.
- (d) School environment.
- (e) Special learning areas.
- (f) Special excursions, Fieldtrips and Festivals.
- (g) Other facilities used outside the school environment for teaching, learning and other related activities.

5.3 Policy to bind all Schools

5.3.1 These procedures shall bind Government and non- Government Schools (See Section 4 of the Health and Safety at Work Act).

5.4 Interpretation

5.4.1 In these procedures except otherwise stated; -

“School management” means the school manager and members of the school committee/School Board, and also refers to the Principal, Head Teacher, Vice Principal, Assistant Principal and Assistant Head Teacher.

“School head” means the principal as in the case of secondary school and the head teacher as in the case of primary school.

“School environment” includes school road entry, gardens/farms, trees, sports fields, play areas, incinerator, toilets, taps, well, water tanks, washrooms, showers, rest areas, fish ponds, poultry yard, piggery and cow paddock.

“Special learning areas” includes mosques and churches used by the school.

“Special excursions and festivals” includes picnic, sports tournaments, fieldtrips, educational competitions, festivals, fund raising activities national days, swimming pools, beaches, rivers/lakes and theaters.

“Overloading” means taking of students/teacher in punt/boat/vehicles and any means of approved transportation beyond their capacities.

“Approved transportation”, means any form of transport approved by the Chief Executive Officer for Education.

“Field staff” to include Divisional education officers, Senior Education Officers, Education officers, Education Advisers, Administrative support staff and all officers authorized to travel.

“Chief Health and Safety Inspector” means the Chief Executive Officer for Education.

“The Board” means the National Occupational health and Safety Advisory Board.

“Accredited trainer” means a person for the time being approved by the Board under Section 35 (1) (c) of the Act to conduct an accredited training course.

“Accredited training course” means any training course for the time being approved by the Board under Section 35 (1) (C) of the Act and conducted by an accredited trainer.

5.5 Non – derogation

5.5.1 The provisions of these procedures are in addition to and do not derogate from the provisions of the Education Act.

5.5.2 This means that where there is an existing legislation that needs to be complied with, the Health and Safety at Work Act, 1996, dovetails into that legislation in order to address the health and safety related matters.

5.6 Established of OHS Committees

5.6.1 A school management which employs less than 20 workers shall appoint a health and safety representative.

5.6.2 A school management which employs 20 or more workers shall establish a health and safety committee for that school.

5.6.3 The composition and size of a health and safety committee established at a school shall be determined by agreement between the school management and a representative or representatives elected at meeting of the workers employed in the school

5.6.4 A health and safety committee shall not have fewer than 6 members.

5.6.5 A workers’ representative on a health and safety committee shall hold office for a period of two years, with a proviso that the representative may be re-elected at the end of the two year term.

5.6.6 The workers’ representative on a health and safety committee shall elect one of their members to be the chairperson of the committee after the establishment of the committee and thereafter as the occasion requires.

5.7 Formulation of School OHS Policy

5.7.1 School management under Section 9 (2) of the Health and Safety at Work Act are required to develop a health and safety policy for the school in consultation with its workers and with other persons the employer considers appropriate.

5.7.2 School management should ensure that the school health and safety policy contain the following:

A general statement of expression of management's attitude and commitment to OHS;

A set of general guidelines for OHS functions;

(c) Accepted of primary responsibility for OHS functions including the provision of resources.

(d) Clear lines of responsibility and accountability at all levels including school management, school head, workers, contractors, customers, visitors etc;

(e) Expression of support for joint consultation on all OHS matters (OHS Reps and Committees etc);

5 A reference to quality assurance programmes if relevant; and

6 That this would be reviewed regularly.

5.7.3 The following points should also be noted:

6.6 Policy should be in plain English to be understood by workers and management alike. In some cases it may be necessary to translate the policy into other local languages.

6.7 Length of the policy should not exceed one page.

6.8 Policy to be written under the school's formal letter head.

6.9 Policy to be signed and dated by the school management.

5.7.4 School management shall send a copy of the school's draft health and safety policy to the Chief Executive Officer for Education for vetting before it is typed under the school letterhead and signed by the school management.

5.7.5 The School management shall provide information about the health and safety policy for the school to all its workers, students and visitors.

5.7.6 The school management shall ensure that a written and dated health and safety policy, signed by the school management is displayed in all designated work areas for the workers, and students to read and understand.

5.8 Conduct of OHS Training

5.8.1 The school management is responsible for the conduct of health and safety training for all persons working in the school, including students so as to perform their task safely and without risks to their health, the health and safety of any other worker or workers in the school or any other persons visiting.

5.8.2 The school management is responsible for providing such information, instruction, training and supervision to employees such as necessary to enable them to do their work in a safe manner and without risk.

5.8.3 Training for health and safety committee members and health and safety representative established at a school shall be provided by the employer of the persons employed at the workplace loss of pay (Section 17/20 of HASAW Act, 1996).

5.8.4 The training shall be provided as soon as practicable after a representative has been nominated by the employer or a committee member elected by the workers and shall consist of:

- (a) health and safety representative and committee Functions.
- (b) applicable health and safety regulations.
- (c) inspection – hazard identification, assessment and control
- (d) accident and complaint investigation; and
- (e) effective communication

5.8.5 The training to be provided to health and safety representatives and members of a health and safety committee established in the school shall be provided by an accredited trainer and in accordance with an accredited course.

5.9 Notification of Accidents and Other Matters

5.9.1 Any workplace accidents, incidents or diseases, whether or not it causes death of, or bodily injury to any person must be reported to the Chief Health and Safety inspector not later than 48 hours after the occurrence.

5.9.2 Written notice of the accident, incident or disease should be made on Form OHSF 1. OHSF 2 to be filled and retained by the school and Ministry of Education.

5.9.3 in case of serious injury immediate notice by the most expedient means shall be given to the Chief Health and Safety Inspector followed by a written notice.

5.9.4 In case of rural and isolated schools where notification of accidents cannot reach the Health and Safety Inspector not later than 40 hours, immediate notice must be given to the health and Safety inspector by the most expedient means followed by a written notice.

5.10 Notification of Certain workplace

5.10.1 In schools where there are twenty or more workers employed, the school management shall give notice each year of the prescribed particulars of the workplace by filling form OHSF 3.

5.10.2 The school management or the person in control of the workplace shall give notice no later than 31st March each year.

5.10.3 In schools where twenty or more workers are employed, the fee payable for the annual registration shall be \$50.00 plus \$2.00 for each person employed whether casual permanent.

5.11 Display of Act and Regulations and other relevant information

5.11.1 School management shall ensure that a copy of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1996 and a copy each of the supplementary regulations are available in the school and shall be made available to the workers upon request.

5.11.2 School management shall display on an OHS notice Board in a prominent place to which all the workers have access or make available to the workers a copy of the following:

- (a) Sections 16 – 25 of the Act.
- (b) Legal Notice 168 – Health and Safety at Work (Representatives and Committees) Regulation 1997.
- (c) The school’s health and safety policy.
- (d) Minutes of OHS meeting.

5.12 Establishment of hazard identification and workplace assessment strategy

5.12.1 School management shall ensure that the schools establish a mechanism for hazard identification, assessment and control to ensure a healthy and safe work environment.

5.12.2 School management in consultation with the school’s health and safety representative or health and safety committee, shall:

- (a) Introduce an on going programme to identify, assess and control potential health and safety hazard;
- (b) Carry out regular health and safety inspections of the schoolwork areas and school practices;
- (c) Put in place procedures for reporting hazards and inform the staff and students accordingly;
- (d) Report and enter all incident/ accident data on a suitable register;
- (e) Investigate accidents and the findings recorded, including a formal report for serious accidents to be filled (Form OHSF 1);
- (f) Review accidents/incidents data on a regular basis and analyse trends;
- (g) Set up systems for follow up procedures to ensure that corrective action is taken as a result of workplaces inspections, accident investigation or hazard reports;
- (h) Identify potential on site emergency situation and develop and implement emergency procedures;
- (i) Provide personal protective equipment where required and ensure that they are used correctly and maintained in a serviceable condition. (e.g. ear muffs and eye goggles in technology areas.);
- (j) establish a system to ensure that OHS risks associated with contractors are adequately managed;
- (k) set up procedures for identifying and meeting legislative requirements, standards and cods for purchasing, storage and use of hazardous substance. (Section 52 – 56 of the Health and Safety at Work Act, 1996).

5.13 Development of Schools Safety Procedures

5.13.1 School management in consultation with the health and safety representative or health and safety committee shall develop and implement safety procedures in the school.

5.13.2 School safety programme shall include the following:

- (i) The safety of students, teachers and other workers on school premise
the safety of students on roads
- (ii) safety of students, teachers and other workers when using other modes of transport such as boats
- (iii) safety of students and others when disasters arise e.g. fire, tsunami.

5.13.3 School management shall ensure that safety programmes are carefully planned and safety procedures and precautions should be clearly stated and explained to the workers, teachers and students and where possible, displayed and demonstrated to them.

5.13.4 School management shall provide safety measures to ensure that all teachers, workers and students are free from any risks to their health and/ or safety.

5.14 Emergency Evacuation Plan

5.14.1 The school management shall ensure that the school has procedures in place to manage all foreseeable emergencies.

5.14.2 The evacuation plan shall include a map indicating evacuation routes and shall be on display throughout the school

5.14.3 School management shall ensure that emergency and evacuation drills be conducted regularly.

5.15 Educational travel and transportation on punt/boat/vessel

5.15.1 All school management and school heads should be responsible for: -

- (a) the safety of children while traveling on a regular or hired punt/boat/vessel provided under the educational transport scheme.
- (b) The up keeping of punt/boat/vessel and outboard engine and to ensure that they are in good working conditions and sea worthiness at all times.
- (c) The verifying supervision of loading in boats.
- (d) The restricted time of traveling from 7.00 a.m – 5.00p.m and to travel only in good weather and in daylight.
- (e) Ensuring that all hired boats/punts/vessel have safety features including life jackets or floaters.
- (f) the recording and checking of all entrusted children and teachers who regularly travel on these punts/boats/vessels.
- (g) The security of the entrusted children and teachers while traveling.
- (h) Ensuring that these punts/boats/vessels are checked by education officers on visit to the schools.

5.16 Educational travel and vehicles

5.16.1 All must ensure that:-

- (a) all authorized vehicles used for approved official travel are in good condition and are road worthy.
- (b) There is no overloading of vehicles.
- (c) All traveling are in the normal course of duties.
- (d) There is no continuous driving by nay officer for more than four hours.
- (e) All vehicles are regularly checked and maintained for safety features.
- (f) Normal services are done and that the maintenance record of all vehicles are kept after a long tour of more than 100 km.
- (g) All accidents are reported to the Police, to the CEO for Education and CEO for Labour.

- (h) In case of accidents and injuries officers or students are treated immediately in a nearest hospital or medical centers.
- (i) Only authorized persons are permitted to travel on government vehicles.
- (j) The authorized drivers hold valid driving licenses and authority to drive government vehicles.

5.17 Educational travel on Government/Public Vessels *

5.17.1 All field staff must ensure that : -

- (i) to the Permanent Secretary for Education 48 hours before traveling.
- (ii) all officers are fully briefed in writing by the Tour Coordinator on what to take on tour e.g. ration, clothing, medicine etc.
- (iii) no traveling is done during bad weather against the advice of the Chief Meteorological Officer stationed at Nadi.

5.18 Use of Special Learning Areas-Places of Worship, Churches, Mosque, Temples, etc. by Children and teachers during Official Hours.

5.18.1 All heads of schools must ensure that:-

- (a) the use of such areas by students is restricted to official use only.
- (b) Continuous consultations are made with the management of these special learning areas to ensure the safety of school children/teachers using these areas from time to time.
- (c) Safety precaution is maintained when eating and drinking in these areas.
- (d) children and teachers observe the rules and cultural tradition of such places.
- (e) Permission should be sought from the Ministry of Education, parents/guardians and students are to be fully supervised by the teachers.

5.19 Students' Safety Programme

5.19.1 Programme to be Comprehensive

A school safety programme needs to be comprehensive. It should aim to include in students and staff habits and skills which will ensure and promote their safety when they are in the school compound or outside on school organised activities.

A student safety programme devised by any school should embrace:

- (a) the safety of students on school premises;
- (b) their safety on roads; and, where applicable,
- (c) their safety when they are using modes of transport such as boats.

Students safety programmes should be carefully planned as safety procedures and precautions should be clearly stated and explained to students and staff and where possible, demonstrated to them. This Code of Practice will attempt to provide schools safety measures to ensure that all staff, workers, and students are free from any risks to their health and/ or safety.

5.19.2 Students Safety on School Premises

Relevant rules and procedures should be displayed on school notice boards, in laboratories and other specialist rooms. Teachers conducting laboratory and workshop sessions should see

that the rules and procedures are strictly observed. All places where children play should be safe and free from any potentially dangerous objects (see Appendices 1 – 5).

5.19.3 Supervision

Supervision is an important means of ensuring the observance of safety measures in schools, in all places, at all time and in all situations. Whenever an accident is likely to occur, head teachers and principals are required to arrange for adequate supervision of students. This includes supervision during morning recess, lunch, during all laboratory and workshop sessions.

5.19.4 Legal Consequences

School managers, head teachers, principals and teachers should be fully aware of the possible legal consequences of not adopting all reasonable precautionary measures to prevent accidents during normal school hours and of any negligence on their part.

5.19.5 Students not to be exposed to Danger

There can be serious consequences, legal ones included, of any accident which occurs when a student is asked to do anything which cannot be regarded as a normal school activity. For example, a student should not be sent on errands to places outside the school premises. If this rule is breached and a student is involved in an accident, this can have legal consequences for both the controlling authority of the school as well as the teacher(s) concerned. Similarly, students should not be asked to do any work, which is potentially dangerous such as climbing a tree and cutting off its branches. Others may include swimming across rivers during flood, playing outside during a storm, entering the workplace without proper protective clothing. Notices to be put in high risk areas to prevent these accidents from happening.

5.19.6 Activities Outside the School

When organising activities, which require students to leave the school premises for such events as picnics and sport tournaments, head teachers and principals are required to obtain the written approval of the parents/ guardians of the students concerned. They are reminded that after such concurrence has been obtained they have an even greater obligation to adopt all normal and reasonable safety precautions for the trips concerned.

5.19.7 Road Safety

A school road safety programme should aim to inculcate in students habits and skills which will ensure and promote their safety when they are boarding buses, travelling in them as passengers, disembarking, crossing roads and walking on roads which do not have footpaths (see Appendix T).

The prevention of road accidents involving students needs special attention because of the rapid increase in the number of such accidents. A school's road safety programme should take full account of the following factors:

- (a) the behaviour of students as pedestrians and passengers;
- (b) liaison with the owners and operators of buses and government officials responsible for transport;
- (c) the need for supervisory arrangements when students arrive at school by bus etc, and also when they leave school.

The programme should be designed in collaboration with all other parties concerned such as the owners and operators of buses, boats, etc.; the Road Safety officials responsible for transport and parents.

5.19.8 Travel by Boat

There has been no record of serious mishap recently involving students who use boats and punts as a means of transport to and from school. However, there is no room for complacency in this regard.

Head teachers and principals of schools who have such students are also requested to prepare and implement suitable safety programmes for the benefit of their students (see Appendix W).

5.20 Safety Procedures and Practice

5.20.1 Hazard Identification Assessment and Control

The school needs to:

- (a) introduce an on going programme to identify, assess and control potential health and safety hazard
 - (b) incorporate into the curriculum procedures for staff and students to control and minimise risks.
 - (c) Carry out regular health and safety inspections of the schoolwork areas and school practises.
 - (d) Introduce hazard reporting procedures in place and inform the staff and students of the process for reporting health and safety hazards.
 - (e) Report and enter all incident/ accident data on suitable register.
 - (f) Investigate accidents and the findings recorded, including a format report for serious accidents to be filled (see Appendix X).
 - (g) Review accident/ incident data on a regular basis and analyse trends.
 - (h) Set up systems for follow up procedures to ensure that corrective action is taken as a result of workplace inspections, accident investigation or hazard reports.
 - (i) Identify potential on site emergency situation and develop and implement emergency procedures.
 - (j) Provide personal equipment where required and ensure that they are used correctly, and maintained in a serviceable condition (e.g. ear muffs and eye goggles in technology areas).
 - (k) Establish a system to ensure that OHS risks associated with contractors are adequately managed.
-
- (i) set up procedures for identifying and meeting legislative requirements, standards and codes for purchasing, storage and use of hazardous substance. (Section 52-56)

5.20.2 Safety Requirements for Kindergartens

Play Room and Indoor Area

- (a) The premises must be approved and be maintained always to the satisfaction of the appropriate Health Authority.

- (b) There must be a minimum floor space of 0.93 sq. meter. Per child and not more than 35 children may be accommodated in any one room or hall.
- (c) Floors must be free from splinters or be covered throughout by mats. If the children are to sit on concrete floor.
- (d) Adequate sanitary facilities must be provided. Toilets pans should be no more than 0.25m – 0.30m high and there must be one for every 15 children or part thereof.
- (e) Wash hand basins should be set .6m high; a mirror fixed over the basin is desirable.
- (f) There must be adequate provisions for safe drinking water.
- (g) All eating and drinking must be kept in a hygienic condition.

Special Room

- (a) A suitable place must be provided, satisfactorily furnished and equipped, for use in case of illness. It should be isolated from the play area.
- (b) An adequate first-aid kit must be available and contents to be changed regularly.

Outdoor Play Area

- (a) There should be a minimum play space of 9.0 sq. meters per child and the layout should allow for easy supervision of all areas.
- (b) There should be suitably drained and surfaced and it should provide some shade.
- (c) The play area should be adequately fenced on all sides with a gate, which can be securely fastened. A galvanised wire fence 1.2 meters high is desirable.
- (d) All equipment should be safe, clean and in good conditions.
- (e) Furniture provided should be of a size and height suitable for small children.
- (f) A waste paper basket and garbage tin must be provided.

5.20.3 Safety In School Excursion/ Picnic

School excursion as part of the teaching programme will require the same duty of care as exists on school premises. Because greater dangers can arise when children are away from school, it may be necessary to maintain a reasonably safe environment. HODs/ Team leaders must:

- (a) seek approval from the Ministry of Education
- (b) obtain parental permission in writing
- (c) identify a safe excursion/ picnic spot
- (d) seek approval from landowners for the use of the excursion or picnic site.
- (e) Inform parents of details of the excursion
- (f) Ensure proper planning is an essential part of any teacher's duty of care in relation to excursions
- (g) Ensure safe transport arrangements must be made.
- (h) Ensure teachers are given a thorough prior briefing on matters relating to safety, control and behaviour of the students.
- (i) Make a list of all the children, teacher and parents who will be going.
- (j) ensure a roll call is made before and after the excursion/ picnic.
- (k) Always brief students on behaviour while boarding/ getting off the bus, behaviour while in the bus and their behaviour while at the picnic/ excursion site.
- (l) Ensure some selected parent to accompany the students and teachers.

- (m) Ensure a vehicle is always available in case of an emergency
- (n) Ensure strict supervision during the excursion/picnic is maintained
- (o) Ensure students work/walk in pairs of the same sex
- (p) appoint a responsible parent to look after students belongings.
- (q) Make sure students clean up excursion/picnic spot before leaving
- (r) Always arrange transport for students due to late arrival from the excursion/picnic.
- (s) Ensure the teacher in charge submit a report on the excursion/picnic.
- (t) Ensure the teacher in charge submit a report of any incident/accident/injuries that occur during the excursion/picnic.
- (u) Always carry a First Aid Kit on the excursion/picnic trip.

5.20.4 Safety Outdoors

Special precautions are necessary outdoors where students and young children play or work. Make your garden and playground hazard free.

5.20.4-1 Potential Hazard in the Garden.

- a) Uneven pathways and steps that can cause falls.
- b) Slippery pathways.
- c) Tools and rubbish left lying around carelessly.
- d) Insufficient outside lightning which can cause falls.

5.20.4-2 Safety Tips

- a) Wear the right personal protective equipment for the right task.
- b) When using tools, drive them away from you rather than towards you.
- c) Train students to use tools in the correct way.
- d) Tools used must be in good working order.
- e) Make sure you have a first – aid kit close by.
- f) keep the workplace clean and hazard free.
- g) Children must be supervised when work in the garden.
- h) Students are not to work/play outside during heavy rain, thunder and lightning.

5.20.4-3 Safety on the Playing Field

Children love to play outside, make your playground safe for them to play.

- a) Ensure that there is no physical hazard on the playing field.
- b) Remove all potential hazards on the playground.
- c) Keep ground surface firm with grass growing.
- d) Keep playground surface free of protruding stones and sharp edges.
- e) Ground drains must be safe for children playing.
- f) Ensure a safe distance from the edge of the building, trees growing close to the ground, drains and power poles.
- g) Keep the playground clean and safe for playing.
- h) Always supervise children when they play.

5.20.5 Safety in Agriculture Education

5.20.5-1 Tools

- a) Agricultural tools should always be kept in good working order. Use them correctly, carry them carefully and store them safely.
- b) Use tools only for the purpose it was designed for.
- c) Ensure that you are at a safe distance from the others when using a sharp tool e.g. knife.
- d) Keep sharp tools in a safe place to avoid accidents.
- e) Train students to use tools in the correct way.

5.20.5-2 Chemical

- a) Always store chemical in their original containers.
- b) Have a separate storeroom for agricultural chemicals and fertilisers (Do not store them together with tools).
- c) Always wear personal protection equipment when handling chemicals.
- d) Do not eat, drink or smoke when handling chemicals.
- e) Never touch, taste or smell chemicals unless instructed to do by instructor.
- f) Label all chemicals correctly

5.20.5-3 General

- (a) Ensure the workplace is hazard free.
- (b) Children must be supervised when they work in the garden.
- (c) Train students to follow the safety measures when using tools and handling chemicals.
- (d) Wear good protective foot wears when working outdoors.

5.20.6 Safety In Building Construction

5.20.6-1 Accident Prevention

The elementary precautions to be followed by everyone working on a building site so as to ensure the safety of all are listed under:

1. Personal Tidiness
2. Tidy Work Area
3. Protective Clothing

5.20.6-2 Personal Tidiness

- a) Wear appropriate clothing for the job in hand and avoid loose fitting clothing, trailing bootlaces, and particularly when working with portable machines.
- b) When wearing a jacket or parka, watch out for loose sleeves and flaps.
- c) Wear tightly fitting sleeves or roll your sleeves up.
- d) Loose sleeves are dangerous.
- e) Keep your jersey tucked in. a sloppy jersey hanging loosely over a nail pouch or waist apron can easily get caught up.
- f) Keep the end of your hamper and pouch belt short, or if you wear an apron, tie strings firmly. Dangling ends of belts and strings are dangerous.

- g) Ensure your trousers fit neatly at the ankles. Don't risk tripping over trousers that are too long.
- h) Wear good solid footwear for outdoor work. Sandals, or jangles. Should not be worn at any time for work.
- i) Hold back long hair firmly, particularly if operating machines, electric drills, or other potential power tools.
- j) Wearing of rings is not recommended. They may become caught on a nail or other sharp protrusion in injury or loss of finger.

5.20.6-3 *Tidy Work Area*

“Safety” begins with a clean and tidy site. The importance of a tidy work area cannot be over emphasised, as not only are accidents, but work is carried out more efficiently.

Always Guard Against:

- a) *Spilt concrete on timber formwork and on the ground:* On completion of concreting, wash down the formwork, and break up split concrete so that it doesn't set into a solid mass.
- b) *Scattered aggregate:* Shovel unusual aggregate into a heap so that it doesn't become scattered over the site.
- c) *Unstacked timber:* The orderly stacking of timber not only keep the site clean and tidy but enables lengths to be easily selected and minimise timber defects.
- d) *Build-up of timber off cuts:* Gather or heap off cuts into a pile well clear of the work place, especially around the saw bench.
- e) *Scattering unusable timber:* Heap timber that is considered waste (firewood) in a position that will not obstruct any operation.
- f) *Litter:* Avoid dropping litter such as fruit skins, paper empty packets and any slippery material in the meal shed or around the site. Ensure that rubbish tins are provided and used.

5.20.6-4 *Protective Clothing*

For normal work, a short apron is sufficient to protect ordinary clothes from timber scuffing, priming paints, and so on. Jeans are good as working trousers, as they are reasonably tight fitting.

(a) *Head Protection:*

Where injury resulting from objects falling from above is likely and the fixing of overhead protection is impracticable, “protective helmets” (hard hats) must be worn by workmen and by a visitor who enters the site.

(b) *Footwear*

In choosing boots or shoes, keep in mind the risk of injury to the feet. Feet can be accidentally injured by:

- a) Dropping tools, timber or assembled items on them
- b) Trapping a foot between objects
- c) Banging the toes against solid objects or
- d) Standing on nails left protruding from timber
- e) Specially made “industrial” boots or shoes with strong leather uppers, thick rubber soles and steel toe caps are ideal for outdoor works.

- f) Strong shoes are suitable for indoor work where there is less risk of foot injury than in outdoor situations.

5.20.7 Safety of Students

5.20.7-1 On School Premises

- (a) School Head teachers and Principals are responsible for the formulation and implementation of students' safety programs in their schools.
- (b) A students' safety programme designed by any school should embrace:
 - (i) The safety of student in the school premises;
 - (ii) Their safety on roads and other school events. (Picnics, Excursion, Fieldtrip, Swimming spots);
 - (iii) Their safety when using other modes of transport such as boats.
- (c) Safety procedures and precautions shall be clearly stated and explained to students and where possible, demonstrated to them.
- (d) Relevant procedures should be prominently displayed in laboratories, and other specialist rooms.
- (e) All places where children play should be safe.
- (f) Supervision is an important means of ensuring the observance of safety measures in schools, and in all places where students are not involved, at all times.

5.20.7-2 Outside the School

- a) Written approval from parents must be obtained before students leave the school for organised activities outside the school.
- b) All safety precautions must be taken if students visit factories and industrial areas.
- c) Provision of an adequate number of supervisions for students during the visit is important.
- d) Strict supervision is important on the way, during activity and after the activity to avoid accidents.

5.20.8 Safety in the Industrial Arts Workshop

5.20.8-1 Students

- a) Avoid making hurried or careless movements, which could cause collisions with other students and result in cuts and abrasions.
- b) Dangers of loose clothing and long hair when using machines.
- c) No tool or machine to be used by a pupil without having first received instructions in its operation.
- d) Care in the handling of hot metal, e.g. when forging.
- e) Wear a protective shield over the eyes when loose chips of metal are liable to occur.
- f) All students to wear shoes or suitable protective footwear in the workshop.

5.20.8-2 Teachers

- a) Ensure that the workshop is tidy from the safety aspect, e.g., no loose pieces of metal on the floor or unnecessary projections such as wall brackets situated in the dangerous positions.
- b) Clean up immediately any oil that may have spilled on the floor.

- c) A first aid kit must be provided in each workshop well stocked, and prominently displayed. It must not be locked.
- d) Accident report forms to be readily available, and in the event of an accident prompt action must be taken;
- e) All teachers should have first aid training, which must include treatment for cuts, burns, electric shock, and artificial respiration.
- f) Always report any potential danger risk in the workshop to the Principal in writing, and keep a copy.

5.20.9 *Safety in Using Gases in Schools*

- a) Cylinders should be stored separately in a well-ventilated area.
- b) Leaking cylinders or equipment should not be used.
- c) In case of leaks any possible ignition source should be avoided.
- d) Smoking where flammable gases are stored or used should be prohibited.
- e) The safest way of extinguishing a fire is usually to stop the supply of gas.
- f) Gas cylinders should be used for the purpose for which they are intended.
- g) The cylinders should be removed from fires or excessive heat
- h) Have a fire extinguisher installed in the lab.
- i) Provision of Safety Operational Procedure and training must be given to lab users.
- j) A first aid kit must be available in the workplace.

5.20.10 *Safety in the Home Economics Rooms*

- a) Protective clothing should be worn at all times in the clothing and food rooms.
- b) All equipment used should be in good working condition.
- c) Keep workplace clean and tidy at all times so that accident is avoided and work is carried out more efficiently.
- d) Display safety procedures for use of operators close to the equipment.
- e) Always have the right number of students in the Home economic room at any one time to avoid accidents.
- f) Furniture used in the rooms should meet the standard requirements.
- g) Floor covering for rooms should be tiled or covered with linoleum.
- h) All rooms must be provided in both rooms.
- i) Train students to follow the safety procedures when using equipment and machines.
- j) Students must be supervised by teachers at all times in their classes.

5.20.11 *Safety on the Playing Field*

Children love to play outside, make your playground safe for them to play.

- a) Ensure that there is no physical hazard on the playing field.
- b) Remove all potential hazards on the ground.
- c) Keep ground surface firm with grass growing.
- d) Keep playground surface free of protruding stones and sharp edges.
- e) Ground drains must be safe for children playing. Ensure a safe distance from the edge of the building, trees growing close to the ground, drains and power poles.
- f) Keep the playground clean and safe for playing
- g) Always supervise children when they play.
- h) Ensure that proper and safe sports equipment is used.
- i) Ensure that a First Aid Kit is readily available and fully equipped.

- j) First Aid personnel should get special training
- k) Obey safety rules in use of sports equipment eg. javelin

5.20.12 Safety on Roads

5.20.12-1 Walking

- a) Use the walkway where one is provided
- b) Walk in single line on the right-hand side of the road and keep well into the side.
- c) Watch out for the drivers pulling out of the road and parking at the edges.
- d) Never play around on the road or at its edges.
- e) Take a lot of care when walking across the road.

5.20.12-2 Rules for Crossing

- a) Find the safest place to cross.
- b) STOP
- c) Stand back a little from the edge of the road or kerb.
- d) Look left and right for moving traffic, and listen.
- e) If traffic is near and coming towards you, let it pass.
- f) When there is no traffic near in either direction, walk quickly straight across the road.

5.20.12-3 Getting on and off Vehicles [eg. Bus, Trucks, etc.]

1. Waiting

- 1) Stand well back from the kerb or edge of the road when waiting for the bus.
- 2) Stand well away until the vehicle has stopped.
- 3) Wait for people to get off before you walk inside.
- 4) While waiting, stand in a queue and wait for your turn to get in.

2. On the Bus

- a) Stay seated until the bus stops for you to get off.
- b) Never distract the driver or play in the bus.
- c) Do not lean out of the window or do not put your hands or arms out of the window.
- d) Children are to follow all safety notices in the bus.
- e) Always find a seat and stay seated during the journey/trip.

3. Getting Off

- a) Wait until it has stopped before you leave your seat.
- b) Wait until the bus has moved away before you cross the road.
- c) Walk well away from the bus and find a safe place to cross (if you have to cross the road).

5.20.13 Safety in Government Vehicles and Field Staff Travelling While on Duty (DEOs, SEOs and Eos)

- a) Vehicles used by officers for school visit must be road worthy.
- b) Vehicles more than 1 year old must pass the Ministry of Transport Test for its road worthiness.

- c) The seats must be comfortable for travelling long distances and rough roads.
- d) Seat belts must be secure for all officers.
- e) All vehicles are regularly maintained and checked for safety features, e.g. fuel, oil, spare tyres, tools are in order and after travel.
- f) No more than 3 passengers apart from the driver shall travel in the vehicle at any one time.
- g) A proper apartment for the luggage in the vehicles is essential.
- h) Air conditioning is needed in vehicles especially while travelling long distances and on dusty roads.
- i) All vehicles must carry tools for changing tyres.
- j) Ensure that only qualified and approved drivers are allowed to drive Government vehicles (valid driving licence).
- k) Travelling during the course of duties.
- l) No continuous driving for more than four hours.
- m) A maintenance record of all vehicles must be checked after a long tour of more than 100km.
- n) All accidents must promptly be reported to the police.
- o) In case of accidents and injuries, officers must be medically examined immediately in a Government Hospital.
- p) Vehicles must carry authorised passengers and travel only during the course of duties.
- q) Provide a report on vehicle after long journey to office/ other offices before vehicle is used for another trip especially use of vehicle over week-ends.

5.20.14 *Safety on Boats*

- a) Boats/ Vessels in which officials will be travelling should possess an official certificate from the Marine Department for its sea worthiness.
- b) At least two-experience crews must man the boat with waterproof shelters and strategic facilities to protect the offices from the sea and rain.
- c) The boat/vessel must be equipped with extra life jackets, set of navigation instruments, fire extinguishers, and other necessities such as oars, drinking water, radio and light.
- d) A speedboat must be powered by at least one good condition engine with a capacity of at least 40-horse power and extra fuel must be available.
- e) On large vessels with cabins, each officer must be given a cabin during the whole length of the travel.
- f) A first aid box with all the necessary dressings, medicines and ointment must be available.
- g) For long distance journeys and travelling on open seas officers must board bigger vessels or ferries.
- h) For short distant journeys on lagoons, officer can travel on open boats or punts with all the safety precaution taken.
- i) Travel during day only when travelling in outboard motors and punts.
- j) Do not overload boats with cargoes and passengers.
- k) For long journeys 2 – 3 hours take food and water on board.

5.21 General Duties Relating to Health and Safety at Work

5.21.1 *Duties of Employers to Workers [Section 9]*

Every Employer Shall Ensure the Health and Safety at work of all his or her Workers [Section 9.1].

This involves the employer providing: -

- a) OHS policy in consultation with workers
- b) Safe use of plant and substance;
- c) Information
- d) Safety equipment and protective clothing
- e) Supervision
- f) House keeping
- g) Ongoing review and improvements of the OHS policy.

The employer is also responsible for non-workers in the work place. It is important for every employer to make sure that persons not under his or her employment or contract of service are not exposed to risks to their health and safety arising from the conduct of his while they are at his/her work place.

An Employer contravenes this Section if he/she fails to [Section 9 (2)]

- a) provide and maintain plant and systems of work that are safe and without risks to health.
- b) Provide, in appropriate languages, such information, instruction, training and supervision as to ensure the health and safety at work.
- c) Ensure any work place under the employers control is maintained in a condition that is safe and without risks to health.
- d) Ensure that the Notice, “Trespasses will be solely at their own risks and will be prosecuted” put up at the place of risk.

5.21.2 Workers Responsibilities [Section 13]

5.21.2-1 Every worker shall

- a) take reasonable care of the health and safety of any worker; including himself or herself or other persons.
- b) Cooperate with employers in their efforts to comply with their duties or obligations.
- c) Use equipment in accordance with any instructions given by the employer.
- d) Take reasonable care and be responsible for their actions in maintaining plants and equipments.

5.21.2-2 Workers are also to co-operate with the employer by:

- (a) notifying supervisors of actual hazards.
- (b) Wearing safety equipment provided by the employer for that purpose.
- (c) Observing safe system of work.
- (d) Participating in health and safety training.
- (e) Following the instructions and information for the purpose of health and safety at work.

5.22 Workplace Arrangements

5.22.1 Workplace Health and safety Representatives or Committee [Section 16 & 18]

- a) A Health and safety representative may be appointed if there are less than 20 workers at the workplace.
- b) A Committee shall be established by the employer if there are 20 or more workers at the workplace.
- c) A person shall cease to be a Health & Safety representative upon:-
 - (i) ceasing to be a worker
 - (ii) resigning as a Health & Safety representative.
 - (iii) Being disqualified under Section 22 of the Health & Safety at work Act, 1996.

5.22.2 Functions of Health and Safety Representative [Section 17 & 20]

A Health and Safety Representative may: -

- a) Inspect a workplace after notifying the employer;
- b) Investigate accidents etc;
- c) Investigate OHS complaints;
- d) Represent workers in discussion with employers;
- e) Refer matter to Health and Safety Committee where one exists;
- f) Consult and co-operate with employers on OHS matters;
- g) Liaise with workers on OHS matters.

5.22.3 Health and Safety Committee: Composition, Functions and Training [Sections 19 & 20]

5.22.3-1 Committees shall consist of: -

- (a) person[s] elected by worker;
- (b) person[s] nominated by employer;
- (c) at least half must be worker representatives;
- (d) worker representative must work at the workplace.

5.22.3 - 2 Functions of Committee

- (i) The functions of a health and safety committee are to;
 - (a) facilitate cooperation between employer and workers on OHS;
 - (b) assist in advising workers on health and safety practices, procedures and policies;
 - (c) investigate OHS matters at the workplace;
 - (d) request Inspector's assistance to resolve OHS matters where necessary.
- (ii) What does the Health and Safety Chairperson do?

The Chairperson:

- (a) schedules meetings and notifies members;
- (b) prepares the agenda and includes items submitted by other members, workers or representatives.

- (c) Invites specialties or resource people when requested by the committee e.g. Health and Safety Inspector, Hygienists, Safety Engineers and others;
- (d) Guides the meeting according to the agenda and time available;
- (e) Ensures all discussions items and with a decision and define outcome e.g. Hazards: its risks, who is responsible of controlling it and feedback;
- (f) Reviews and approves the minutes; and
- (g) Ensures the committee carries out its functions under Section 20 of the Health and Safety at Work Act, 1996.

(iii) *What are the Health and Safety Secretaries' Duties?*

The Committee's Secretary:

- (a) keeps the committee records which shall be placed in the custody of the employer for safekeeping.
- (b) Reports on status of recommendations;
- (c) Prepares the minutes;
- (d) Distributes the minutes after approval; and assist the Chairperson required.

(iv) *What does the Health and Safety Agenda include?*

The Agenda includes:

- (a) meeting time, venue and date;
- (b) the introduction of visitors and other introductions where necessary;
- (c) apologies for those not attending;
- (d) health and safety business arising from the minutes (including progress reports on outstanding items);
- (e) reports – health and safety inspections, accidents, statistics, etc;
- (f) correspondence;
- (g) new or other business
- (h) health and safety information session (when applicable); and
- (i) time date and place of the next meeting.

(v) *What does the Health and Safety Minutes include?*

The minute include:

- (a) the time, date and venue of the meeting;
- (b) details of the attendance;
- (c) items discussed (reports, problems, statistics etc);
- (d) reasons for health and safety recommendation and counter arguments raised;
- (e) health and safety recommendations – specifying action needed, by when and by whom;
- (f) time and date of next meeting;
- (g) signature of chairperson.

5.22.4 Training of Health and Safety Representatives and Committee Members

The employer shall provide the training of the health and safety representative and members of an occupational health and safety committee as soon as practicable. The

training shall be carried out during working hours at the workplace without loss of pay.

5.22.5 Responsibilities of Employers to the Health and Safety Representatives and Committees [Section 21]

An employer shall: -

- (a) consult with health and safety representatives and health and safety committees on the practices, procedures or policies that are to be followed at the workplace.
- (b) At the request of the worker, permit a health and safety representative or committee member to present at any interview concerning occupational health and safety.
- (c) Permit a health and safety representative or committee member to accompany an Inspector during an inspection of a work place.
- (d) Immediately notify a health and safety representative or committee member of any accident, injury, dangerous occurrence, immediate threat or risk or hazardous situations;
- (e) Provide other assistance to Health and Safety representatives or committees to facilitate performance of their duties under the Act.

5.22.6 Disqualification of Health and Safety Representative or Committee Member [Section 22]

Any employer or worker may apply to the permanent Secretary of Industrial Relations seeking disqualification on the ground that: -

- (a) The Health and Safety representative or committee member has acted:
 - (i) with intention of only causing harm to the employer or the employer's undertaking;
 - (ii) unreasonably, capriciously or otherwise than for the purpose for which the power was conferred on the representative or committee member.
- (b) The representative or committee member has intentionally used or disclosed information for purposes not connected with functions
- (c) The person is no longer considered to represent the majority of the workers.

5.22.7 Discriminating Against Workers – Unlawful Dismissal [Section 23]

An employer shall not dismiss a worker or alter his/her employment conditions for:

- (a) making a complaint about a health and safety matter;
- (b) being a health and safety representative or a member of a health and safety committee;
- (c) exercising the functions of a health and safety representative or committee member.

5.22.8 Remedies for Discriminating Against Workers [Section 24]

In addition to imposing a penalty on the person convicted against *Section 23* of this Act, the Court may order him to:

- a) pay compensation; and/ or
- b) reinstate the dismissed worker.

5.22.9 Immediate Threat [Section 25]

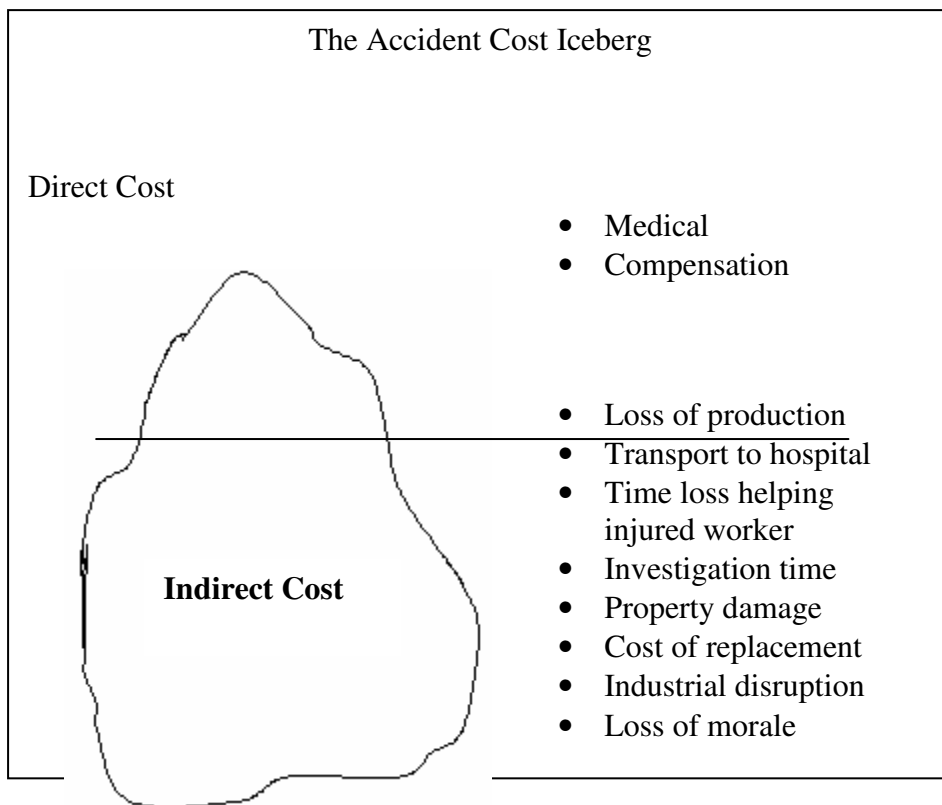
- (a) Where a worker believes there is immediate threat or safety unless the worker ceases to perform particular work, the worker shall:
 - (i) inform supervisor; or
 - (ii) if his/her supervisor is not present – cease work and inform supervisor at the earliest that the work has ceased.
- (b) Supervisor shall take appropriate action to remove threat, which may include directing workers to cease work. If any disagreement arises between a worker and the supervisor either party may ask an OHS Inspector to investigate and to make decisions and exercise necessary powers under this Act.
- (c) Employer may assign worker to other work within contract of service.

5.23 Records and Costs

Notification and Recording of Accidents etc. [Section 26-29]

- (a) Workplace accidents to be notified to the Chief Inspector whether or not it causes death of, or bodily injury to any person. The accident report from OHSF 1 (Appendix B) must be used when reporting accidents and must be sent to the Ministry of Labour within 48 hours;
- (b) The Chief Inspector must also be notified of other matters affecting health or safety of any person in the workplace.
- (c) A record of all accidents and near miss accidents must be kept in the workplace.
- (d) An employer who employs twenty or more persons shall notify the Chief Inspector each year the prescribed particulars of the workplace. The notice shall be accompanied by the prescribed fee.
- (e) Failing to report an accident, a \$10,000 penalty in the case of corporation or \$5,000 in any other case.
- (f) Failing to provide the inspector with information or obstructing a inspector - \$10,000 in case of corporation or \$5,000 in any other case. [Section 43[6] and 45[2].
- (g) Failing to comply with improvement notices - \$10,000 in case or corporation or \$5,000 in any other case. [Section 46[3] - \$20,000 or \$10,000 [Section 47[3] and 47[5]].
- (h) General Penalty - \$15,000 or \$1,000 [Section 66[1]].

THE REAL COST OF HEALTH AND SAFETY PROBLEMS



5.24 Revision of these Procedures

Parts of all these procedures shall be reviewed as necessary or amended from time to time through the Policy Reference Group and CEO.

6. GUIDELINES

6.1 Managing Occupational Health and Safety in Schools - The Six Steps

The following six –step approach will assist schools in the implementation of school-based OHS programmes:

1. Develop an OHS Policy
2. Set up a consultative mechanism with workers.
3. Establish a training strategy.
4. Establish a hazard identification and workplace assessment strategy.
5. Develop and implement risk control strategies.
6. Promote, maintain and improve these strategies.

6.2 How do you Develop OHS Programmes

An OHS programme is a planned, coordinated activity to achieve the OHS policy objectives of the organization or school. The school's OHS health and safety representative/ or health and safety committee should be involved in programme development with management.

Consider these points:-

- | | | | |
|-----|---------------------|---|--|
| (a) | Identify Problems | : | What are the hazards? |
| (b) | Develop Programmes | : | What does this strategy involve? |
| (c) | Implement | : | Who is responsible for managing the programme? |
| (d) | objectives | : | How will we know if it is successful? |
| (e) | Monitor | : | How will we ensure that the programme runs smoothly? |
| (f) | Evaluate and Review | : | How will we decide whether to continue with change or discontinue the programme? |

6.3 Step 1: Formulation of the School's Occupational Health and Safety Policy

An OHS Policy is a statement of a principle that the employer's organization upholds. Its objective is to reflect the management's positive attitude and commitment to OHS in the workplace/schools.

Under Section 9 [2] [f] of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1996, employers at national and local levels are required to develop an OHS policy in consultation with its workers and with other persons the employer considers appropriate.

6.3.1 Requirement of the Policy

Each school is required to have its own OHS Policy, which should be developed in consultation with its workers (school staff, support staff, students/parents and other workers within the school).

An employer who employs twenty (20) or more workers shall establish a Health and Safety Committee in the workplace [Section 18 (1) of the Act]. In schools where there are less than twenty (20) workers, the workers may appoint a health and safety representative for that school.

The school prefect or students representatives can also be included in the consultation process to maximize the representations from all sectors.

This will enhance the flow of information and communications regarding potential hazards and risks in the school. The management will be enriched with knowledge of things or activities, which has the potential to cause harm to students and other people on the school premises. The management should be proactive in controlling the hazards and risks before they cause accidents.

6.3.2 Why have an OHS Policy?

- (a) Legal requirement.
- (b) Foundation for effective OHS programmes.
- (c) Provide a strong lead by management.
- (d) Basis for proper management just as other management functions – policies for purchasing, costing etc.
- (e) To be incorporated in the organization's corporate plan/business plan.

6.3.3 What does the Policy do?

- (a) It makes a statement of belief and intent.
- (b) It gives direction from management.
- (c) It must apply throughout the organization.
- (d) It provides a guide for decision.
- (e) It provides a guide for action.

6.3.4 What is a Good Policy?

- (a) it demonstrates commitment.
- (b) It ensures accountability at all levels.
- (c) It encourages co-operation and participation.
- (d) It is clearly understood by all – management and workers.
- (e) Policies should be reviewed regularly and updated where necessary.

6.3.5 How do you Formulate a Policy?

- (a) Draft a simple statement of the organization's commitment to OHS.
- (b) Develop the ideas in the statement in consultation with workers and OHS representatives/committee.
- (c) Finalize policy after wide consultation. The policy should outline responsibilities and accountabilities of management, supervisors and workers (and non-workers).

6.3.6 Contents of the Policy

It is recommended that organizations (school) OHS policy developed under Section 9 (2) (f) of Fiji's Health and Safety at Work Act 1996 should have the following features:

- (a) A general statements of expression of management attitude and commitment to OHS.
- (b) A set of general guidelines for OHS functions.
- (c) Acceptance of basic responsibility for OHS functions including Head Teachers, Principals, School Managers, Managing Authorities of schools.
- (d) Clear lines of responsibility and accountability at all levels including managers, workers, contractors, customers, visitors, students etc.
- (e) Expression of support for joint consultation on all OHS matters (OHS Rep, and Committees etc.).
- (f) A reference to Quality Assurance Programs if relevant.

- (g) Policy should be in simple plain English to be understood by workers/students and management. In some cases it may be necessary to translate the policy into local languages.
- (h) Length of policy should not exceed one page.
- (i) Policy to be written and posted under the school's formal letterhead.
- (j) Policy to be signed and dated by the Head of School/Institution, Head Teacher, Principal and the School Manager, See Appendix A for a sample school policy.

6.3.7 Publicize the Policy

Promote policy and related procedures in meetings, seminars, newsletter, on notice boards all induction programmes.

6.4 Step 2: Set up a consultative Mechanism with Workers.

Ensure co-operation by letting your workers know what you are doing and why you are doing it. Involve management and workers in your efforts using this consultative mechanism:-

- (a) Establish a workplace OHS representative and / or committee.
- (b) Have meetings, workshops, surveys, suggestion boxes, etc, to start the consultation process and let workers know what you are doing.
- (c) Provide information about OHS in general, the legislation and the key workplace culture change necessary in your organization.
- (d) Ensure that all workers input are valued.

6.5 Step 3: Establish a Training Strategy

- (a) Analyses work tasks and the knowledge or skill level required to perform the tasks.
- (b) Plan and conduct training and skill development for the safe performance of work tasks.
- (c) Plan and conduct training in the safe systems of work that have been developed.
- (d) Include OHS principles in worker induction programmes.
- (e) Plan and conduct training to monitor its effectiveness.
- (f) OHS should be integrated into the training programme of an organization rather than simply be an add – on after the event.
- (g) Information, instruction and supervision are integral to an effective training strategy and the fulfilment of duty of care requirements.

6.6 Step 4: Establish Hazard Identification and Workplace Assessment Strategy.

6.6.1 Hazard identification

(a) Systematic Identification

- (1) OHS – systematic/periodic inspection to evaluate implementation and effectiveness of company's OHS system (OHS professional).
- (2) Workplace inspections – regular workplace inspections by managers, supervisors and OHS representative, committee members to determine existing hazards by observation.

- (3) Injury and illness records – employers must keep records on injuries and illnesses. These statistics can be analysed to alert the school to the presence of hazards in the school premises.
 - (4) Accident investigations – workplaces should have a set of procedures for investigating and reporting on accidents, health issues and new misses to identify the causes and necessary remedial action.
 - (5) Health/ environment monitoring – experts may be used to take measurements in the workplace to monitor the effectiveness of control strategy.
- (b) *Incidental Investigations:*
- (ii) Complaints – many workplace hazards are brought to the attention of a supervisor or manager through complaints by workers.
 - (iii) Observation – principals, head teachers or health and safety representative and health and safety committee members, as part of their normal duties, continually observe work procedures and should be on the look-out for possible hazards.

6.6.2 Workplace Assessment

Once hazards have been identified, the next step is to assess their significance.

There are many types of hazards, e.g., physical, chemical, biological, ergonomical, psychological, and so the methods for assessing them will be quite different. However, a few general points can be made on the factors that need to be considered when assessing hazards. These are: -

- (a) Number of factors
- (b) Exposure
- (c) Severity
- (d) Human difference

6.7 Step 5: Develop and Implement Risk Control Strategies

Use the Hierarchy of Control method to help you decide the best way to control risks.

6.7.1 Hierarchy of Control

To use the Hierarchy of Control method, ask the following questions:

- (a) Is it possible to remove the risk at the design stage?
- (b) Where the hazards exists, can it be eliminated?
- (c) Can a machine or work practice be substituted to reduce the risk?
- (d) Can the worker be isolated from the risk or vice versa?
- (e) Can safer work practices be developed and put in place?
- (f) Personal protective equipment (PPE) should be used as a last resort. It is important to note that “PPE” does not address the risk.

6.8 Step 6: Promote, Maintain and Improve these Strategies

Inform all staff of the OHS Policy and Programme and Review Regularly

- (a) Inform all people in the workplace of the OHS activities including the success of the control strategies.
- (b) Ensure OHS is integrated into all management procedures.
- (c) Evaluate the success of the control strategies; eg. review the injury, accidents and near misses reports and records.
- (d) Evaluate and review your education and training programmes.

6.9 Safety in the Laboratory

Today schools in Fiji contain far greater range of potential hazards than any time in the past. If accidents are to be avoided, it is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure that students acquire appropriate safety awareness. A safety conscious teacher is one who is aware of potential hazards and who takes appropriate preventative measure when planning his lessons.

It is often seen that the main causes of laboratory accidents are:

- (i) failure of the teachers in charge to give adequate instruction;
- (ii) failure of the teachers to plan and ensure that the experiments do work;
- (iv) failure of pupils to follow instruction or rules.

Basically, safety precautions in the laboratory involve good planning and common sense in the use of chemicals and equipment. Performing laboratory experiments are perfectly safe as long as few simple rules and precautions are adhered to like some of the following:

- a) Students should not enter the laboratory until asked by the teacher.
- b) In the laboratory, pupils are to be under the direct supervision of the teacher, and at no time should they be left on their own.
- c) Some form of footwear should be worn at all times in the lab.
- d) Eating or drinking should not be permitted in the lab.
- e) Any accidents, even the minor ones, should be reported to the teacher and to the administrator.
- f) Chemicals should not be touched with bare hands and a clean spatula should be used.
- g) While observing the odour (smell) of a substance, do not hold your face directly over the container. Waft a small amount of vapour towards you by sweeping your hand over the top of the container.
- h) If an acid or other chemical is spilt on clothing or skin, wash it off immediately with plenty of water.
- i) When heating a test tube, always direct the mouth away from yourself and other members of the class.
Hold the tube with a holder, at an angle, and on the side close to the bottom.
- j) Allow ample time for hot glassware to cool. Remember hot glass looks like cool glass. Bathe skin burns in cool water.

- k) When a small quantity of solution is to be boiled, this should always be done in a large test tube containing pieces of porcelain. This prevents hasty heating causing 'bumping' of the liquid and there is less chance of liquid spurting out of the tube.
- l) When using a concentrated acid always add, with constant stirring the acid to water or to an aqueous solution.
- m) Never put your thumb or finger over the end of a test tube when shaking. Stopper the tube with a cork or bung.
- n) When a gas is collected over water, remove the delivery tube from water before heating is topped. This prevents sucking of water into the hot apparatus and a possible explosion.
- o) Unused chemical should not be returned to the stock bottle. If the quantity is large and it could be used again then should be stored in a separate labelled bottle.
- p) Always handle flammable liquids, such as ethanol and propane, with great care and keep them away from naked flames.
- q) Always check the name of a bottle is exactly that of the chemical you require.
- r) Always wash your hands after practical work.
- s) Never put your head or clothes near a Bunsen flame. Long hair should be tied back. Some hair preparation (e.g. wet – look gel) make the hair more flammable than usual and should be avoided. Adjust the bunsen to give a luminous flame when you are not using it.
- t) Never taste anything unless instructed to do so.
- u) Teacher and students should know the location and proper operation of fire extinguishers.
- v) A well-supplied First Aid Kit should be provided. Charts showing proper treatment for specific injuries should be prominently pasted.
- w) Laboratories and storage facilities should be locked when not under direct supervision of the teacher.
- x) Teachers should have a thorough understanding of the potential hazards of all the materials, processes and equipment that will be in the school laboratory.
- y) Teachers set an example for their students. Follow all safety regulations and constantly remind students of hazards.
- z) At the end of the practical work, power, gas and water should be turned off, and the apparatus and the benches left clean and tidy for the next class.

In schools where there are no laboratories or science room, a lockable cupboard should be provided with strict supervision by the science teacher.

Teachers who want to use the science materials/ equipment should personally take materials from the teacher in charge.

Extreme care must be taken when moving chemicals from one room to another.

All safety regulations must be displayed and followed

7. **EFFECTIVE DATE** January 2007

8. **REVIEW DATE** January 2008

9. **KEY SEARCH WORDS**

Occupational health and safety, workplace, OHS, safety, safety committee, training, facilities, hazard, accidents, sickness, risk, risk management, investigation, workplace assessment, danger, premises, excursions, protective clothing, duty of care, threat.

10. **APPROVED BY CEO**

SIGNATURE

DATE

APPENDIX A: EXAMPLE A SCHOOL'S OHS POLICY

RATU KADAVULEVU SCHOOL OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

Ratu Kadavulevu School Management is fully committed to the protection of its workers, students, visitors and the school community.

1. The school management shall provide and maintain a safe workplace, equipment and proper materials.
2. Ensure that Health and Safety Act and Regulation are printed, displayed and followed.
3. Inform and train workers, students, and visitors, parents and school community on Health and Safety strategies.
4. Provide support and assistance through consultation to all involved;

Students
Workers
Visitors
Parents
School Community

The school management is accountable and responsible that teachers, students, parents, visitors and the school community.

- (i) Follow all Health and Safety procedure
- (ii) Avoid behaviour and unsafe practice that may result in injury to themselves and others.
- (iii) Be responsible and report all potential hazards to their immediate supervisor, Health and Safety reps, and OHS committee.

This policy commits the school management in all its operation/business/functions where students, teachers, workers, parents and school community are required to operate off site.

Our management will consult with the elected health and safety representatives, workers, students and school community to ensure that any change required in the workplace does not affect their health and safety.

The management are fully committed in supporting the OHS committee in carrying out their responsibilities.

This policy will be regularly, evaluated and modified when necessary.

.....

Date:

[I. Kunagogo]
PRINCIPAL.

APPENDIX B: WORKPLACE INJURY AND DISEASE NOTIFICATION FORM
OHSF 1

**HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK (ADMINISTRATION) REGULATIONS 1996
ABOUT THE EMPLOYER OR PERSON IN CONTROL**

1. Registered name of the company _____
2. Trading name _____
3. Address of the registered office _____
4. Address of the workplace or where the accident/occurrence took place

5. Main activity carried out at the workplace _____
6. Number of people employed at the workplace or site _____
7. Is there a OHS committee at the workplace or site Yes/ No _____

ABOUT THE INJURED OR ILL PERSON

8. Surname _____ Given names _____
9. Sex (M or F) _____ 10. Date of birth _____
11. Is the injured or ill person an employee of the above company Yes/No. *If no go to section 16*

BASIS OF EMPLOYMENT

12. Shift Arrangement 1. ___ Fixed, standard or flexible hours
2. ___ Rotating shift
13. Number of hours 1. ___ 8 hours or less
2. ___ more than 8 hours (excluding overtime)

14. JOB DETAILS

Description of occupation or job title _____
Main tasks performed _____

15. Training provided

1. ___ Induction Training 2. ___ Task specific training
3. ___ Both of the above 4. ___ Neither of the above

DETAILS OF THE INJURY OR DISEASE

(Refer to fifth and sixth Schedule)

16. Date injury occurred Day Month Year
or disease report ____/____/____

17. Time of injury or disease ____/____

18. Nature of injury or disease

19. Bodily location of injury or disease

20. Description of occurrence of injury or disease:

26. Was the outcome injury of disease 1. _____
2. _____

27. Preventive action proposed or taken:

(tick one or more boxes as appropriate)

	Proposed	Taken
Change to induction training	_____	_____
Change to ongoing training	_____	_____
Equipment/machinery modifications	_____	_____
Change to work procedures	_____	_____
Change to work environment	_____	_____
Equipment/ machinery maintenance	_____	_____
Other job redesign	_____	_____
Other preventive action	_____	_____

28 Date of Resumption of work on: Day Month Year
_____/_____/_____

29. Total number of working days lost _____

This notification Form must be completed within 48 hours of the accident and sent to the Ministry of Labour and a copy to the Ministry of Education. Employer to retain a copy of this Notification Form.

APPENDIX C: IMPORTANT ADDRESSES

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

No.	Position	Location	Phone No.	Fax No.
HEADQUARTERS				
1.	Permanent Secretary for Education	Marela House, Suva	220404	303511
2.	Deputy Secretary [Administration & Finance]	Quality House, Suva	220520	308361
3.	Director [Administration & Finance]	Marela House, Suva	220438/ 220430	303511
4.	Chief Education Officer [Secondary]	Quality House, Suva	220510	303511
5.	Chief Education Officer [Primary]	Quality House, Suva	220505	303511
DIVISIONS AND DISTRICTS EDUCATION OFFICES				
CENTRAL DIVISION				
1.	Divisional Education Officer [Central]	Nausori	477999	477305
2.	Senior Education Officer [Suva]	Nausori	477999	477305
3.	Senior Education Officer [Nausori]	10 Gorrie Street, Suva	311032	311724
EASTERN DIVISION				
4.	Divisional Education Officer [Eastern]	10 Gorrie Street	311047/ 312912	303511
5.	Senior Education Officer [Eastern]	10 Gorrie Street	311047/ 312912	303511
NORTHERN DIVISION				
6.	Divisional Education Officer [Northern]	Ro Qomate House, Labasa	811783	813920
7.	Senior Education Officer [Macuata-Bua]	Ro Qomate House, Labasa	811783	813920
8.	Senior Education Officer [Cakaudrove]	Savusavu	850162	850522
WESTERN DIVISION				
9.	Divisional Education Officer [Western]	Lautoka	664033	663847
10.	Senior Education Officer [Ba-Tavua]	Ba	674677	670887
11.	Senior Education Officer [Nadroga-Navosa]	Sigatoka	500350	520768
12.	Senior Education Officer [Lautoka-Yasawa]	Lautoka	664033	663847
13.	Senior Education Officer [Ra]	Rakiraki	694153	694855

MINISTRY OF LABOUR

No.	Position	Location	Phone No.	Fax No.
HEADQUARTERS, SUVA				
1.	Chief Inspector [Permanent Secretary for Labour]	414 Victoria Pde, Suva	309156	315029
2.	Director Occupational Health and Safety	414 Victoria Pde, Suva	307872	315029
3.	Principal Engineer Mechanical [Policy/ Administration]	414 Victoria Pde, Suva	309161	315029
4.	Principal Engineer Mechanical [Field Operations]	414 Victoria Pde, Suva	314774	315029
DIVISIONAL / DISTRICTS OFFICES				
SUVA				
1.	Senior Labour Officer [OHS]	414 Victoria Pde, Suva	308246	315029
SIGATOKA				
1.	Labour Office	Sigatoka	500977	500977
NADI				
1.	Labour Office	Nadi	702429	702229
2.	Assistant Labour Officer [OHS}	Nadi	701979	702229
LAUTOKA				
1.	Divisional Labour Officer	Lautoka	660305/660631	666630
2.	Labour Officer [OHS}	Lautoka	660305/661692	666630
BA				
1.	Labour Officer	Ba	674732	674732
2.	Assistant Labour Office	Ba	674732	674732
LABASA				
1.	Divisional Labour Officer [Northern]	Labasa	811643/819432	811477
2.	Labour Officer [OHS]	Labasa	811643/819436	811477
3.	Assistant Labour Officer [OHS	Labasa	811643/819439	811477
SAVUSAVU				
1	Labour Officer	Savusavu	850414	850414