

# Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy

## 1. Introduction

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (**MACS**) is a company limited by guarantee established in 2021 by the Archbishop of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne to assume the governance and operation of MACS schools across the Archdiocese of Melbourne. MACS subsequently established Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Specialist Schools Ltd (**MACSS**) to provide educational services to children with special needs and Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Early Years Education (**MACSEYE**) to provide early years care and education services.

The [Statement of Mission](#) in the MACS Constitution, and the constitutions of its subsidiaries, MACSS and MACSEYE, sets out the Archbishop's expectations of Catholic schooling in the Archdiocese and provides an important context and grounding for the company and the direction which the MACS Board must always observe in the pursuit of the company's objects.

The Board must ensure that all policies and procedures concerning the operations of MACS, and its subsidiaries are consistent with the Statement of Mission and company objects, as well as any directions issued by the Archbishop from time to time.

MACS seeks the highest level of protection reasonably possible for students, staff, contractors, families, volunteers and visitors against harm to their health, safety and wellbeing; and is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy work environment.

MACS does this by ensuring compliance to all legislative and regulatory requirements and fostering a culture where staff and management consult and collaborate to identify hazards, assess risks, and implement effective measures to eliminate or reduce those risks, as far as is reasonably practicable.

## 2. Purpose

This policy seeks to ensure that MACS provides environments that are safe and healthy places to learn, work and flourish, consistent with legislative requirements and the principles and traditions of the Catholic Church.

## 3. Principles

At MACS we are deeply committed to fostering a workplace that prioritises health, safety and wellbeing for all employees, students, and those we interact with including parents, carers, visitors, community, contractors and those in religious ministry. We recognise the importance of ensuring each person feels safe in the workplace and while at school; and that this safety is critical to a quality Catholic education.

The policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- Health, safety and wellbeing (HSW) for all staff, students, families, visitors and contractors is a core value for MACS
- All staff, students, visitors and contractors have the right to enjoy a safe workplace, where risks to their wellbeing and safety are managed to be as low as reasonably possible
- All staff, students, visitors and contractors have a role to play in achieving excellent HSW performance, and must work towards reducing risk to themselves and others
- MACS complies with, and seek to exceed, all legislative requirements
- HSW procedures and processes are aligned with, and supportive of, those in core business functions, such as child safety, student wellbeing, risk management, assurance, and emergency and critical incident management; and

- We learn from our experiences and do what we say we will do, translating our HSW principles into responsible and effective work practices.

## 4. Commitment statement

MACS, and its Board and management, are committed to:

- providing a safe and healthy environment for staff, students, families, visitors and contractors
- eliminating hazards and reducing HSW risks to the extent reasonably possible, to prevent work-related injury and ill-health
- proactive and positive management of mental health, psychosocial, and wellbeing risks
- ensuring compliance with all relevant legislation and obligations
- providing information, training and supervision to employees and other relevant parties
- consulting with staff (and their representatives), managers and other stakeholders on HSW issues, and fostering a culture of engagement and communication
- supporting injured staff to return to work as soon as possible; and
- continually improving HSW management systems and setting HSW objectives and measures that allow effective monitoring and improvement of performance.

## 5. Responsibilities and leadership

To achieve health, safety and wellbeing objectives, MACS:

- engages with our staff, students, communities, families, contractors and other parties – listening to their needs and understanding issues that are important to them.
- empowers our staff and students – involving them in processes and decision making to achieve HSW outcomes. We promote, recognise and role model HSW behaviours. To achieve this, we build the capability of our staff through information, training, instruction, mentoring, coaching and supervision; and
- evaluates our performance – measure and monitor our success in delivering on our HSW commitments and objectives. We evaluate the maturity of our HSW approach through a process of self-assessment and performance review. We build consistency in our management systems and measure our improvement through lead and lag indicators.

MACS and its management are responsible for:

- maintaining, so far as is reasonably practicable, a workplace that is safe and without risks to physical and mental health
- providing adequate facilities for the welfare of all employees
- providing information, training and supervision for employees and contractors, enabling them to participate in HSW systems, and work in a safe and healthy manner
- providing adequate resources for implementing this policy and associated processes
- ensuring integration and interoperability of HSW amongst all MACS functions and
- providing and maintaining safe equipment, tools, vehicles, chemicals and other items including personal protective equipment.

MACS Staff and Students are responsible for:

- acting in a safe manner, and fulfilling their duties under relevant legislation
- taking reasonable care of their own health and safety, and that of others affected by their actions
- cooperating with MACS in improving HSW performance
- complying with procedures, directions and training provided
- reporting incidents, concerns, hazards and near misses as soon as practical, and taking action to control hazards where possible and
- participating in programs to assist injured staff members to return to work.

## 6. Legal obligations and external requirements

Relevant health, safety and wellbeing legal obligations and external requirements are systematically identified, communicated to relevant staff, and complied with. A process is in place to monitor and proactively respond to changes in legislative and external requirements.

## 7. Management systems and procedures

MACS is committed to implementing systems and practices that best serve our schools, staff and students.

Our approach is simple, robust with consistent expectations across all schools and offices. Our HSW systems are designed to support a flexible implementation approach suited to the diverse nature of our schools.

Procedures and systems required to implement this policy are documented in the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Management System (HSWMS) Manual. The HSWMS Manual is tailored to MACS and is an integral part of management, culture and practices embedded within MACS schools and offices.

The HSWMS Manual and elements are available for access by all relevant staff, students, visitors and contractors, and comprise:

- Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Common management system standards and procedures
- Risk-specific standards and procedures
- HSW management system guidelines, tools, training and supporting materials to assist schools and offices in meeting the requirements of the policy and procedures.
- Systems (such as online platforms for incident management, reporting, training, etc).

HSW performance is regularly reviewed and analysed, and conformance with the requirements of the MACS HSW Management System is regularly assessed.

## 8. Integration and interoperability

The elements of the HSW Management System are designed to integrate with how work is carried out across all areas of MACS. They link to, work with, and are supported by, other organisational functions such as:

- Child Safety
- Student Wellbeing
- Risk Management
- Compliance, Assurance and Audit
- Emergency and Critical Management
- People Experience
- Organisational Development
- Employee Relations
- Procurement
- Facilities Management

## 9. Continuous improvement

Through the Executive Leadership Team and the various HSW consultation and leadership groups, we continue to demonstrate care for each other's wellbeing, identify common projects, monitor trends, and capture and share best practice. We celebrate our successes and share learning experiences to enable us to improve our performance.

Our HSW culture involves leading and inspiring, re-thinking processes, learning lessons from what has worked well and tracking the progress of programs and initiatives to improve.

## 10. Consultation, communication and support

We consult, co-operate and co-ordinate activities with staff, students, contractors and external stakeholders on health, safety and wellbeing matters and encourage their participation in, and commitment to, HSW performance improvement initiatives and practices.

We elect, establish, train and maintain health and safety representatives and health and safety committees which cover all offices and schools, in support of relevant health and safety legislation.

An employee assistance program is in place, and supported by communication of the service, and encouragement to participate.

## 11. Hazard and risk management

Processes are in place to:

- systematically identify hazards, determine the potential consequences and likelihood, and evaluate risks
- manage risks in line with the Risk Management Framework, such that they are eliminated, or if unable to be eliminated then reduced to as low as reasonably practicable
- develop, implement, maintain and monitor appropriate management responses and controls
- train staff on assessing risks, determining acceptable risks, and verifying control effectiveness
- ensure risk reduction actions are effectively completed.

## 12. Incident and injury management

All health, safety and wellbeing related events, near misses and issues in our workplaces are recorded, reported, investigated, and analysed, to prevent recurrence and learn from these events. Where appropriate and as required, relevant regulatory authorities are notified using the localised processes outlined in the HSW manual. Incident learnings are actively shared across our schools, offices and the education sector. We care for people who are injured at work and support them in the process of returning to work.

## 13. Training and competency

Our staff and contractors are suitably trained and competent to conduct their activities in a safe and responsible manner, and in accordance with relevant MACS and legal requirements. A process is in place to ensure all staff and contractors are inducted and trained in their HSW responsibilities and expectations, the specific procedural and system requirements relating to their work, and the fundamental processes for supporting the wellbeing and mental health of those around them.

## 14. Inspections, auditing and verification

Regular internal and external audits are conducted to confirm conformance with this policy and other HSW procedures and processes. Such audits address the degree of implementation of HSW management systems, the effectiveness of the systems in meeting the needs of schools, students and staff, and recommendations for improvement. Additionally, inspections of schools, offices and offsite learnings locations are conducted at intervals which meet the risk profile of those locations.

## 15. Management review, monitoring and improvements

MACS achieves assurance that health, safety and wellbeing risks are being appropriately managed and reduced by a process of monitoring, auditing and reviewing performance. Systems are in place to allow management to identify trends, measure progress, assess compliance and drive improvement. Lead and lag measures are developed, reported, and tracked against targets, to allow management to monitor the key drivers of health, safety and wellbeing performance.

## 16. Definitions

Definitions of standard terms used in this Policy can be found in the [Glossary of Terms](#).

**Critical incident**

An unplanned event (including dangerous occurrences, emergencies and systems failures) resulting in or having a potential for injury, ill health, damage or other loss.

**Contractor**

A contractor includes all external parties engaged by MACS to undertake work, including contractors, consultants, labour hire, other paid attendees at schools and offices, and external service providers where MACS employees or students attend the premises or activities of those service providers.

**Hazard**

A source or a situation (including dangerous occurrences and systems failures) with a potential for harm in terms of human injury or ill health, damage to property, damage to the environment or a combination of these.

**Health and safety representative**

An elected employee responsible for representing employees within a designated work group on matters relating to occupational health and safety.

**Health, safety and wellbeing**

A broad term used to describe the overall health, safety and wellbeing of a group of people engaged in work or employment, also involving the management of risk in a workplace.

**Health, Safety and Wellbeing Management System (HSWMS)**

The documents, processes, electronic platforms, tools, reports and responsibilities that combine to form the system for managing health, safety and wellbeing performance.

**Risk**

Risk is defined as the effect of uncertainty on objectives. An effect is a deviation from the expected – positive and/or negative. Risk is often expressed in terms of a combination of the consequences of an event (including changes in circumstances or knowledge) and the associated likelihood of occurrence.

**Risk management**

The coordinated activities to direct and control an organisation regarding risk.

**School environment**

Means any of the following physical, online or virtual places used during or outside school hours:

- a campus of the school
- online or virtual school environments made available or authorised by MACS or a MACS school for use by a child or student (including email, intranet systems, software, applications, collaboration tools and online services)
- other locations provided by the school or through a third-party provider for a child or student to use including, but not limited to, locations used for camps, approved homestay accommodation, delivery of education and training, sporting events, excursions, competitions and other events) ([Ministerial Order No. 1359](#)).

**School staff**

Means an individual working in a school environment who is:

- directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority
- a contracted service provider engaged by MACS (whether or not a body corporate and whether or not any other person is an intermediary) engaged to perform child-related work for a MACS school
- a minister of religion, a religious leader or an employee or officer of a religious body associated with MACS ([Ministerial Order No. 1359](#)).

**Student**

Student means a person who is enrolled at or attends a MACS school.

**Volunteer**

A person who performs work without remuneration or reward for MACS.

## 17. Related policies and documents

**Supporting documents**

Policy Commitment Statement

Procedures, guidelines, tools and templates forming the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Management System (MACS HSW Management System Manual)

**Related MACS policies and documents**

Anaphylaxis Policy – Schools

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy – Schools

Code of Conduct for MACS Staff

Complaints Handling Policy for MACS Schools

Emergency and Critical Incident Management Policy

Risk Management Framework

First Aid Policy

Health, Safety and Wellbeing Framework

Risk Management Framework

Workplace Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination Policy

**Resources**

Victorian Catholic Education Multi-Enterprise Agreement (current)

**WorkSafe Victoria** - a statutory body set up to, among other things, enforce Victoria's occupational health and safety laws and assist injured workers back into the workforce.

1 Malop Street, Geelong VIC 3220

WorkSafe Victoria is a

Phone: 1800 136 089

Website: [www.worksafe.vic.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au)

## Policy information

<b>Responsible executive</b>	Director, People and Culture
<b>Policy owner</b>	General Manager, Health Safety and Wellbeing
<b>Approving authority</b>	MACS Board
<b>Assigned board committee</b>	People and Culture
<b>Approval date</b>	7 May 2025
<b>Risk rating</b>	Extreme
<b>Date of next review</b>	April 2026
<b>Publication</b>	Gabriel, CEVN

POLICY DATABASE INFORMATION	
<b>Assigned framework</b>	Employment
<b>Supporting documents</b>	See list of supporting documents and related policies above
<b>Superseded documents</b>	Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy – v1.0 – 2024 Occupational Health and Safety Policy – MACS Office – v1.0 – 2022 Occupational Health and Safety Policy – Schools – v1.0 – 2021