

Back to School Checklist

Creating and maintaining healthy and safe learning and working environments is both our commitment and our challenge for 2008. With this in mind, here are a number of simple things that can help start the new year in a safe and healthy manner:

- Inform new staff and volunteers of procedures, health and safety information and expectations at your school as part of the induction process. Remember to also advise part-time staff, cleaners and schools officers.
- Inform staff of their local contacts including; school WHSO, Rehab and Return to Work Coordinator and regional support including; the Employee Assistance Service and other Organisational Health Staff.
- Prevent strains and sprains by ensuring staff moving furniture and resources have enough time, assistance and equipment to do the task easily and safely. *If moving major items is required, contractors may be the most effective option.*
- Keep walkways and common areas clear and unobstructed to prevent the risk of trips and falls. Encourage staff to tidy staff room areas, cull resources and prioritise requirements for storage.
- Reinforce the importance of staff wearing appropriate footwear for the school environment and the task they are undertaking e.g. traversing stairs and uneven surfaces, supervising sport and practical classes, playground duty and other activities.
- Serious injuries associated with staff involved in school sport activities are common. Remind all staff to assess their own ability to physically participate in the activity, warm up adequately, wear appropriate clothing and engage in the activity according to their level of fitness.
- Sun safe behaviour is important for staff well being and to model such behaviour to students. Staff working outside should wear a hat, appropriate clothing and sunscreen. Encourage staff to drink water regularly and to be aware of strategies to prevent heat related illness.
- If a staff member has sustained an injury or illness during the holidays, or is returning to work with a pre-existing injury or illness, enquire into whether they need any assistance to return to work safely. If so, ask staff to provide their doctor's recommendations regarding their limitations and requirements e.g. safe access to classrooms and facilities.
- Encourage and support staff with new year's resolutions or ideas about wellbeing activities e.g. walking groups, morning tai chi, social events and other ideas to promote health.
- Should you require any assistance, discuss these issues with your WHSO, Rehab and Return to Work Coordinator or your Regional Organisational Health Staff.

For more information:

Contact your Regional Senior Health and Safety Consultant
<http://education.qld.gov.au/health/contacts/hscontacts.html>