

# Safety Net



## Welcome

HERE TO SUPPORT YOU

### Dear Colleagues

Welcome to the second edition of Safety Net for 2008. I am pleased to advise that arrangements have been made for all Education Queensland Schools to access Australian Standards on line and Kidsafe Queensland's Playspace Resource Kit. In this edition you will find information on how to access these resources which will help schools with a range of facilities based projects including planning, refurbishing or quotations.

Good infection control in schools help prevent the spread of disease— this is particularly important as we head into "flu season". Recent media reports have highlighted the importance of hand washing and advice on page 3 of this issue provides relevant procedural information for all schools.

Also included is a "wrap up" of some of the latest resources to be posted to the Creating Healthier Workplaces website: [www.education.qld.gov.au/health](http://www.education.qld.gov.au/health). Items include *Safe Driving*, *Safe use of Greywater in the School Environment*, *Footwear and Safety at Work* as well as *Review of Chemicals used by Schools Officers*.

In recent months, the Organisational Health Unit has officially expanded to encompass both the Training and Education Portfolios of the Department of Education, Training and the Arts. The unit now reports to Tom Barlow—Executive Director, Human Resource Strategy (Training) who will take up the role as chair of the Corporate Workplace Health and Safety Standing Committee. I would like you to join with me in welcoming Tom to the arena of Organisational Health and our *SafetyNet* newsletter.

Thankyou for continuing to support health and safety in our working and learning environments.

**Mark Hewison - Director - Organisational Health Unit**

### **Anaphylaxis Management Training Program**

A pilot of an accredited Anaphylaxis Management Training Program has now been completed. Approximately 1500 state school staff have attended courses in Greater Brisbane, Moreton, South Coast and Sunshine Coast Regions.

The course, delivered by the Queensland Ambulance Service, is designed to equip staff with the knowledge and skills required to respond in an emergency situation involving a student with anaphylaxis.

General feedback from participants has been positive with school staff finding instruction in the use of the 'EpiPen' auto-injector (used for the emergency treatment of anaphylaxis) especially useful.

The pilot program will now be assessed to determine opportunities to extend course delivery to other areas of the state. Education Queensland will be developing a range of resource materials for schools to raise awareness of anaphylaxis and inform school staff about the management and treatment of this condition. The Interim Anaphylaxis Guidelines for Queensland Schools can be accessed at: [www.education.qld.gov.au/schools/healthy/anaphylaxis.html](http://www.education.qld.gov.au/schools/healthy/anaphylaxis.html)

### **Welcome Lisa Newbold**

Lisa Newbold has joined Education Queensland as Senior Health and Safety Consultant for the Greater Brisbane Region. Lisa is based in the Kedron office and is working part-time in a job share arrangement with Leanne Bowen.

Lisa comes to Education Queensland with 10 years experience in OHS within the private sector. Prior to Education Queensland, Lisa was the State OHS Manager for Coca Cola Amatil with her key objectives being to drive Coca Cola toward achieving their self insurance licence and developing management accountability and developing management systems. Prior to Coca Cola Lisa has worked for Mayne Pharmaceuticals & Allianz Insurance.



**Regional Health and Safety Consultants:** <http://education.qld.gov.au/health/contacts/hscontacts.html>



## Kidsafe Playspace Resource Kit

The Organisational Health Unit has negotiated an annual subscription with Kidsafe Qld so that Education Queensland schools can access the "Kidsafe Playspace Resource Kit". EQ schools will be able to access an electronic version of the Resource Kit via 'The Learning Place'.

"The Kidsafe Playspace Resource Kit" has recently been updated and reflects the latest Australian/New Zealand Standards for Playground Equipment. The resource kit is made up of 20 fact sheets with topics including safe play surfaces, Australian Standards and safe shade plants.

Education Queensland schools can access the documents by:

1. Accessing The Learning Place website at: <http://learningplace.eq.edu.au/cx/resources/access/Tasks.jsp>
2. Put "kidsafe" into the search area of the web page
3. The resource kit is likely to be the first item listed in the search results
4. Click on the "kidsafe" link and the page with the fact sheet list will appear
5. You can print these documents.

Kidsafe Qld is a not-for-profit organisation that sells the hard copy of the Resource Kit for \$30 - this helps the organisation recoup some of the costs of producing the resource. If your school or members of your school community would like to purchase a hard copy please contact Kidsafe Queensland via

Phone: 3845 1829, fax: 3252 7900 or email: [qld@kidsafe.com.au](mailto:qld@kidsafe.com.au).

## Australian Standards Online

The Organisational Health Unit has funded a one year subscription to the Australian Standards database.

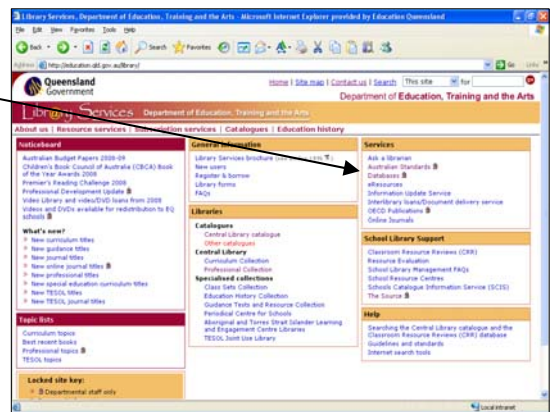
The database is accessible only via the Library Services website:

<http://education.qld.gov.au/library/services/register-borrow.html>

Select: Databases from the right hand side of the page

Open the Australian Standards Data Base and use the user id. and password provided by library services.

Please note that the license arrangement is for two concurrent users only— so please log out as soon as possible. Download the document rather than keeping the database open.



### Health & Safety Checklist

School Based Workplace Health and Safety Officer  
Information for Principals and WHSOs

Workplace Health and Safety Officers (WHSO) play an important role in the department's commitment to providing and maintaining safe and healthy schools. The WHSO are asked to work with their responsible line manager and departmental convenors. The role is to perform the responsibilities listed below and ensure the best of support they are afforded at their school.

**Legislative Requirements**

- The Workplace Health and Safety Act 1989 requires all workplaces (e.g. schools) with 10 or more workers, including contractors and freelance teachers and trainees, to appoint a qualified WHSO for their workplace.
- A qualified WHSO must undertake [specific training](#). Please refer to the Creating Healthier Workplaces website for information about WHSO training courses provided by the Department.
- The WHSO has functions allocated by legislation; these are summarised below.
- The principal, as manager, has a range of responsibilities to ensure the WHSO can fulfil their function.
- The appointment of a WHSO does not diminish the principal's workplace health and safety obligations.

**Checklist for Principals**

- Discuss with your WHSO their role and priority activities for your school.
- Ensure WHSO/WHSOs receive a copy of the current WHSO Details.
- Ensure the Annual Assessment process is completed and priority issues are noted in the Action Plan.
- Incorporate safety issues and strategies into your school's Annual Operational Plan.
- Establish a forum for discussing and addressing health and safety issues (e.g. health & safety committee).
- Schedule regular meetings with your school WHSO to meet, progress and discuss emergent issues.
- Provide resources to the WHSO to allow the officer to properly fulfil their functions for example:
  - Regular, dedicated time to perform the functions of the role e.g. inspections, investigations
  - Time to coordinate the Annual Assessment and track the report
  - Time for other responsible members to conduct parts of the Annual Assessment
  - Access to staff to discuss safety questions, assessments or investigations
  - Facilitate access to continued training and professional development e.g. regional network meetings
- Discuss with the WHSO any potential or existing risks to staff or others e.g. proposed structural or ground works at the school, new curriculum activities (new equipment or substances used by staff) or others.
- Advise staff of their responsibility to use the risk management processes in their planning and preparation. The WHSO role is to assist staff with the supporting teacher taking the lead role.
- Provide and support the role of school WHSO and employ WHSOs on a casual basis or in staff rooms.
- Keep information, recommendations and reports provided by the WHSO.

Queensland Government  
Education Queensland  
Page 1 of 2

## Workplace Health and Safety Officers

Workplace Health and Safety Officers (WHSO) play an important role in the department's commitment to providing and maintaining safe and healthy schools.

The WHSO can assist principals with their responsibilities under legislation and departmental procedures. The ability for a WHSO to perform their role will depend upon the level of support they are afforded at their school.

It is important that School Principals and WHSOs work together. Information to assist in allocating appropriate time and resources for the WHSO can be found on the fact sheet entitled: *School Based Workplace Health and Safety Officer - Information for Principals and WHSOs*.

<http://education.qld.gov.au/health/pdfs/healthsafety/checklist-school-based-whso.pdf>



# Don't let these slip through the Net

## Handwashing in State Schools



Recent media attention given to schools with inadequate hand-washing facilities for students.

All schools should review and address the facilities provided for staff and students to wash their hands at school.

Hand washing is one of the most important measures in preventing transmission of infection.

Enteric infections, including gastroenteritis and hepatitis A are common amongst people of all ages. It is very important that children are provided with adequate hand washing facilities as a basic health measure.

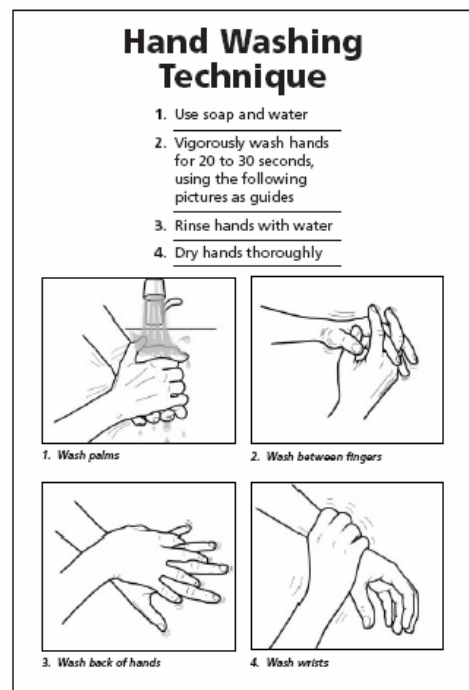
Workplace Health and Safety Queensland, Queensland Health and our own Infection Control Guideline (in place since 2000), recommend that "mild liquid soap and paper towels or air dryers should be available at hand basins".

Staff and students should always follow basic good hygiene practices which require that hands be washed using soap, water and then dried:

- > Before handling, preparing or eating food
- > Before and after assisting students with eating/meals
- > Before and after assisting students with toileting
- > Before and after providing first aid or medication
- > Before and after contact with an ill or injured person
- > After contact with blood or bodily fluids
- > After removal of protective gloves
- > After using the toilet and
- > After contact with animals.

To reinforce correct hand washing techniques, a copy of the picture "Hand Washing Technique" is provided in the guideline. This should be laminated or placed in a plastic sleeve and attached to the wall near hand washing facilities.

More information can be found in the new **Infection Control Guideline**—[http://education.qld.gov.au/health/pdfs/healthsafety/infection\\_control\\_guideline.pdf](http://education.qld.gov.au/health/pdfs/healthsafety/infection_control_guideline.pdf)— which has replaced *DOEM HS-18: Infection Control* originally published in 2000.



Photocopy, place in plastic sleeve (or laminate) and position on the wall above handbasins.

## Infection Control

School Principals are reminded to familiarise themselves with the departmental procedures for infection control.

Each school/workplace should implement a staff immunisation program. An immunisation program should include the following elements:

- (a) Staff immunisation record that is kept up to date.
- (b) Promote the vaccination of non-immune and at-risk staff.
- (c) Provide information to staff about relevant vaccine-preventable diseases.
- (d) Document how the risk of acquiring vaccine-preventable diseases will be managed for individual workers who refuse vaccination, for whom vaccination is medically contra-indicated or who fail to respond to vaccination
- (e) That students may be at risk of acquiring a vaccine-preventable disease during specific school activities.
- (f) All female staff who are considering pregnancy should discuss their work requirements and their immunisation status with their doctor. Ideally, all vaccinations recommended for your work environment should be complete prior to pregnancy.
- (i) It is recommended that pregnant women, women contemplating pregnancy, women who are breast-feeding and individuals with illnesses, allergies or who are taking medication should discuss their personal situation with their doctor prior to vaccination.





# What's on the Safety Net?



## Safe Driving Fact Sheet

Road crashes are the single largest cause of fatality and injury to workers in Australia each year. It is therefore a significant workplace health and safety risk. A vehicle is defined as a workplace when it is used by a worker in the performance of their work. There is no whole of government policy regarding safe driving, however owing to the vast size of our state and the great distances often travelled by staff of the department as part of their work requirements, this fact sheet has been prepared as a reminder and to provide general advice on safe driving practices.

The fact sheet can be found at:

<http://education.qld.gov.au/health/safety/factsheets.html>

## Greywater usage in Schools - responsibilities

In order to use greywater responsibly, schools should be:

- aware of what they need to do to avoid health risks, i.e. following and applying the relevant requirements
- aware of the potential impacts of detergents on soil and plants
- aware that they should prevent individual's contact with greywater
- aware that greywater generated from the premises must be contained and used only on the school site
- conscious of any water sources within close proximity to where greywater is being used
- greywater should not flow into drains.

A fact sheet has been developed in consultation with Strategic Facilities Branch

**Fact Sheet:** <http://education.qld.gov.au/health/pdfs/healthsafety/greywater-factsheet.pdf>



## Footwear and Safety at Work - preventing slips, trips and falls

Our feet bear the brunt of many health and safety incidents and can be injured sufficiently to leave us unable to work for some time. We can place our health and safety at risk because we do not wear the most suitable footwear for the activities we are performing at school.

Schools are unique workplaces that include a range of environments - from classrooms to sporting fields - and host a broad variety of activities. Consequently, every campus presents a range of risks to staff and students. The school principal, leadership team, Workplace Health and Safety Committee, Workplace Health and Safety Officer (WHSO) and all staff should work together to identify and manage these risks. This includes identifying appropriate footwear to prevent injuries associated with activities that are undertaken.

**Fact sheet:** <http://education.qld.gov.au/health/pdfs/healthsafety/footwear-safety-factsheet.pdf>

## Review of Chemicals Used by Schools Officers

This fact sheet is designed to assist Schools Officers, school-based administration staff and Workplace Health and Safety Officers to review chemicals used by Schools Officers. Chemicals used in your school may include insecticides, herbicides, paints, thinners, fuels and oils, gases and pool chlorine. From time to time some chemicals may become out of date, damaged, forgotten about or replaced with newer chemicals. Unnecessary chemicals should be removed from the school environment.

A fact sheet and check list can be found at:

[http://education.qld.gov.au/health/pdfs/healthsafety/chemical\\_review\\_factsheet.pdf](http://education.qld.gov.au/health/pdfs/healthsafety/chemical_review_factsheet.pdf)

