

# Hearing Conservation Program

The Hearing Conservation Program (the Program) in the Department of Education commenced in 2009 and is conducted to meet the requirements of the [Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#) (Qld), [Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011](#) (Qld) and [Managing Noise and Preventing Hearing Loss at Work Code of Practice 2021](#). The purpose of the Hearing Conservation Program is to achieve the safe management of noise within a workplace.

The Program focuses on employees in identified roles at risk of exposure to excessive noise and as a consequence, **noise induced hearing loss**. Identified roles include:

- Instrumental Music Teachers and Instructors
- Industrial Technology and Design (ITD) /Manual Arts Teachers
- Industrial Technology and Design/Manual Arts Teacher Aides
- Schools Officers (Janitor/Ground staff)
- Agricultural Teachers and Assistants (if they are exposed to workplace noise i.e. ride on mowers, whipper snippers, leaf blowers).
- Engineering Teachers if performing work similar to Industrial Technology and Design Teachers
- Classroom Music Teachers if they are performing similar work to Instrumental Music Teachers (i.e. brass bands, percussion etc.).

Schools are permitted to include any employee in the Hearing Conservation Program, with authorisation from the Business Manager or Principal required.

## Hearing testing and healthy hearing education and training

The Program includes a confidential, individual appointment for employees approximately every two years, for:

- An audiometric assessment (hearing test)
- healthy hearing education and training.

## Hearing testing

Attune Hearing is the only approved provider to conduct hearing tests for identified Department of Education employees. Attune Hearing travel to metropolitan, regional and remote schools throughout Queensland conducting the hearing tests on-site, utilising their Australian Standard approved mobile testing equipment.

This service ensures minimal disruption to the school working day. For some remote schools where access can be difficult other arrangements will be made to conduct the hearing tests.

**Schools will be contacted by Attune Hearing to organise appointment times.** Schools and employees need to be aware that [Attune Hearing](#) will visit regions on a cyclic schedule in order to accommodate the 5000 employees that are part of the Program. It is essential that:

- schools and employees respond to appointment requests from Attune Hearing, and
- employees attend the appointment time.

It is a mandatory requirement for all employees in the groups listed above to have the hearing test and receive healthy hearing education and training - even if they wear hearing aids.

Schools with **new** employees appointed in the listed groups are to email [hsu@qed.qld.gov.au](mailto:hsu@qed.qld.gov.au) to discuss a hearing test appointment and ensure adequate hearing protection is provided to the employee.

## Healthy hearing education and training

Education and instruction regarding healthy hearing will be provided during the hearing test appointment. Attune Hearing Audiometrists will provide information about:

- why noise can be hazardous
- identifying noise hazards
- strategies to protect yourself from hearing damage and loss
- the right type and appropriate use of hearing protection.

## Hearing protection

School leadership teams are to regularly review the hearing protection they have in place for employees and how this is being used.

Schools pay for hearing protection for all employees.

### **Instrumental Music Teachers**

As part of the Hearing Conservation Program Instrumental Music Teachers are provided with specialist musician's earplugs. Industrial earplugs from safety suppliers are not suitable for Instrumental Music Teachers.

### **ITD/Manual Arts Teachers and ITD/Manual Arts Teacher Aides Schools Officers and Agricultural Teachers and Assistants**

The type of hearing protection (Class 5 earmuffs) required by ITD Teachers, ITD Teacher Aides, Schools Officers and Agricultural Teachers is readily available in metropolitan and regional areas from safety suppliers. Class 5 hearing protection must comply with Australian Standards.

**ITD Teachers and ITD Teacher Aides** can opt for the Serenity earplug which can be supplied at their hearing test appointment. This earplug enables staff to block out damaging noise whilst still being able to communicate (i.e. ITD staff can protect their hearing from workshop noise whilst being able to hold conversations with students). This earplug has been tested for wear in humidity and for 12-hour comfort. It protects hearing from equipment such as drop saws, hammers, nail guns, riveting etc.

Hearing protection only works if it is being worn and being worn consistently in accordance with instructions. Factsheets about hearing protection are available on the [Creating Healthier Workplaces website](#). **Principals and supervisors are to provide reminders to employees about hearing protection and document this monitoring and supervision.**

## Cost of Services

- Hearing test and healthy hearing education and training \$240 pp
- Serenity earplugs for Instrumental Music Teachers \$50 pp
- Serenity earplugs for ITD Teachers/Teacher Aides \$100 pp

*Please note:* If employees are unable to attend an appointment with Attune Hearing the individual or school is to notify Attune Hearing on **1800 344 677**. A non-attendance fee of \$100 will be charged directly to the school if the employee (or school) fails to advise Attune Hearing of a cancellation 24 hours prior to the appointment. This is in line with Attune Hearing's standard procedure for non-attending clients.

## Further information

For information regarding exposure to noise, hearing protection and healthy hearing access the [Creating Healthier Workplaces website](#).

For enquiries regarding hearing test appointments contact: Attune Hearing on 1800 344 677

For questions regarding the Hearing Conservation Program contact: [hsw@ged.qld.gov.au](mailto:hsw@ged.qld.gov.au)