

## Working in Isolation Policy

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### 1. Purpose:

This policy describes the process of managing the health and wellbeing of employees working in isolation.

The aim of this policy is to ensure the safety, health and security of employees who are on College premises (Including the Senior School, Middle School, Junior School Campuses, Cape Otway Site, the College Boatshed and other College residential properties) and are isolated from other persons because of time, location or nature of their work.

### 2. Legislation:

- a. Victorian Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- b. Victorian Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007
- c. Isolation Register

Regulation 3.3 of the Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996 requires that if an employee is isolated from other persons because of the time, location or nature of the work then the employer must ensure that there is:

- a. a means of communication available which will enable the employee to call for help in the event of an emergency; and
- b. a procedure for regular contact with the employee and the employee is trained in the procedure.

### 3. Scope:

This policy applies to all personnel carrying out activities in the bounds of The Geelong College and includes all employees and contractors.

The policy applies to all employees at the College whilst performing work on any of the College premises and/or working in isolation (defined as weekdays (between 6pm and 8am), on weekends and in the term holidays).

### 4. Definition:

A person who is working by him/herself with no other personnel in proximity or visual sight.

### 5. Description:

The College recognises that on some occasions it is necessary for an employee to work on College premises (as above) in isolation and/or after hours.

Of the many areas of work undertaken at the College, the following groups are identified for the purpose of assessing the appropriateness of working in isolation:

- a. Administration
- b. Practical, including use of chemicals and machinery
- c. Hospitality and wellbeing
- d. Security and services departments

### 6. Administration:

This area extends to office staff, managers, teachers and employees working after hours to do administrative work. While the section of the school in which they work may be under alarm,

knowledge of their presence by the alarm company will not of itself be sufficient for the purpose of communication in an emergency. If the area is not alarmed, line managers or the caretaker should be notified of work commencement and completion time and the employee is to ensure to take all personal security measures i.e. locking doors, walking in well-lit areas, resetting the alarm.

## **7. Practical work including use of chemicals and machinery:**

Roles covered under this category include Science, Art and Craft Preparation, Grounds, Maintenance and Cleaning. The activities these employees will be permitted to undertake and not permitted to undertake while working alone and/or after hours must be clearly defined by line managers before any after-hours work is undertaken.

## **8. Hospitality and Wellbeing:**

Positions include nursing, counselling, catering and boarding house employees. A similar condition will apply with respect to permitted activities being defined by line managers before any after-hours work is undertaken.

## **9. Security and Services Departments:**

Departments include caretaking, grounds, maintenance, cleaning, Boat Shed and Bus Drivers/Courier. Some employees will also be subject to provisions under work including use of chemicals and machinery.

All regulations applicable in work hours will continue to apply and clear definition, as above, regarding permitted activities while working alone and/or after hours must be set out by Line Managers.

## **10. Emergency response procedures**

In all cases, Line Managers must be aware that the employee is in the school and have knowledge of the intended time they intend to spend there.

In the case of an emergency the normal emergency response procedures should be understood and carried out (as per the College's Critical Incident Plan). If a phone is not readily accessible, employees are not permitted to work alone and/or after hours.

## **11. Responsibilities**

**11.1 Line Managers:** All managers who allow staff access to designated offices, laboratories, workshops or other locations are responsible for the implementation of this policy.

- a. In consultation with management, employees or health and safety representatives, line managers are to:
- b. Identify situations where employees may work alone or after hours
- c. Identify associated risks related to the time, location or nature of the work
- d. Assess the extent of the risks associated with the work
- e. Ensure that staff are trained in the required procedure
- f. Establish control measures e.g. how to ensure help can be summoned quickly
- g. Establish and maintain an adequate and reliable communication system for all employees required to work alone and/or after hours
- h. Communicate on a regular basis with persons working in isolation and/or after hours Evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of the risk control measures e.g. communication, transport, emergency assistance, etc.

Where designated high-risk procedures are performed, a further level of responsibility operates. This would extend to:

- a. determining whether the work to be completed is (or should be) a designated high-risk procedure;

- b. taking all practicable measures to ensure that no designated high-risk procedure is undertaken by anyone working alone and/or after hours;
- c. maintaining a record of all occasions (and people) for which (and whom) they authorise the performance of designated high-risk procedures;
- d. determining whether the work to be completed requires special safety precautions, such as having 2 people in the room when a particular procedure is carried out;
- e. determining the types of work tasks which are not permitted at all if working alone and/or after hours.

**11.2 Employees:** Employees are responsible for taking all reasonable steps to ensure their own safety and security. They also:

- a. must have completed appropriate induction training, including emergency evacuation and other necessary emergency procedures;
- b. must not perform any designated high-risk procedures if working alone and/or after hours;
- c. must inform the Caretaker of their presence in that location, and the expected duration of their work there;
- d. must notify their line manager if they have a medical condition that can give rise to a dangerous or life-threatening situation when working alone and/or after hours.

## **12. Work too hazardous to be undertaken when working alone and/or after hours:**

Some work is required to be undertaken during work hours when qualified assistance and supervision is available and not when working alone and/or after hours. Examples of this work may include:

- a. particular acids and chemicals and explosive or potentially explosive substances
- b. disposal of hazardous substances
- c. naked flames associated with flammable solvents
- d. low temperature environments, e.g. cool rooms
- e. high powered, fast-moving machinery or equipment
- f. heights or confined spaces
- g. It is the responsibility of the Line Manager to assess which areas may or may not be worked on by staff working in isolation or after hours.

## **13. Training**

Each workplace area is responsible for preparing and enforcing their own procedures and for informing, instructing, training and supervising staff in these.

## **14. Records**

Line Managers are required to keep documentary evidence of all worksite procedures and records of training (if any) and information provided to employees required to work in isolation or after hours.

## **15. Review**

This body of policy and procedure will be reviewed by the WH&S Committee every three years. Individual Line Managers are required to review individual procedures annually as part of the review of workplace management.

## **16. During Normal Hours:**

The isolated employees' Line Manager shall,

- a. Instruct the employee in the manner in which communication will occur.

- b.** This will be either by making visual contact with the employee **or by** verbal communication
- c.** The frequency of the contact and/or communication shall also be determined at that time depending on each situation, in discussions with Line Manager and specified in the Isolation Register.

## **17. Outside of Normal Hours**

The isolated employees' Line Manager shall,

- a.** Instruct the employee in the manner in which communication will occur.
- b.** This will be either by making visual contact with the employee or by verbal
- a.** communication.
- c.** The frequency of the contact and/or communication shall also be determined at that
- d.** time depending on each situation, in discussions with Line Manager and specified in the Isolation Register.
- e.** In addition, the Line Manager shall ensure that the isolated employee communicates with when they have completed the required task(s) and are about to leave the isolated site. Specific Situations will be noted in the Isolation Register.
- f.** Ensure the isolated employee is not the only personnel on site.