

SCHOOL SAFETY ARTICLE

According to the “**general duties of employers to the employees**” enacted in the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHS Act) section 8 (1) every employer shall maintain, as far as is reasonably practicable, a working environment that is safe and without risk to



the health of employees. This piece of legislation is not only applicable to corporates but it extends to the educational sector which includes employees (teachers, and other staff) and learners. Section 9 also asserts that although learners are not considered employees, the OHS Act is still

applicable to their welfare and the Department of Education and relevant bodies associated with the school should ensure that they comply with the OHS Act to safeguard the health and welfare of everyone within the school premises.

Essentially schools should develop and include a basic health & safety system which is a document that guides the school's health and safety management system. The safety statement is preceded by the health and safety policy – a document which declares the commitment to ensure that health and safety in schools is prevalent as far as is reasonably practicable. The safety statement should be reviewed and updated as required considering significant changes related to workplace/school hazards

Health and Safety Management Systems in a school setting is an ongoing process which aims to promote the continuous improvement of the manner in which schools manages its safety. The former should be part of the overall management of the school and includes,

the school structure, planning activities, practices, procedures and resources for developing, implementing, reviewing and maintaining safety and health.

There are five key steps that contributes to the success of Health and Safety Management Systems and they include; policy and commitment, planning, implementation, measuring performance as well as audit and review. Every school contain elements of low and high risks in terms of health and safety. The gravity of these elements are dependent on the school profile which bears the school's significant features, and they include:

- School size
- School buildings and structures
- Planning procedures
- Provision for persons with special needs
- Organisational structures/chart
- List of regular visitors providing services to school, e.g. parents, contractors / educational service providers, tutors
- Adult education/Abet

These distinct features will assist in identifying the resources that need to be allocated to the health and safety management system of the school. The school should also decide and document the specific roles and responsibility of those who will coordinate health and safety on their behalf. Conducting risk assessment is considered the cornerstone of effectively managing health and safety at the workplace. Schools need to be proactive in matters relating to health and safety and put control measures in place in case of emergencies.

In conclusion, we have noticed with concern that there is general confusion about **school safety** and **school security**. There is a big distinction between safety and security. This article serves to highlight facts about school health and safety nothing about security.

Top 10 Safety Measures Schools Should Adopt To Ensure The Safety Of Students

