1. **Introduction**

1.1 The Work Health and Safety Act (2011) requires JVS staff to report workplace incidents. The extent to which an incident is notified beyond the particular workplace to the Principal, who in turn may be required to inform Work Cover Australia of the incident, depends on its seriousness, as well as considering the potential impact it has on the school as a whole.

1.2 The timely reporting of incidents through the appropriate processes enables early intervention, effective management and provision of support where required, and ensures that legislative reporting requirements are met.

1.3 Documenting and reporting of incidents enhances accountability and risk management. It also assists in preventing reoccurrences both at the workplace and across the organisation.

2. **What is an Incident?**

2.1 Staff must report:

- Workplace incidents
- Workplace related incidents (incidents occurring at an activity directly related to work e.g. excursions, sports events)
- Community or student incidents (occurring outside the workplace but which impact on the workplace)

2.2 An incident refers not only to incidents that occur at the workplace but also to incidents that occur during workplace activities (e.g. excursions) or incidents away from the workplace that have an impact on the operation of the workplace (e.g. emergencies such as natural disasters, or the death of employees or students).
3. **Workplace Planning to ensure Reporting of Incidents**

3.1 The Principal is to ensure that staff at the workplace are aware of their responsibility to notify incidents.

3.2 The Principal is to make information about the reporting of incidents available to staff so that, depending on the nature of the incident, they are aware of the relevant reporting procedures (e.g. reporting to the Principal, writing in the incident and injury register for the WHS Committee to review, reporting via hotline to Work Cover).

3.3 Where incidents must be reported, the reporting is to occur as soon as practicable, but within 24 hours of the incident occurring.

4. **WHS Reporting**

4.1 The WHS Committee should also advise the Principal of any incident. Where appropriate, the WHS Chairman will assist the Principal with the incident. The WHS committee (Chairman) should also notify the Principal if there is uncertainty about the reporting of an incident.

5. **JVS and Risk Management – Incidents involving Students**

5.1 At the Joseph Varga School, Incident Reporting is an important component of the school’s Risk Management Plan in which the school strives to anticipate and prevent risks and hazards through careful reporting and analysis of incidents as they occur.

5.2 The school achieves this by teachers being required to complete an **Incident Register** that can apply in during playground duty and in the classroom context, as well as other times where supervision of students occurs in and outside of the school.

5.3 Based on the information that is regularly collected through these forms, the information is sent to the Principal, School Psychologist and, where appropriate, the WHS committee for analysis and reporting in the form of an
Incident Register Graph, which can be subsequently examined and discussed by all the staff.

5.4 The graphing of incident reports can establish trends and patterns that can apply to the behaviours of individual children according to criteria such as level of physicality and degree of verbal abuse.

5.5 Full Incident Reports are triggered at the time of their occurrence, or soon thereafter, when a specific behaviour meets the criteria for a ‘high level incident’. A full incident report requires a full description of the observed behaviour, the student/s involved, what action/s the teacher took as part of the follow-up, and then a record of the actions that will and have been taken by the Principal and others in relation to the matter.

5.6 Should the Principal, or delegated authority, regard the matter as particularly serious, or requiring a high degree of intensive intervention by several key personnel, then a separate Incident Follow-Up Report form may be generated, comprising such information as date, time, location, incident summary, and action taken point by point by all parties involved.

PROCEDURES:

Incident Reporting during ‘Duty’:

1. Teachers should be familiar with the criteria in the Duty Incident Register i.e. Low, Medium, or High level incidents to establish whether a full incident report must be completed.
2. Teachers must ensure all ‘fields’ on the form are complete.
3. Where possible, investigate and interview students/staff involved.
4. Record directly observable information and accounts from those involved (i.e. no speculation).
5. If not appropriate to write a full report at the time, notes should be recorded and then a report completed on the same day.
6. The following behaviours are not acceptable and should be considered incidences to be recorded:
• Wrestling, especially neck or strangle holds
• Tackling or pushing with intent to take someone down to the ground.
• Biting, spitting, punching, kicking, slapping, pulling hair
• Swearing or inappropriate racist, sexist, sexualised or indecent comments/discussions.
• Accessing or attempting to access objectionable material on an item of technology such as pornography, hate or torture sites, facebook or social media. This includes viewing any entertainment or media that is not age appropriate.

Classroom Incident Reporting:

• Teachers are required to use their ‘Classroom Incident Register’ to record anecdotal information including observations and incidents in the classroom.
• There is an accumulative incident page for each child.
• Using the same criteria as the ‘Duty Incident Register’, the teacher must make a determination of the severity of the incident, record notes, and if applicable, complete a full report by the end of the working day.
• Any full incident report must be given to the Principal that day or the following morning if the Principal is unavailable. A copy must also be given to the School Psychologist, and in some cases, the Chairman of the WHS committee.
• The Principal will make a determination and suggested follow up of the incident to be undertaken by the Principal or where applicable, the Teacher.
• The Chairman of the WHS committee will collect all Classroom and Duty Incident Registers and bring them to regular WHS committee meetings to view and establish hazards, patterns of behaviour identified in accumulative records, and provide recommendations (if applicable) to the School Psychologist and/or Principal.
Critical Incidents:

- From time to time an incident can occur for no obvious reason that immediately becomes a critical incident, requiring different degrees of intensive therapeutic support, and at times, crisis intervention or physical restraint.
- Although these rare occasions would be recorded on the Duty or Classroom Incident Register, they are of such impact that they immediately demand the recording of an Incident Report because they require immediate team intervention (in line with the school’s Behaviour Management Policies and Procedures).

NB: Differentiating between ‘Serious’ and ‘Critical’ incidents at JVS is being determined in an imminent review of this policy and procedures.

Last Updated: 13 December 2013