

St Gerard's Dandenong North

Essential Safety Measures Policy



St Gerard's Dandenong North is a school which operates with the consent of the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne and is owned, operated and governed by Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (MACS), where formation and education are based on the principles of Catholic doctrine, and where the teachers are outstanding in true doctrine and uprightness of life.

Purpose

We are called to be stewards of creation, caring for the gifts God has given us, including the environment, our own personal talents and resources. St Gerard's is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of members of our community to ensure that the school is an optimal environment for learning. The proper maintenance of the buildings, facilities and grounds is essential to the creation and maintenance of a safe and inclusive learning environment, and gives the school community confidence in the reliability of systems should an emergency arise.

St Gerard's has a moral and legal responsibility to ensure the safety and wellbeing of members of the community. The Victorian *Building Regulations 2018* (the Regulations) require that buildings are maintained so that they operate satisfactorily.

Scope

These guidelines apply to the buildings, facilities and grounds of St Gerard's. Schools are classified as Class 9b buildings in the Regulations (excluding any other parts of the building that are of another class).

There are different obligations under the Regulations, which depend upon when the school was built or when building work occurred on the building or buildings.

Buildings constructed before 1 July 1994

If the building was built before 1 July 1994, the owner is responsible for ensuring that any safety equipment, safety fittings or safety measures are maintained and fulfilling their purpose. This includes exits and paths of travel to exits.

Buildings constructed after 1 July 1994

If the building was constructed or altered since 1 July 1994, the list of essential safety measures, including their performance, frequency and type of maintenance required, would be included with the occupancy permit or certificate of final inspection.

Regulatory context

Schedule 4, clause 13 of the *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017* (ETR) states that a registered school's buildings, facilities and grounds must comply with any laws that apply to the school including local laws and building, planning, and occupational health and safety laws.

Definitions

Essential safety measure is defined in Part 15 of the Regulations and includes items listed in Schedule 8 of the Regulations, such as:

air handling systems (used for smoke hazard management)

exit doors

early warning systems

emergency lifts

emergency lighting

emergency power supply

emergency warning systems

exit signs

fire control centres

fire curtains and doors

fire extinguishers

fire detection and alarm systems

fire hydrants

fire isolated stairs

fire rated materials

fire windows

mechanical ventilation (incorporating a cooling tower, or hot or warm water system)

fire isolated passageways and ramps

paths of travel to exits

smoke alarms

smoke control systems

sprinkler systems.

Policy

- 1.1 As the building owner, MACS requires that Mr Paul Cowan prepares an annual essential safety measures report on the building's essential safety measures. Mr Paul Cowan may authorise an agent, such as a specialist maintenance contractor, to complete the report. The annual essential safety measures report needs to be in accordance with the approved form.
- 1.2 Records of maintenance checks, safety measures and repair work must be retained so they can be inspected by a municipal building surveyor or chief officer of the fire brigade.
- 1.3 These documents must be available on request after 24 hours notice has been given.
- 1.4 If work is planned that will alter existing buildings, the impact on essential safety measures must be considered. Check with a municipal or private building surveyor to ensure that compliance with the Act and Regulations is maintained.
- 1.5 A current copy of the building's occupancy permit will be displayed at St Gerard's in a prominent position approved by the building surveyor.

Role of the principal or delegate

Mr Paul Cowan at St Gerard's acts as the school's site manager and is responsible for:

occupational health and safety (OHS) affecting buildings, plant, classroom furniture and equipment

general safety and environmental management

soil and environmental contamination

building ventilation

noise

rainwater tanks

sanitation and waste collection

swimming pools

tree maintenance

fire protection prevention

bushfire preparedness

general safety practices on site during a construction project.

The procedures at St Gerard's are consistent with the relevant Australian Standard and only incorporate approved playground equipment (and do not include seesaws, swings, maypoles, merry-go-rounds, roundabouts and flying foxes).

Consequences of failing to comply

Non-compliance could place students, staff and members of our community, as well as passers-by and the occupants of adjoining buildings at risk. Non-compliance may result in an infringement notice being issued by council or the Fire Authority, along with a fine. It may also result in prosecution and more substantial fines.

Related school policies

OHS Policy