Background

The Enhanced Risk Management Policy and Strategy were endorsed by the DEECD Leadership Committee and Secretary in February 2012.

These documents make it clear that **principals and managers are accountable for the management of risk** within their areas of responsibility and related to the decisions they make (or do not make – as risks also abound when decisions are avoided).

**DEECD Risk Management Policy for Government Schools**

The extracts (below) from the Risk Management Strategy are specifically relevant

- Operational **risk management is the responsibility of the principal**. Strategic risks are managed by the principal on behalf of the School Council and may be based on risks to the Annual Plan.

- Where schools have a strategy or approach to managing risk which deviates from those of the ERMF the risk management approach is to be articulated in a Risk Management Policy.

- The refresh and generation of risk registers in schools should align with the strategic planning cycle and school year with one risk register documenting risk to the strategic plan and Annual Implementation Plan as well as operational risks (with the exception of those risks / hazards recorded in the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) register).

- Establishing the school’s appetite for risk will be a part of the strategic planning process.

- The risks to the school’s strategic and annual implementation plans should be presented to the school council for periodic “Monitor & Review”. Typically this should be done on a quarterly basis, such that the Council can fulfil its governance requirements.

It is recommended that all schools develop and promulgate a Risk Management Policy covering those points indicated below:

- the rationale and approach taken to risk management
- responsibilities and accountabilities for risk management
- guidelines and actions for managing risk,
- techniques and resources to be applied to the management of risk,
- acceptance, communication and escalation of risk
- recording, monitoring and review.
PURPOSE

Risk is intrinsic to our world and therefore, the management of risk and recognition of opportunities are integral to achieving our vision, mission and goals and delivering on our strategic plan.

This policy recognises systematic risk management is integral to good management and effective governance required of an autonomous public school. Through proactive management of risks and opportunities, the school aims to improve decision making and outcomes.

Risk will manifest itself in most activities and endeavours we undertake including delivering key learning outcomes, supporting wellbeing, maintaining finances and infrastructure and building our reputation.

By asking “What if...” questions and through planning, risk can be reduced or mitigated. Through these processes we will foster success and be better prepared to respond if (or when) the risks materialise.

RESPONSIBILITY & GUIDELINES

As the Secretary states in his foreword on the Department’s Risk Management Policy, “Risk management is everyone’s responsibility and must be wired into all planning and implementation.” All staff are specifically responsible for identifying and for managing risk within their areas of responsibility.

Risks must be balanced against our goals and our community’s expectations when making decisions on whether or not they are acceptable. If for example, our aim is to improve language proficiency but there is a high risk of long term medical impact (such as from radiation) it would be inconceivable that the benefit would outweigh the risk.

The effort expended on risk management should be proportional to the risk but we must at least identify, communicate and consult on risks to be able to make the assessment of how much effort to expend. Resources used to manage risk should also be commensurate with the risks and legislative requirements.

Risk management must be integrated into all planning, when activities occur spontaneously or plans change risk management may become even more important and must be considered.

Any risks which cannot be mitigated below “High” must be immediately brought to the Principals attention, i.e. if the residual risk is “High” inform the Principal and consider stopping the activity. Additionally, where the residual risk is medium staff should consider whether they have responsibility for the activity and the authority to accept the risk.

IMPLEMENTATION

Tungamah Primary School will utilise the Department’s Enhanced Risk Management Framework adopting and using the procedures, guidelines, language and tools which can be accessed through the edugate Risk Management site at; https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/Services/Policies/Pages/Risk.aspx

Risks will be captured in the College Risk Register (based on the Department’s sample register), with the exception of those hazards recorded in the Occupational Health and Safety Register.

Where the current risk is assessed as medium (or above) the risk must be recorded in the risk register. Additionally, risks should be recorded where they have been “keeping us awake at night”, are considered noteworthy, have a number of control mitigating them, or it is thought the risk may escalate in the future.
The risk register will be reviewed by the Leadership Team at the start of each term and by the School Council at their second meeting of each term. The purpose of these reviews will be to gauge the effectiveness of risk management as a whole and of specific controls for critical activities and risks.

The school council will also review risk assessments for all activities to be undertaken away from the school grounds. Risks are to be assessed using the Department’s guidelines unless agreed by School Council.

**CONCLUSION**

Risk management is everyone’s responsibility and must be wired in to all planning and implementation at Tungamah Primary School.

Risk understanding and our tolerance for risk will be key considerations in our decision making. In the areas of wellbeing, financial management and governance our tolerance for risk is low but this does not mean a culture of risk aversion as we strive to achieve our vision.


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<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Christine Purcell</td>
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<td>Victorian Government Schools Policy Advisory Guide</td>
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