

Model Policy Disclaimer

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Policy Implementation Documents

1. Background

- 1.1 Policies are meaningless unless properly implemented. Indeed the operationalisation of the policy is the standard against which the school will be held to account just as much as the policy itself. The wording of policy is important but so is the way in which the aims and objectives of the policy are actually delivered.
- 1.2 Policy implementation documents are essential. Only perhaps policies that are more in the nature of guiding principles (e.g. mission statements, duty of care policy) escape the need for an implementation document.
- 1.3 This guidance document provides schools with the tools to think about and plan how they approach the task of creating policy implementation documents.

2. Start with the 'Why'

- 2.1 The policy implementation documents are derived from the policy itself and turn the policy into action; the documents lead to behaviour and decisions that in turn lead to consequences for the school, for students, for staff and for the whole school community.
- 2.2 The standard against which policy implementation documents are to be judged is clarity: is everyone clear as to their behaviours, what they are accountable for, what actions they need to take, the timeframe over which such actions need to happen and how their actions will be monitored and reviewed?

3. The Structure of Policy Implementation Documents

- 3.1 Each policy will require one or more different type of implementation document depending on the nature of the policy.
- 3.2 Types of policy implementation documents might include:
 - i. **Procedures:** Probably the most common type of implementation document. A procedures document works well when the policy is relatively straightforward involving a set or sets of actions that more than one person needs to understand and follow. A procedures document is often used as a reference document in answer to a staff member's question 'what do I need to do when the following happens?'. Examples of policies that may require a procedural document could be Reporting Policy (Emergency and Incidents), Alcohol Policy (Student Consumption), Behaviour Management Policy.

- ii. **Procedures Manual:** May be required when the policy area involves a whole range of procedures e.g. OHS Policy. A manual could also be created when many related policies come together to form an overarching policy such as Student Wellbeing.
 - iii. **Checklists:** Might be needed when there is a large number of complex, mandated policy items e.g. a Child Safe Standards Policy, Australian Government Recurrent Grants, etc. Checklists enable the school to monitor delivery.
 - iv. **Flowcharts or workflows:** A helpful way to give clarity about a detailed procedure that needs to be followed through a logical sequence e.g. Mandatory Reporting, Anaphylaxis Management Policy, etc.
 - v. **Guidance:** Useful when the delivery of a policy requires judgments relating to decisions to be made e.g. Anti-Bullying and Harassment, Uniform Policy.
 - vi. **Codes of Conduct:** Useful when the delivery of a policy requires the school to give clarity as to behavioural expectations e.g. Child Safe Standards Policy, Equal Opportunity and Anti-Harassment.
- 3.3 It is the work of the school, and more specifically the policy 'owner' (i.e. the one who is responsible for delivery) to decide what type(s) of policy implementation documentation is needed to create a clear line of sight between the policy and its implementation in order to deliver the policy purpose and outcomes. This will be different for each policy.
- 3.4 In order to provide clarity it is recommended that policy and policy implementation documents be separated out. Whether these are formatted as separate stand-alone documents or formatted as one, it is important to identify all the policy implementation documents that must be read as part of the policy.

4. Writing Style Advice

- 4.1 The formatting of all types of implementation documents give clarity to the structure. Clear headings, for example, signpost the structure; and falling in underneath each heading should be numbered sections with one idea per paragraph. The use of numbering (rather than bullet points) enables the reader to make easy reference to a specific paragraph.
- 4.2 Consistency (where possible) within each type of implementation document will be helpful. For example, the school may decide that its procedural documents would benefit from some standard headings.
- 4.3 All policy implementation documents must have a clear title and be dated. If the document supersedes an earlier version that must be identified so there is no confusion. It is recommended that this information be written as a heading rather than as a footnote.
- 4.4 Sometimes, it may feel as if the document needs to include a substantive section that doesn't fit neatly into the document itself. One way to handle this is to include that section as an appendix.
- 4.5 Good implementation documentation is as brief as possible. The writing should be straightforward, concise and precise – make every word count. A good test is whether a new member of staff finds the documentation easy to follow.

- 4.6 Intentional and consistent use of the words 'must', 'should' and 'may' is important and helpful:
- 'Must' = a requirement
 - 'Should' = good or best practice
 - 'May' = advice.
- 4.7 The language shouldn't be too technical – straightforward enough for a new employee to understand. Acronyms should be spelt out the first time they are used.
- 4.8 Avoid using information that may be quickly outdated (e.g. phone numbers, names).
- 4.9 Facts need to be double-checked for accuracy.