

The Watauga County Board of Education (the “board”) directs the superintendent to implement a system-wide loss prevention/safety program with the goal of maintaining a safe working environment for employees and a safe learning environment for students. The program must be consistent with the requirements for school safety established in policy 4200/7270, School Safety, and with applicable state and federal rules related to workplace safety and other safety issues in the school environment.

The superintendent shall establish a system-wide health and safety leadership team to oversee the school system’s injury and loss prevention efforts. These efforts will include (1) accident and injury prevention and investigation; (2) hazard investigation and control; and (3) promotion of safe practices and safety awareness in the school environment. The team shall be responsible for developing processes for accident investigation and for the identification, reporting, and correction of hazards and other unsafe conditions within the school environment, as described below. The superintendent or designee shall lead the health and safety leadership team in carrying out its responsibilities.

A. ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION AND CORRECTION OF HAZARDS

The health and safety leadership team shall develop an accident investigation protocol, or improve existing protocols, for investigating all employee work-related injuries.

The accident investigation protocol must include steps to identify in a timely manner the cause(s) of the accident and any underlying factors that may have contributed to it. It must also require the identification and implementation of actions to address unsafe conditions to prevent recurrence of the incident. Investigation steps may include, but are not limited to, interviews of the injured employee(s) and witnesses, examination of physical evidence, examination of the workplace, and data collection.

The protocol must provide for recording the findings of cause, recommendations for correction, and actions taken.

The health and safety leadership team shall develop additional protocols, or improve existing protocols, as necessary to investigate reports of hazards and other unsafe conditions within the school environment.

B. PREVENTATIVE MEASURES: IDENTIFICATION, EVALUATION, AND CONTROL OF HAZARDS

The health and safety leadership team shall establish or improve processes and strategies for the identification, investigation, and control of hazards and other unsafe conditions in the school environment, including those arising from safety hazards (e.g., slippery floors, cluttered work areas, overloaded electrical outlets); chemical and biological hazards (e.g.,

solvents, pesticides, lab chemicals, bloodborne pathogens); other health hazards (e.g., allergens and other indoor air pollution, noise), and ergonomic risk factors (e.g., repetition, use of excessive force, awkward posture).

The processes for identification, investigation, and control may include periodic worksite inspections to identify potential or actual safety hazards; job task safety analysis; employee safety surveys; analysis of ergonomic risk factors; review of injury data, accident reports, and workers' compensation records; hazard control analysis; and/or other standard means of hazard identification and control that are consistent with the goal of improving safety in the school environment. The superintendent or designee may appoint site-based safety teams to conduct these activities at each school system site that houses employees. If site-based teams are utilized, they shall report to the health and safety leadership team on a schedule to be established by the superintendent or designee.

C. CORRECTION OF IDENTIFIED HAZARDS

The processes and strategies for improving safety in the school environment required by this policy must include a system for correcting identified hazards and must require the immediate removal of employees from an area where there is an imminent danger that cannot be immediately corrected (e.g., a chemical spill).

The system for correcting hazards must give priority to solutions that actually remove the hazard. If the hazard cannot be removed altogether, procedures that limit exposure to the hazard should be implemented when practicable. In addition, personal protective equipment may be provided to protect the individual(s) from direct exposure to a hazard that cannot be eliminated. A combination of these methods should be used if needed to address the hazardous condition.

D. REPORTING HAZARDS OR OTHER UNSAFE CONDITIONS

The health and safety leadership team shall establish or improve processes for employees and others to report hazards and other unsafe conditions to supervisory or administrative personnel without fear of reprisal.

E. DEVELOPMENT OF SAFE WORK PRACTICES

The health and safety leadership team shall assist the superintendent or designee in the development of safety standards for facilities, equipment, machinery, tools, and work practices. The standards must be consistent with all applicable federal and state standards.

F. SAFETY EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The health and safety leadership team shall coordinate a system-wide safety education program to educate individuals in the school environment on safety practices. The program of education and training must be documented and must include instruction on workplace-related safety practices, relevant job- or activity-specific safety practices, and site-specific

safety and emergency procedures. It must also include instruction on measures for reporting any unsafe conditions, work practices, or injuries.

G. RECORDKEEPING

The health and safety leadership team shall establish uniform processes for recordkeeping that comply with the requirements of federal and state law.

H. EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY FOR SAFETY

All employees are expected to follow safe work practices, use appropriate personal protective equipment as instructed by their supervisors, and attend safety education programs as assigned. Employees must report unsafe conditions or work practices, accidents, or injuries as soon as practicable, in accordance with established procedures.

Legal References: 29 C.F.R. Part 1910; 13 N.C.A.C. 07F.0101; State Board of Education Policy INSR-003
Cross References: School Safety (policy 4200/7270), Hazardous Materials (policy 6540), Occupational Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens (policy 7260), Occupational Exposure to Hazardous Chemicals in Science Laboratories (policy 7265)

Adopted: March 9, 2015

Revised: August 14, 2017 (Legal references only)