

# H&S Issues

**Most OH&S officers take their responsibilities seriously, with good reason. Failure to act on potential hazards has serious consequences, both in terms of safety and accountability. Most schools appoint OH&S officers, yet it is important to remember that *all* staff members are accountable for students' health and safety. Safe work practice documents reveal that any individual who assumes responsibility in a school situation for the welfare of students by providing instruction, direction, advice or assistance is deemed an accountable person.**

How accountable are you when it comes to the *Eternal* Health and Safety of the students in your school? Do you help take responsibility for the spiritual formation of your students? Or perhaps your school has an appointed Eternal, Health & Safety Officer. With increases in funding, many schools have employed chaplains who serve in this role. This issue of TEACH features the role of chaplaincy in Christian schools. Chaplains act as advocates for students. They have a heart to develop spirituality and a job description that fosters the Eternal Health and Safety of students. Their role in schools is very important, but as with any good practice, there may be inherent dangers.

In this case, the biggest danger is that classroom teachers may abdicate their role to the chaplain, leaving with this individual the responsibility for the students' Eternal Health & Safety. George Barna

(2003), researcher and author, points out that one primary function of churches is to equip people to reflect Jesus. As faith-based communities, Christian schools function as churches, and most perceive that one of their roles is to make disciples. This requires a greater commitment than merely learning about Jesus. It's like those 'learn about' and 'learn to' statements that appear in some syllabus documents. Christian educators desire that their students move beyond learning about God and learn to live in God's presence, so they can reflect His love to the world. For Christian teachers, their chosen career is more than a job. It is a ministry.

To be effective in this ministry demands an integrated approach that reaches further than the chaplain's office. Everyday teaching and school routines should reflect the spirit-filled lives of the teachers. This should be evident in chapel programs, during morning devotions or worships, in scripture classes, *and* in every aspect of the school program.

Students learn to reflect Jesus by associating with people who are reflecting Jesus in the way they live. This means all of us are accountable when it comes to the Eternal Health and Safety of our students. How seriously are we taking our responsibility? **TEACH**

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## Reference

Barna, G. (2003). *Think like Jesus*. Brentwood, TN: Integrity Publishers.