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## **HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY**

### **Introductory Statement**

In accordance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, it is the policy of the Board of Management to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of all staff and to protect students, visitors, contractors and other persons at the school from injury and ill health arising from any work activity. The successful implementation of this policy requires the full support and active co-operation of all staff, students, contractors and visitors to the school. It is recognised that hazard identification, risk assessment and control measures are legislative requirements which must be carried out by the employer to ensure the safety, health and welfare of all staff.

The Board of Management, as employer, undertakes in so far as is reasonably practicable to:

- promote standards of safety, health and welfare that comply with the provisions and requirements of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and other relevant legislation, standards and codes of practice;
- provide information, training, instruction and supervision where necessary, to enable staff to perform their work safely and effectively;
- maintain a constant and continuing interest in safety, health and welfare matters pertinent to the activities of the school;
- continually improve the system in place for the management of occupational safety, health and welfare and review it periodically to ensure it remains relevant, appropriate and effective;
- consult with staff on matters related to safety, health and welfare at work;
- provide the necessary resources to ensure the safety, health and welfare of all those to whom it owes a duty of care, including staff, students, contractors and visitors.

The Board of Management is committed to playing an active role in the implementation of this occupational safety, health and welfare policy and undertakes to review and revise it in light of changes in legislation, experience and other relevant developments.

## **Rationale**

The policy represents the Board of Management's commitment to safety and health, and specifies the manner, the organisation and the resources necessary for maintaining and reviewing safety and health standards. The Board of Management is required to document the school's health and safety policy and make it available to all employees, outside services providers and Inspectors of the Health and Safety Authority. The Board of Management also considers its duty-of-care in the school and this must be an integral part of any Health and Safety Policy.

## **Aims:**

With this policy, the school ideally hopes:

- to create a safe and healthy school environment by identifying, preventing and tackling hazards and their accompanying risks
- to ensure understanding of the school's duty of care towards pupils
- to protect the school community from workplace accidents and ill health at work
- to outline procedures and practices in place to ensure safe systems of work
- to comply with all relevant health and safety legislation (so far as is reasonably practicable) to include the following areas:
  - o Provision of a safe workplace for all employees - teachers, SNAs, secretary, caretaker, etc.
  - o Ensuring competent employees, who will carry out safe work practices
  - o Ensuring safe access and escape routes
  - o Ensuring safe handling and use of hazardous substances and equipment
  - o Provision of safe equipment including maintenance and use of appropriate guards
  - o Provision of appropriate personal protective equipment

## **Responsibilities of employer - Board of Management (See Solas December 2005)**

- Provide and maintain a workplace that is safe and do likewise for all machinery and equipment etc.
- Manage work activities to ensure the safety, health and welfare of employees
- Ensure that risks are assessed and hazards are eliminated or minimized as far as is reasonably practicable
- Prepare a safety statement and regularly update it, particularly when there have been significant changes or when the risk assessment is no longer valid
- Provide and maintain decent welfare facilities for employees, including the provision of a safe place of work in which the risk of assault to staff is prevented or minimised
- Prepare and update procedures to deal with an emergency situation and communicate these procedures to employees
- Appoint a competent person to oversee the functions of the Board in relation to Health & Safety
- Provide training and information to workers in a format and language that is appropriate, including training on the commencement of employment
- Report serious accidents to the Health and Safety Authority
- Consult annually with employees and provide them with information in relation to safety, health and welfare
- Require employers from whom services are contracted to have an up to date safety statement (e.g. painters, contract cleaners, bus companies...)

## **Responsibilities of employees**

Health and safety is everyone's responsibility. As a worker you have legal duties designed to protect you and those you work with (Solas December 2005).

Responsibilities include:

- Not to be under the influence of an intoxicant to the extent that they endanger your own or other persons' safety. To submit to tests for intoxicants as and when regulations specifying testing procedures are adopted
- To co-operate with an employer or other people to ensure that the Health and Safety law is implemented

- Not to engage in improper conduct that will endanger you or anyone else
- To attend Health and Safety training and correctly use any equipment at work
- To use protective clothes and equipment provided
- To report any dangerous practices or situations that you are aware of to an appropriate person
- Not to interfere or misuse any safety equipment at your workplace
- To tell your employer, if you are suffering from a disease or illness that adds to risks

### **Entitlements of safety representative of the Board of Management (Section 25 Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act, 2005)**

The safety representative has the right to:

- Represent the employees at the place of work in consultation with the employer on matters in relation to health and safety
- Inspect the place of work on a schedule agreed with the employer or immediately in the event of an accident, dangerous occurrence or imminent danger or risk to the safety, health and welfare of any person
- Receive appropriate training
- Investigate accidents and dangerous occurrences
- Investigate complaints made by employees
- Accompany an inspector carrying out an inspection at the workplace
- Make representations to the employer on matters relating to safety, health and welfare
- Make representations to and receive information from, an inspector
- Consult and liaise with other safety representatives in the same undertaking.

## Carrying Out of a Risk Assessment

Each year, the Board of Management should carry out a risk assessment, identifying hazards, assessing the risks and specifying the actions required to eliminate or minimize them. They may enlist the help of the teachers, safety officer, secretary and other relevant parties to carry this out. Hazards may include physical, health, biological, chemical and human hazards.

As part of the general approach to safety, other policies & practices which have a bearing on safety, health and welfare have been put in place and communicated to employees, pupils, parents and others using the premises. These include Acceptable Usage (AUP), Anti-bullying, Child Protection, Code of Behaviour, Critical Incident Management Plan, Parental Involvement, Relationship & Sexuality Education (R.S.E.), Special Educational Needs, Substance Use Policy and Vetting (Garda Clearance). This is not an exhaustive list. Health and safety are considered when any policy/plan is being drawn up e.g. PE, Visual Arts, etc. The duty of care is also considered in all areas and aspects of school life.

## **Procedures to deal with emergencies**

### • Emergency contact procedures

- o Contact details of staff and pupils are updated annually by the school's secretary. The contact details are kept on Aladdin and class teachers retain a hard copy of their own class. The Principal, Deputy Principal and secretary have access to all records on Aladdin. Each individual class teacher has access to their own class' information on Aladdin
- o The secretary usually contacts parents/guardians in case of an emergency, though depending on the severity of the emergency, the Principal or a teacher may contact them

- Fire-drill and school evacuation procedures (See p. 45-49 A Guide to Insurance, Safety and Security in the School, Church and General)

- o Fire-drills are held termly
- o Teachers and pupils aware of the designated assembly points following evacuation of the building. Assembly points are clearly marked.
- o Procedures for evacuation displayed near the door of each room
- o New staff are notified of these procedures by the Assistant Principal

o Pupils are notified of these procedures by the class teachers at the start of the year and they are regularly reminded throughout the year

- **A Serious Accident Procedure & Accident Report Form is available in the CPSMA Management Board Members' Handbook p. 285.**

A report of this kind must be made to the HSA in respect of the following types of incident:

o An accident causing loss of life to any employed or self-employed person if sustained in the course of their employment

o An accident sustained in the course of their employment which prevents any employed or self-employed person from performing the normal duties of their employment for more than 3 calendar days not including the date of the accident

o An accident to any person not at work caused by a work activity which causes loss of life or requires medical treatment.

- **A Critical Incident Management Plan is in place in the school.**

Please refer to the plan.

A copy of this and relevant accompanying information is available in the Critical Incident Management Plan folder located in the office

- **Exceptional closures**

o In the event of an exceptional closure, parents receive a text to their mobile device

### **Health issues**

- **Registration Form**

o There is a section allowing parents to identify any allergies/illnesses of a new child

- **Managing specific health issues**

o Staff are made aware of the health issues in relation to certain pupils by the Principal and/or previous class teacher at staff meetings and/or on a one-to-one basis

- **Administration of Medication - refer to the Administration of Medicine Policy**
  - o Forms are completed by parents and signed on behalf of the Board of Management by the Chairperson or Principal
  - o A copy is maintained for each child and all administration is documented and witnessed
  
- **Sickness or Injury**
  - o If children are sick or injured, the secretary usually contacts parents/guardians, though depending on the severity, the Principal or a teacher may contact them
  
- **Illnesses and contagious infections such as rubella, chicken pox etc. - See 'Infectious diseases in the Primary School: Health Service executive (H.S.E.)**
  
- **Head-lice**
  - o Parents are notified by text, email or note. They are reminded to check their child's hair regularly and of ways in which to treat them if they're present
  
- **School hygiene**
  - o Children are encouraged to wash their hands. The use of wash facilities, including hot water and soap, are available in each classroom
  
- **General cleanliness of school environment**
  - o The school employs a cleaner to ensure a consistent standard of cleanliness throughout the school, including refuse, toilets, classrooms, floors etc.
  
- **First Aid**
  - o Some members of staff have a qualification in First Aid
  
- **Healthy eating - refer to the Healthy Eating Policy.**

## Safety and welfare issues

### Pupils

#### • **Assembly and Dismissal of Pupils**

- Children assemble in school yard each morning between 9.20 a.m. and 9.30. They are supervised by members of staff. The bell rings @ 9.30am.

#### • **Dismissal**

- Junior Infants and Senior Infants are collected at 2.10pm by a Parent/Guardian/designated person.
- 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class are dismissed @ 3.10pm, a teacher supervises from 3.10pm to 3.20pm children departing on the bus or in cars.

#### • **Ensuring pupil safety on the grounds**

- There is a one way system in operation in the yard to ensure children are as safe as possible coming and going to and from school. Parents are asked to be as vigilant as possible.

#### • **Pupils leaving the school premises during the school day e.g. dentist or doctor appointment**

- o The parent notifies the teacher by note in advance of the departure.

#### • **Supervision of Pupils: See Guidelines from Allianz website, [www.allscoil.ie](http://www.allscoil.ie)**

- o Supervision in the event of a teacher being absent

- Children are taught by sub or SEN teacher until either a substitute teacher arrives or they are divided between the classes

- o The supervision roster for playground duty is clearly displayed in the staff room/office/classrooms



- **Incident / accident book**
  - Serious Incident/Accident - Records are written in the Incident Report Book kept in a filing cabinet in the secretary's office. These records are written by the principle staff member involved. The Principal reads this and retains a separate copy if deemed necessary
  
- **Code of Behaviour and Anti Bullying Policy**
  - o Refer to school's policy for dealing with behaviour which causes a risk to others
  
- **Allegations or Suspicions of Child Abuse**
  - o Refer to Child Protection Policy and Child Protection Guidelines. Also refer to CPSMA Management Board Members' Handbook.
  - o The school's Child Protection Policy, in line with Child Protection Guidelines, is followed in the case of an allegation or suspicion of child abuse
  
- **School tours / outings**
  - Prior to the tour/trip, teachers contact the site of the tour and discuss any safety concerns
  - Teachers brief the children on safety aspects of the trip in the days prior to the trip
  - A note outlining the itinerary, cost, appropriate clothing and any other safety concerns is sent to parents prior to going on tour. Permission slips are also attached. These must be returned to the class teacher prior to the trip
  - Teachers bring an emergency contact list, first aid box and phone with them on tour Teachers regularly carry out headcounts e.g. getting on/off the bus, changing locations, before the bus departs, after lunch and toilet breaks
  - Teachers ensure all children are wearing their seatbelts prior to the bus departing each location

## Staff

- Garda clearance
- o The school ensures that all successful staff at interview have recently been vetted by the gardaí
- o The school endeavours to maintain a high standard in its 'duty of care' to all staff by encouraging a positive and safe environment and taking precautions to ensure that this exists e.g. clear signs, planned evacuation procedures etc.
- o Practices to support positive staff relations in the school include
  - Internal communication board, staff meetings, circulation of minutes, emails
  - Process of decision-making - insofar as is possible, staffed are called upon to make decisions on the basis of consultation and consensus within the school community e.g. adoption of school plans
  - Effective school policies and procedures - all teachers are aware and have a soft copy of school plans, policies, practices and procedures
  - Mutual respect
  - A sense of fairness
  - Informal meetings and communication e.g. outings, positive news texts etc.
  - Wellbeing/Mindfulness for teachers and school staff is made available as often as possible (at least once a year)
- o Staff are made aware of the procedures to address cases of adult bullying/harassment or to initiate a grievance procedure at staff meetings, informal meetings, through access to policies and reminders to read policies. These procedures are as follows:
  - Stage 1 - Decide to address the problem
  - Stage 2 - Informally address the problem
  - Stage 3 - Involvement of the Principal and/or Chairperson of the Board of Management
  - Stage 4 - Referring the matter to Board of Management for further investigation
- Employees work in a reasonably comfortable and safe environment that is well heated and ventilated, appropriately lit, suitable chairs etc.
- There are safeguards in place for pregnant staff members e.g. they are notified immediately in the event of an infectious diseases and encouraged to seek immediate medical advice on how to proceed
- Training was provided in the school previously in how to use fire extinguishers. Due to the increase in staff numbers and new extension, the

Board of Management will look into providing further training in the near future.

- Procedures followed by cleaners include
  - o Vacuum cleaner leads not trailing on the floor
  - o Safety signs clearly visible - wet floors.

### **Equipment and materials**

- Lawnmowers, ladders and any other equipment associated with school maintenance stored in a secure shed and are not accessible to children.
  - Solvents, chemicals, cleaning agents are stored in the Cleaners' Store Rooms

### **Success criteria of Safety, Health & Welfare Policy**

The policy will be successful if it has

- Created of a safe and healthy school environment by identifying, preventing and tackling hazards and their accompanying risks
- Ensured understanding of the school's duty of care towards pupils
- Protected the school community from workplace accidents and ill health at work
- Outlined procedures and practices in place to ensure safe systems of work
- Complied with all relevant health and safety legislation (so far as is reasonably practicable) to include the following areas

- o Provision of a safe workplace for all employees - teachers, SNAs, Secretary, Caretaker, etc.

- o Ensuring competent employees, who will carry out safe work practices
- o Ensuring safe access and escape routes
- o Ensuring safe handling and use of hazardous substances and equipment
- o Provision of safe equipment including maintenance and use of appropriate guards

- o Provision of appropriate personal protective equipment.

### **Roles and Responsibility**

The people who have particular responsibilities for aspects of the policy and how they fulfil their role include the

- Board of Management
- Safety Officer - Tom Nugent
- Safety Representative - Karen Bourke
- Each member of staff

**Implementation Date**

This policy will be implemented immediately.

**Timetable for review**

The next review for this policy will take place during the school year 2022 or earlier if circumstances change.

**Ratification & Communication**

This revised plan was ratified at a Board of Management meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

Signed: Breda Hickey

Date: 4/10/18

Breda Hickey, Chairperson, B.O.M.