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Gaelcholáiste Synge

Health, Safety and Welfare Policy

GAELCHOLÁISTE SYNGE
65–71 Sráid Heytesbury,
Baile Átha Cliath 8, D08R283
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1. Introduction

The Board of Management is responsible, as an employer, for ensuring, to the greatest extent possible, the safety, health and welfare of its employees at work, and of those directly affected by the work activities of the school.

Section 20 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 requires an employer to prepare a safety statement to protect the following:

• the safety, health and welfare of its employees while at work;

• the safety and health of other persons in the workplace, including: pupils, visitors, contractors and members of the public.

This Statement has been developed based on hazard identification and risk assessments carried out in accordance with Section 19 of the 2005 Act.

This safety statement should be read in conjunction with all other contractual obligations, policies and Codes of Conduct in force in the school. Any changes to the Safety Statement are recorded in the revision history below.

This table will be used to ensure that any amendments based on the school's needs are recorded and made available to staff members.

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Date	Person	Summary of Changes	New Version Number

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2. Legal and Other Requirements

This Safety Statement has been developed to enable Gaelcholáiste Synge to comply with its key legal requirements as set out in the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005, and other ancillary legislation and regulations. This document has been developed in accordance with the guidelines of the Health and Safety Authority for Post-Primary Schools.

The 2005 Act introduced specific duties on both the employer and the employee. The general duties on the employer are set out in Part 2 (Chapter 1), 3 and 4 of the 2005 Act.

The various requirements are divided into the following headings:

- General Duties of Employers
- Information to Employees
- Instruction, Training & Supervision of Employees
- Emergencies and Serious and Imminent Dangers
- Protective and Preventive Measures
- Hazard Identification & Risk Assessment
- Safety statement
- Co-operation
- Health Surveillance & Medical Fitness to Work

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- Safety Representative
- Employee Consultation
- Penalisation

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The 2005 Act introduced specific duties on both the employer and the employee. Chapter 2 of the 2005 Act gives details of the general duties of the Employee. The various requirements are divided into the following headings:

- General Duties of Employees
- Interference, misuse, etc.
- General Duties of Persons in Control of Place of Work
- Health Surveillance & Medical fitness to Work
- Staff Safety Representative
- Employee Consultation

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3. Health and Safety Objectives

Gaelcholáiste Synge's health and safety objectives promote high standards of safety, health and welfare. The objectives ensure that standards are implemented that fully comply with statutes, regulations and codes of practice in force at the time and that comply with good practice in the provision of the services provided by the school.

In order to determine whether the objectives and targets are being achieved, they will be measured, where possible, to allow progress to be monitored. The Principal will set objectives and targets, in consultation with the Safety Committee, having regard to the resources available within the school, to the extent possible.

The objectives of this policy are as follows:

To provide systems of work that are planned, organised, carried out and maintained.

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4. Gaelcholáiste Synge Health and Safety Statement

This Safety Statement, in accordance with Section 20, Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, outlines the policy of Gaelcholáiste Synge, which has been developed in consultation with the School Board of Management and school staff. It is revised on a yearly basis or as required by changes in legislation and communicated to all staff through regular staff meetings and training programmes.

We are committed to meeting all relevant statutory requirements that relate to occupational safety, health and welfare. We are committed to managing and conducting work activities in such a way as to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of our staff and others who may be affected by our activities. This is achieved by the following (so far as is reasonably practicable):

1. The provision of a safe place of work, including safe access and egress;
2. The provision of safe plant and equipment;
3. The provision of safe systems of work;
4. The provision of welfare facilities;
5. The provision of appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision;
6. Determining and implementing appropriate preventative and protective measures;
7. Having regard to the general principles of prevention;
8. The provision of emergency plans and procedures;

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9. Reporting prescribed accidents and dangerous occurrences to the Health & Safety Authority;
10. Obtaining, where necessary, the services of a competent person to advise on health and safety;

The detailed arrangements for achieving these objectives are set out in the main body of the Safety Statement. The Principal, together with the Board of Management, has overall responsibility for health and safety at the school. Staff share a responsibility with management in ensuring their own safety, while at work. This Safety Statement requires the co-operation of all staff, visitors, contractors and others to enable Gaelcholáiste Synge to discharge its responsibilities under the law.

Gaelcholáiste Synge is committed to upholding the standards outlined in this Safety Statement. Sufficient authority and resources, both financial and otherwise, will be made available to enable staff to carry out their responsibilities in a reasonable and efficient manner. All staff will be made aware of and have access to this Safety Statement. The Safety Statement will also be available to third parties where appropriate. The Safety Statement will be reviewed annually in light of experience and future developments within the organisation.

Síniú: _____ Dáta: _____

Chairperson of the Board of Management

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Síniú: _____ Dáta: _____

Principal/Secretary of the Board of Management

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5. School Profile

School Name	Gaelcholáiste Synge
Address	65-71 Heytesbury Street, Dublin 8, D08R283
Principal	Clare Catterson, Principal
Senior Leadership Team	Clare Catterson, Principal Medb Ní Fhearghail, Deputy Principal Gaelcholáiste Synge Lesley Plunkett, Deputy Principal CBS Synge Street
Number of students	220
Buildings	2 buildings: The primary school on one floor The secondary school over three floors

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Facilities detailing number of classrooms, labs, workshops, gymnasiums, outside pitches	16 classrooms 1 computer room 1 laboratory 1 home economics room 1 art room 1 music room 1 woodwork room 1 staff room 2 yards 1 canteen 1 sports hall 2 football pitches (outside the school grounds) Offices (Principal, Deputy Principal, Home-School Liaison Officer, Guidance Counsellor)
Provision for persons with special needs	Accessible toilet
List of regular visitors providing services to school e.g. external	Fire Protection Company External Cleaning Services

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Name of Health and Safety Rep(s)	Clare Catterson, Principal Medb Ní Fhearghail, Deputy Principal Gaelcholáiste Synge Lesley Plunkett, Deputy Principal CBS Synge Street
Location of Defibrillators / First Aid Kit	Permanent defibrillators are located in: • Reception • Canteen First aid equipment is located at reception and in the staff room
Name of Chief Fire Warden	Clare Catterson, Principal
External fire assembly points	School yard

Foireann Bainistíochta Teagmhas Criticiúil		
Role	**Name**	**Phone**
Team leader:	Clare Catterson, Principal	01 478 39 98

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Garda liaison	Clare Catterson, Principal	01 478 39 98
Staff liaison	Clare Catterson, Principal	01 478 39 98
Student liaison	Medb Ní Fhearghail, Deputy Principal Gaelcholáiste Synge Lesley Plunkett, Deputy Principal CBS Synge Street	083 433 57 59 01 478 39 98

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Structure of Gaelcholáiste Synge

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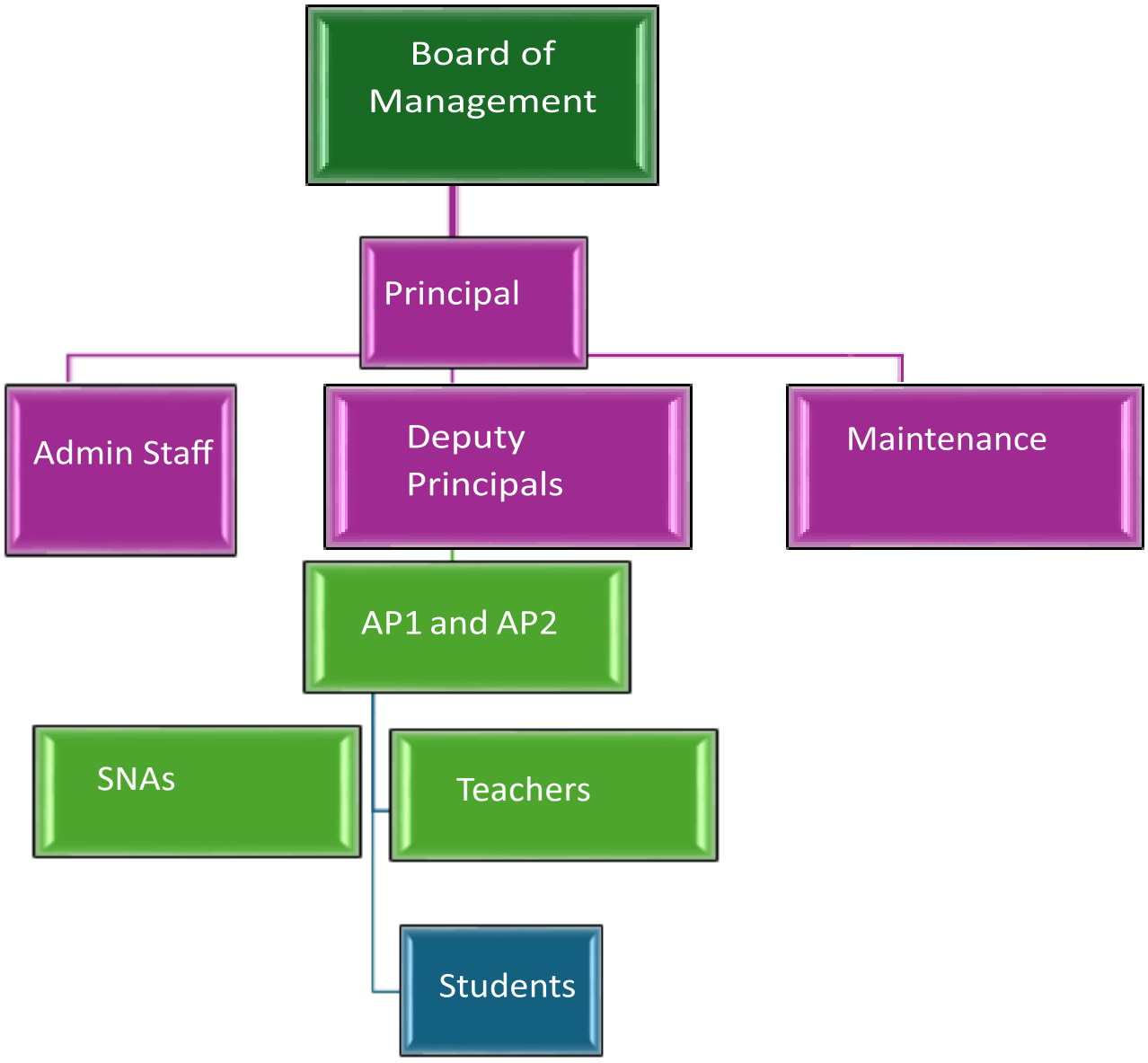

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6. Roles and Delegated Functions

In accordance with the Safety, Health and Welfare Act, 2005, it is the employer's responsibility to ensure that appropriate safety systems are in place with clear roles and delegated functions assigned to support a culture of safety first.

Employees are provided with the health and safety training necessary to carry out their role. Every effort is made to ensure that identified hazards in the workplace are reduced or eliminated as far as is reasonably practicable.

This policy and procedure are effectively communicated to all staff.

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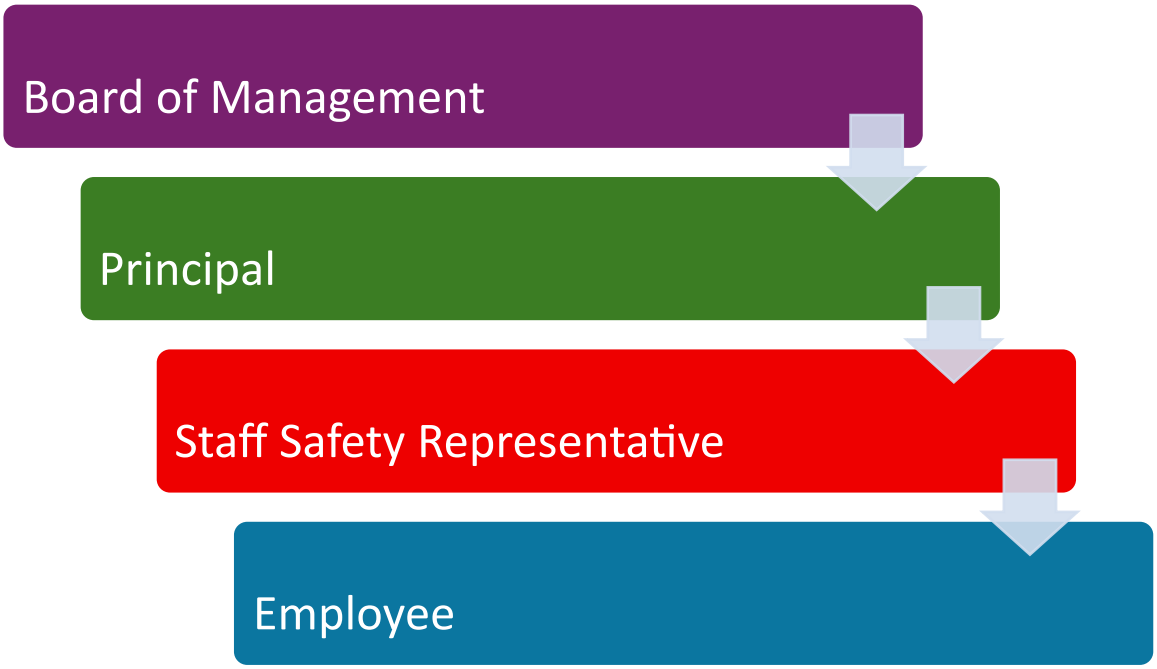

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Board of Management

1. Every employer shall ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of his or her employees.
2. Without prejudice to the generality of subsection (1) of the 2005 Act, the employer's duties shall extend, in particular, to the following matters:

a. managing and conducting work activities in such a way as to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of his or her employees;

b. managing and conducting work activities in such a way as to prevent, so far as is reasonably practicable, any improper conduct or behaviour likely to put the safety, health or welfare at work of his or her employees at risk;

c. as regards the place of work concerned, ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable —

i. the design, provision and maintenance of it in a condition that is safe and without risk to health,

ii. the design, provision and maintenance of safe means of access to and egress from it, and

iii. the design, provision and maintenance of plant and machinery or any other articles that are safe and without risk to health;

d. ensuring, so far as it is reasonably practicable, the safety and the prevention of risk to health at work of his or her employees relating to the use of any article or substance or the exposure to noise, vibration or ionising or other radiations or any other physical agent;

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e. providing systems of work that are planned, organised, performed, maintained and revised as appropriate so as to be, so far as is reasonably practicable, safe and without risk to health;
f. providing and maintaining facilities and arrangements for the welfare of his or her employees at work;
g. providing the information, instruction, training and supervision necessary to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health, and welfare at work of his or her employees;
h. determining and implementing the safety, health and welfare measures necessary for the protection of the safety, health and welfare of his or her employees when identifying hazards and carrying out a risk assessment under *section 19* or when preparing a safety statement under *section 20* and ensuring that the measures take account of changing circumstances and the general principles of prevention specified in *Schedule 3*;
i. having regard to the general principles of prevention in *Schedule 3*, where risks cannot be eliminated or adequately controlled or in such circumstances as may be prescribed, providing and maintaining such suitable protective clothing and equipment as is necessary to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of his or her employees;
j. preparing and revising, as appropriate, adequate plans and procedures to be followed and measures to be taken in the case of an emergency or serious and imminent danger;
k. reporting accidents and dangerous occurrences, as may be prescribed, to the Authority or to a person prescribed under *section 33* , as appropriate, and

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l. obtaining, where necessary, the services of a competent person (whether under a contract of employment or otherwise) for the purpose of ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of his or her employees.

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Person in Control of Place of Work

1. Comply as far as reasonably practical with the requirements of the 2005 Act;
2. Shall ensure as far as is reasonably practical, that the place of work, the means of access thereto, or egress therefrom, and any article or substance provide for use in the place of work, are safe and without risk to health.
3. Ensure all accidents and incidents are reported to the ETB and investigated with all relevant statutory reports completed;
4. Organise relevant training with appropriate registers maintained;
5. Participates in the Safety Committee where one is established.

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Safety Representatives

1. Employees may, from time to time, select and appoint from amongst their number at their place of work a representative (in this Act referred to as a "safety representative") or, by agreement with their employer, more than one safety representative, to represent them at the place of work in consultation with their employer on matters related to safety, health and welfare at the place of work.

A safety representative may —

a. inspect the whole or any part of the place of work —
   i. subject to *subsection (3) of the 2005 Act*, after giving reasonable notice to the employer, or
   ii. immediately, in the event of an accident, dangerous occurrence or imminent danger or risk to the safety, health and welfare of any person,
b. investigate accidents and dangerous occurrences provided that he or she does not interfere with or obstruct the performance of any statutory obligation required to be performed by any person under any of the relevant statutory provisions,
c. after the giving of reasonable notice to the employer, investigate complaints relating to safety, health and welfare at work made by any employee whom he or she represents,
d. accompany an inspector who is carrying out an inspection of the place of work under *section 64* other than an inspection for the purpose of investigating an accident or dangerous occurrence,
e. at the discretion of the inspector concerned, accompany an inspector who is carrying out an inspection under *section 64* for the purpose of investigating an accident or dangerous occurrence,

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f. at the discretion of the inspector concerned, where an employee is interviewed by an inspector with respect to an accident or dangerous occurrence at a place of work, attend the interview where the employee so requests,
g. make representations to the employer on any matter relating to safety, health and welfare at the place of work,
h. make oral or written representations to inspectors on matters relating to safety, health and welfare at the place of work, including the investigation of accidents or dangerous occurrences,
i. receive advice and information from inspectors on matters relating to safety, health and welfare at the place of work, or
j. consult and liaise on matters relating to safety, health and welfare at work with any other safety representatives who may be appointed in the undertaking concerned, whether or not those safety representatives work in the same place of work, in different places of work under the control of the employer or at different times at the place of work.

The employer and the safety representative shall, having regard to the nature and extent of the hazards in the place of work, agree the frequency or schedule of inspections which may be carried out under *subsection (2)(a)(i)*, which agreement shall not be unreasonably withheld by the employer.

Every employer shall consider any representations made to him or her by the safety representative in relation to the matters specified in this section or any other matter relating to the safety, health and welfare at work of his or her employees and, so far as is reasonably practicable, take any action that he or she considers necessary or appropriate with regard to those representations.

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An employer shall give to a safety representative such time off from his or her work as is reasonable having regard to all the circumstances, without loss of remuneration, to enable the safety representative —

a. to acquire, on an ongoing basis, the knowledge and training necessary to discharge his or her functions as a safety representative, and
b. to discharge those functions.

Where an inspector attends at a place of work for the purpose of carrying out an inspection under *section 64* , the employer shall inform the safety representative that the inspection is taking place. Safety representatives will not be placed at any disadvantage as a result of fulfilling their role.

Health and Safety Committee

A Health and Safety Committee (hereinafter Safety Committee) facilitates the consultation process on safety, health and welfare matters in a school.

1. Employees shall have the right to make representations to and consult their employer on matters relating to their safety, health and welfare at work, including the matters specified in *subsection (1)* of the 2005 Act.
2. Where, in a place of work by agreement of the employer, there is a group of persons (by whatever name known) representative of the employer and the employees that constitutes a safety committee in compliance with *Schedule 4* and that exists for the purpose of consultation regarding the safety, health and welfare at work of the employees, consultation within that group of persons may, to such extent as may be agreed between the employer and his or her employees, fulfil the requirements of *subsections (1)* and *(2)* of the Act.

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3. Every employer shall consider any representations made to him or her by his or her employees in relation to the matters specified in this section or any other matter relating to their safety, health or welfare at work and, so far as is reasonably practicable, take any action that he or she considers necessary or appropriate with regard to those representations.
4. An employer shall give to employees involved in arrangements for consultation referred to in *subsections (1)* and *(3)* such time off from their duties as is reasonable having regard to all the circumstances, without loss of remuneration, to enable those employees —
    a. to acquire the knowledge and training necessary to discharge their functions under this section, and
    b. to discharge those functions.

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Where a safety committee is established as a means of consulting with employees, it should ideally be comprised of a minimum of;

• Principal;
• Staff members (elected by staff);
• Safety Representative (elected by staff).

The Safety Committee will also consider any of the other items arising under Section 26 (1) (b) of the Health and Safety and Welfare at Work Act, 2005.

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Employees

Will comply as far as reasonably practical with the requirements under the 2005 Act.

An employee shall, while at work —

(a) comply with the relevant statutory provisions, as appropriate, and take reasonable care to protect his or her safety, health and welfare and the safety, health and welfare of any other person who may be affected by the employee's acts or omissions at work,

(b) ensure that he or she is not under the influence of an intoxicant to the extent that he or she is in such a state as to endanger his or her own safety, health or welfare at work or that of any other person,

(c) if reasonably required by his or her employer, submit to any appropriate, reasonable and proportionate tests for intoxicants by, or under the supervision of, a registered medical practitioner who is a competent person, as may be prescribed,

(d) co-operate with his or her employer or any other person so far as is necessary to enable his or her employer or the other person to comply with the relevant statutory provisions, as appropriate,

(e) not engage in improper conduct or other behaviour that is likely to endanger his or her own safety, health and welfare at work or that of any other person,

(f) attend such training and, as appropriate, undergo such assessment as may reasonably be required by his or her employer or as may be prescribed relating to safety, health and welfare at work or relating to the work carried out by the employee,

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(g) having regard to his or her training and the instructions given by his or her employer, make correct use of any article or substance provided for use by the employee at work or for the protection of his or her safety, health and welfare at work, including protective clothing or equipment,

(h) report to his or her employer or to any other appropriate person, as soon as practicable —

(i) any work being carried on, or likely to be carried on, in a manner which may endanger the safety, health or welfare at work of the employee or that of any other person,

(ii) any defect in the place of work, the systems of work, any article or substance which might endanger the safety, health or welfare at work of the employee or that of any other person, or

(iii) any contravention of the relevant statutory provisions which may endanger the safety, health and welfare at work of the employee or that of any other person,

of which he or she is aware.

(2 An employee shall not, on entering into a contract of employment, misrepresent himself or herself to an employer with regard to the level of training as may be prescribed under *subsection (1)(f)* of the Act.

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First Aid Responder (FAR)

Part 7, Chapter 2 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007 deals with the issue of first-aid within the workplace. The employer has a duty to provide first-aid equipment at all places of work where working conditions require it.

In accordance with Health and Safety Regulations, all First Aid Responders are required to complete the appropriate training courses in order to administer first aid in a workplace setting.

The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) only recognises the Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council First Aid Response (PHECC FAR) as a course that meets the requirements of Occupational First Aid in the workplace. This is a basic first aid course that trains course participants to provide first aid to someone who suddenly becomes ill or injured until the emergency medical services arrive. The FAR also includes the full Cardiac First Response Community standard.

The Safety Committee, as part of its annual review, will consider the training needs of FAR staff.

A list of qualified first aiders is available on the school notice boards. The school has provided suitable first aid equipment which is located throughout the school. It is the responsibility of the first aider(s) to maintain the first aid equipment and appropriate records in accordance with their training.

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Automated external defibrillators (AEDs) are provided as life-saving devices which can prevent death from sudden cardiac arrest. Training is also provided to identified staff members. Staff members trained in the use of defibrillators are responsible for ensuring that the devices are maintained to the appropriate standards and, in the event of a problem with them, to bring it to the attention of the Principal.

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Maoir Dhóiteáin

The duties and responsibilities of all employees acting as Fire Wardens are outlined as follows:

General Duties of a school fire warden:

The general responsibilities of a fire warden are to reduce the risk of fire within the school and ensure that emergency routes and equipment are appropriately maintained. This includes:

- Identifying and removing fire hazards on school premises;
- Ensuring escape routes are kept clear of obstruction;
- Checking fire doors are clear, both inside and out and are never locked;
- Ensuring appropriate maintenance and servicing of firefighting equipment; • Maintaining accurate information on fire hazards within their designated area to present to fire fighters in the event of a fire;
- Reporting any problems with the above to the Principal and ensuring action is taken.

Duties of a school fire warden – during a fire:

In the event of an emergency, it is the responsibility of individual staff members to evacuate their classrooms/areas of work and place of work. The role of the school fire warden is to support this, providing a second level of protection. The fire warden should:

- Raise the alarm or make sure it has been raised by someone else;
- Check their designated section of the premises after the main evacuation to ensure no one has been left behind (including toilets and store rooms where learners/staff may have sought refuge);
- Shut down dangerous equipment, close windows and shut fire doors where it is safe to do so;

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- Use firefighting equipment if it is safe to do so and they are confident in its operation;
- Liaise with fire fighters as to the location of the fire and the risks specific to that area of the school.

Visitors

Students, parents, volunteers and visitors must comply with the school's safety statement and instructions relating to safety, health and welfare.

It is a requirement that the school gives at least the same level of health, safety and welfare to students, and all visitors as it gives to employees.

Visitors should be directed to take notice of emergency exit routes from all levels of premises and be aware of alarm signals.

In the event of an emergency, all students / visitors should be instructed to follow directions with regard to evacuation of the premises or follow staff members to a safe exit route.

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7. Responsibilities

Introduction

Management of health and safety is integrated into the school's existing management structure. Staff at all levels have responsibility for health and safety, commensurate with the level of their general responsibility.

The Board of Management

The Board of Management is responsible for occupational health and safety management and performance in the school. The Board is aware of the duties imposed on themselves, the school and its staff by health and safety legislation.

- The Board of Management fulfils its legal obligations as an employer in accordance with the 2005 Act.
- The Board of Management provides a safe place and systems of work.
- The Board of Management ensures that the school has written risk assessments and an up-to-date safety statement.
- At each of its meetings, the Board of Management will place health and safety on its agenda, reviewing performance for the previous period and dealing with any key issues brought to its attention.
- The Board will conduct an annual review of occupational health and safety policies and performance in the school.

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- The Board is responsible for ensuring that appropriate financial and physical resources are made available to deal appropriately with occupational health and safety issues as they arise.
- The Board may be asked to review specific issues during the year as necessary.
- The Board of Management reviews the safety statement at least annually and when changes occur that may affect safety, health and welfare.
- The Board of Management reviews the school's performance in relation to safety, health and welfare matters.
- The Board of Management allocates appropriate resources to deal with safety, health and welfare matters.
- The Board of Management may appoint competent persons as necessary to advise or assist the Board of Management in relation to safety, health and welfare matters in the school.

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The Principal

The Principal has executive responsibility for the day-to-day management and co-ordination of occupational health and safety matters in the school in accordance with the health and safety policy agreed by the Board of Management. The Principal is responsible for the following:

- Complies with the requirements of the 2005 Act.
- Reports to the Board of Management on the school's safety, health and welfare performance.
- Manages safety, health and welfare in the school on a day-to-day basis.
- Communicates with all members of the school community on safety, health and welfare matters on a regular basis. Implements the health and safety policy.
- Ensures that all accidents and incidents are investigated and that the appropriate statutory reports are completed.
- Manages the development and regular practice of emergency procedures;
- Arranges relevant training.
- Ensures that risk assessments and corrective actions are carried out.
- Ensures that regular reviews of the school's safety, health and welfare performance are carried out.
- Ensures that suitable and appropriate arrangements are in place to identify all significant foreseeable risks and the measures necessary to eliminate or reduce them to an acceptable level, e.g. co-ordinate the risk assessment process through teachers responsible for individual rooms.
- Ensures that regular inspections are carried out to ensure that the workplace is appropriate from a health, safety and welfare perspective.

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- Ensures that all building services, including all firefighting and fire prevention equipment, are well maintained.
- Ensures that all statutory examinations and inspections of facilities and equipment are carried out and that records are kept.
- Makes statutory reports on accidents, e.g. to the Health and Safety Authority.
- Ensures that teachers and anyone with specific duties are aware of their responsibilities; that they are given sufficient information, training and time to carry out their duties, and that their activities are co-ordinated and monitored.
- Ensures that appropriate arrangements are in place for communication and consultation between staff, management and other persons who may visit the workplace, e.g. the establishment of the Health and Safety position, the Safety Committee and a Safety Representative.
- Ensures that reports from staff on potential hazards are acted upon.
- Keeps up to date with health and safety legislation.
- Ensures that interest and enthusiasm in health and safety matters is promoted throughout the school and that a good personal example is set.
- Ensures that at least two emergency evacuation drills are carried out each year.

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Deputy Principal

Deputy Principals assume the responsibilities of the Principal in health & safety matters in the absence, for any reason, of the Principal. In the day-to-day running of the school, Deputy Principal have the following responsibilities:

- assist in implementing the health and safety policy;
- keep abreast of the duties of the school and its staff by health and safety policy;
- insist that sound and safe working practices are observed at all times;
- be familiar with fire drills and evacuation procedures;
- arrange a suitable rota for teachers to attend safety training courses;
- arrange for supervision of external areas and arrange random patrols of grounds within the site perimeter in conjunction with the Principal.

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Teaching and other Staff

Teachers are responsible for the day-to-day management of health and safety in their classrooms and in other areas affected by their teaching. The general duties of staff are set out in Part 2, Chapter 2, Section 13 of the *Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005*. The responsibilities of teachers at Gaelcholáiste Synge include:

- comply with all statutory duties in relation to employees as required by the 2005 Act
- co-operate with school management in the implementation of the safety statement
- inform students of the safety procedures relating to specific subjects
- ensure that students comply with safe procedures, e.g. use personal protective equipment (PPE) and adhere to laboratory rules
- carry out risk assessments of the immediate work environment
- carry out a formal check of the classroom/immediate work environment to ensure that it is safe and free from defects and faults
- ensure that equipment is safe before use
- ensure that risk assessments are carried out on new hazards, e.g. new machinery, systems or chemicals
- select and appoint a safety representative(s)
- co-operate with the school safety committee
- report accidents, near misses and dangerous occurrences to relevant persons, as specified in the safety statement
- ensure that interest and enthusiasm for health, safety and the environment is promoted and a good personal example is set

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- report any defects in equipment, place of work or system of work that may endanger safety, health or welfare to the Principal without unreasonable delay;
- carry out risk assessments relating to students with Special Educational Needs in their classroom to ensure that they do not endanger themselves or others. Liaise with the Additional Educational Needs Coordinator / Special Needs Assistant as necessary to implement appropriate control measures and safeguards.
- ensure that any measures identified as necessary in the risk assessments are fully implemented as soon as reasonably possible;
- supervise, guide, inform and train students to enable them to participate safely in school activities;
- wear personal protective equipment and clothing and require students to wear them when necessary;
- bring any problems that are outside the teacher's care or authority to the attention of the Principal;
- they take a full and active part in all safety training programmes organised by the school;
- they take an active part in fire safety including fire drills and training,
- they are familiar with fire fighting equipment and how to use it;
- they ensure that students are aware of evacuation procedures.

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AEN Department including Special Needs Assistants

AEN Department incl. Special Needs Assistants have responsibilities for the students in their care. Chapter 2, Section 13 of the *Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act* 2005 outlines the general duties of staff. The responsibilities of the AEN Department incl. Special Needs Assistants of Gaelcholáiste Synge include the following:

- ensuring an interest in and enthusiasm for health, safety and environmental matters is promoted and a good personal example is set;
- taking reasonable care for his/her own safety, health and welfare and that of any other person who may be affected by his/her acts or omissions while at work;
- participate in risk assessments relating to students with Special Education Needs in classrooms to ensure they do not endanger themselves or others. Liaise with the relevant teacher / AEN Coordinator / External Agency as needed to implement appropriate control measures and safeguards.
- to report to the Principal without unreasonable delay, any defects in equipment, place of work or system of work, which might endanger safety, health or welfare, of which he/she becomes aware;
- following manual handling procedures if lifting students;
- taking a full and active part in all training programs for safety that the school organises;

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- actively participating in fire safety including drills and firefighting training, being familiar with firefighting equipment and its uses and ensuring that the students in their care are aware of evacuation procedures.

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Safety Committee

The Safety Committee is made up of staff. It has the responsibility for the following:

• facilitates the consultation process on safety, health and welfare matters in a school, for example, by reviewing the school's risk assessments, policies and procedures.

• coordinates the school's health and safety management system;

• communicates information to management and staff on safety, health and welfare matters;

• makes recommendations for amendments to the Safety Statement;

• reviews methods for promoting health and safety within the school.

• coordinates periodic inspections to ensure that the safety programme is being implemented;

• collects inspection forms;

• ensures that emergency procedures and contingency plans are in place in the event of a fire;

• instructs teachers and students on emergency procedures;

• ensures that the Safety Statement is periodically reviewed, including risk assessments;

• ensures that all staff have access to the Safety Statement and that they have read and understood it;

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• ensures that regular inspections are carried out on the premises and that remedial measures are taken where necessary;

• ensures that an accident report form is completed in the event of each accident and that each accident is investigated;

• monitors the systems to ensure that fire precautions are in order.

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Safety Representative

Employees are entitled to appoint a safety representative, or by agreement with the Board of Management, more than one safety representative.

The role of a safety representative is to consult and make representations to the Principal or the Board of Management on matters of safety, health and welfare relating to colleagues (including non-teaching staff) in the school.

The Board of Management must act on the information provided by the Safety Representative, if necessary. The purpose of these consultations is to prevent accidents and ill health, to raise problems, and to identify ways of overcoming them. Consultations are particularly important when changes are taking place, for example when drawing up a safety plan, or when introducing new technology or work processes, including new substances. They also have a role to play in established work practices and hazards.

The safety representative has the right to:

- carry out inspections of the whole or part of the school in the event of an accident, dangerous or imminent danger or risk to safety (after giving adequate notice to the Board of Management);
- investigate accidents and dangerous incidents after giving notice to the Board of Management;
- investigate complaints relating to safety and health;
- make representations to inspectors of the Health and Safety Authority;

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- accompany inspectors of the Health and Safety Authority when carrying out an inspection under Section 64 of the 2005 Act other than an investigation of an accident or dangerous incident (although this may be permitted at the discretion of the inspector);
- be present when an employee is being interviewed by an inspector about an accident or dangerous incident in the workplace, if the employee and the inspector so wish;
- consult with the Board of Management as a staff safety representative in relation to safety, health and welfare in the workplace;
- consult with HSA inspectors, including in relation to the investigation of accidents or dangerous incidents;
- obtain advice and information from HSA inspectors regarding safety, health and welfare in the workplace;
- consult and liaise with other safety representatives appointed in the same workplace.

If an inspector from the Health and Safety Authority is carrying out an investigation, the Board of Management must inform the safety representative. The principal may do this, on behalf of the Board of Management.

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Administrative Staff

Part 2 Chapter 2 Section 13 of the *Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act* 2005 outlines the general duties of staff. The responsibilities of the clerical staff are outlined below:

- actively participating in fire safety including drills and firefighting training and being familiar with firefighting equipment and its uses;
- carrying out routine inspections (each term) to ensure the office is adequate as regards health, safety and welfare and passing on this information to the Safety Officer;
- maintaining a list of emergency numbers;
- reporting any defects in office equipment to the Principal as soon as possible;
- taking reasonable care for their own safety, health and welfare and that of any other person who may be affected by their acts or omissions while at work.

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Maintenance Staff

Maintenance Staff have responsibility for the general care and maintenance of the school. As such in respect of occupational health and safety they have specific responsibilities to:

- take reasonable care for their own safety, health and welfare and that of any other person who may be affected by his acts or omissions while at work;
- co-operate with the Principal on matters relating to Health & Safety;
- carry out routine inspections to ensure all areas are adequate as regards health, safety and welfare;
- report to the Principal, without unreasonable delay, any defects in plant, equipment, place of work or system of work, which might endanger safety, health or welfare of students and staff, of which they become aware;
- make correct use of personal protective equipment, machinery, apparatus, tools, dangerous substances and any other equipment;
- be thoroughly familiar with machinery and power equipment before attempting to use it;
- ensure that no people have access to areas whilst work is in progress;
- prevent the build-up of rubbish and especially of combustible material;
- maintain furniture, equipment or the work environment that are within their capabilities;

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- not carry out any tasks that they are not competent or permitted to carry out or which involves unreasonably high risks;
- get help if there is any doubt whether an object to be moved is too heavy for one. Use any devices provided for assistance. Do not attempt to lift heavy loads single-handed;
- take a full and active part in all training programs for safety that the school organises;

Cleaning Staff

Cleaning staff have responsibility for the general cleanliness and hygiene of the school. Part 2, Chapter 2 Section 13 of the *Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act* 2005 outlines the general duties of employees. As such in respect of occupational health and safety they have specific responsibilities to:

- take reasonable care for their own safety, health and welfare and that of any other person who may be affected by their acts or omissions while at work;
- co-operate with the Principal and any other person to such extent as will enable the Principal or the other person to comply with any of the relevant statutory provisions;
- report to the Principal, without unreasonable delay, any defects in plant, equipment, place of work or system of work, which might endanger safety, health or welfare, of which she becomes aware;

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- know what to do in case of fire, familiarise themselves with the best escape route from their workstation so that in the event of an emergency they are able to lead themselves to safety;
- attend to spillages immediately and to barricade the area until completely dry;
- dispose of rubbish as soon as possible to avoid build up;
- avoid leaving trailing cables. If this is necessary use a notice to the effect that cleaning is in progress;
- ensure all mats and carpets are properly laid and uncrumpled.

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Contractors and Subcontractors

Any contractor working in or on behalf of the school has a duty to comply with statutory obligations as designated under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007-2016, and any other relevant legislation such as the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2013.

For the purposes of the safety statement the school will:

make available the relevant parts of its safety statement and safety file (where one exists) to any contractors working in the school on behalf of the school

• provide to contractors the school's regulations and instructions relating to safety, health and welfare

• be aware of the contractors duty to make available to the school the relevant parts of the contractor's safety statement and risk assessments in relation to the work being carried out.

• co-operate and coordinate their activities in order to prevent risks to safety, health and welfare where it is sharing a workplace with a contractor.

The school has a duty as a Client if they engage a contractor to carry out construction work, e.g. where a school is getting construction work carried out, they will have duties as a Client under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations, 2013.

These duties include:

- appointing competent designers and contractors
- appointing competent Project Supervisors for the Design Process (PSDP)
- appointing competent Project Supervisors for the Construction Stage (PSCS) where:
  - there is more than one contractor involved in the work
  - the work is scheduled to last more than 30 days (or 500 person days), or
  - there is a particular risk involved

- notifying the Health and Safety Authority if the work is scheduled to last more than 30 days (or 500 person days) using the AF1 Form available on www.hsa.ie.

It is the responsibility of all contractors to:

- Ensure that all their employees comply with the school safety rules and procedures;
- not to put at risk any of the employees or students of the school;
- promptly report all accident / incidents to the Principal;
- produce their safety statement, method statement and any other safety documentation to Gaelcholáiste Synge on request;
- carry appropriate insurance cover;
- take all safety precautions with systems of work, equipment, personal protection etc.;
- ensure all equipment and tools brought onto the school's premises be of sound construction and meet the statutory requirements applicable to these tools or equipment;
- cordon off the boundaries of the contractor's operation, where possible, and mark them with warning signs;
- provide emergency safety equipment, which may be required for their operation;
- follow strictly the permit to work system in force at the time of contract;
- comply with all relevant legal obligations in particular the provisions of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005, the Safety Health and Welfare (General Application) Regulations 2007 - 2016 and the Safety Health and Welfare (Construction Regulations) 2013.

8. Risk Assessment

Risk assessment is at the heart of managing safety, health and welfare effectively in any workplace. Before addressing risk assessment there are a few essential health and safety terms that should be read in conjunction with this section of the Guidelines. All members of the school community should be familiar with these terms.

Hazard:
A hazard is anything that has the potential to cause harm to people, property or the environment. It can be a work material, work equipment, or a work method or practice.

Risk:
Risk is the likelihood that someone will be harmed by the hazard together with the severity of harm suffered. Risk also depends on the number of people exposed to the hazard.

Control measures/controls:
Control measures/controls are the precautions taken to ensure that the risk is eliminated or reduced. Following risk assessment, implementing control measures is a critical element of managing safety effectively. Control measures ensure, for instance, that equipment is safe and work activities are conducted in a safe manner. It is not enough to be aware of risk. Control measures must be put in place to eliminate or significantly reduce it.

Risk assessment:
A risk assessment is concerned with identifying the hazard, then estimating the severity and likelihood of harm arising from such a hazard. The employer can then put in place control measures to minimise the risk or weigh up whether he or she has taken enough precautions to prevent harm.

All activities at the school that could cause an accident or ill-health must be risk-assessed, in particular the most hazardous ones. The process of risk assessment is straightforward and it allows schools to identify hazards and to deal with them effectively so that they do not pose unnecessary danger to anybody. For example, in Ireland, manual handling is the highest cause of workplace injuries, and slips, trips and falls (STF) are the second highest cause. Slips, trips and falls account for one quarter of all reported accidents in the education sector. These hazards are present in all schools and must be risk assessed along with other common hazards.

All risk assessments must be written and included in the school's safety statement.

Gaelcholáiste Synge uses the following 3-step process when carrying out risk assessments:

Step 1: Identify the hazard

Step 2: Assess the risk in proportion to the hazard

Step 3: Identify and implement the appropriate control measures to eliminate the hazard or reduce the risk

Include the details of the person responsible for carrying out the risk assessments in each area of activity, for example, in many cases the most appropriate person to carry out a risk assessment of a classroom is the individual teacher using the classroom as he/she is most familiar with the environment and activities being undertaken.

Include details of the school's provision for information on risk assessment for all staff and the appropriate resources to support risk assessment. As part of these Guidelines, risk assessment templates have been produced for a whole range of hazards common to schools. These can be downloaded individually and completed online or offline and should be added to the documentation for your safety statement.

Completed risk assessments must be included in the safety statement. They should be reviewed and revised at least annually or as new equipment, systems, personnel or other significant changes occur. The safety statement must be brought to the attention of all staff and they should be able to access it when required.

A risk assessment may be a visual exercise that reflects a situation at a given point in time. It is a common sense duty of care to identify risks and hazards to assist the Employer in making decisions in respect of deploying resources.

It is recognised that where staff are engaged in the process of risk assessment that there is a requirement on the employer to ensure that appropriate time during the working day is identified for this work to be completed. Employees who participate in good faith in the risk assessment process will not be subject to any disciplinary sanction.

The most appropriate person to carry out a risk assessment of any area / location is the individual staff member with the most experience and knowledge of the nature of the work to be undertaken in specific areas of the school. This means that the person(s) most familiar with the workspace and activities to be carried out there may be asked to complete a risk assessment of their workspace as they are more likely to be aware of and deal with hazards on a daily basis.

A risk assessment exercise does not place responsibility on the employee to reduce or eliminate a risk. Once identified through a risk assessment process the risk/hazard becomes the responsibility of the Principal to reduce or eliminate in a planned and co-ordinated manner, which may require assistance and support from the ETB.

This exercise does not negate the duty of an employee to notify management of any concerns that may arise at any other point in time. Consideration should be given locally within schools to allowing appropriate time to support people engaged in conducting risk assessments on an annual or bi-annual basis in their area of work.

HSA Templates for risk assessments are available on the HSA website, this Health and Safety Statement and from the Principal. They are to be reviewed and revised at least annually or as new equipment, systems, personnel or other significant changes occur.

A signature on a risk assessment form is not mandatory however a record must be maintained of who undertook the assessment from the perspective of assuring accurate, responsible record keeping.

Risk assessment is at the heart of managing safety, health and welfare effectively in any workplace. Before addressing risk assessment, there are a few essential health and safety terms that all members of the school community should be familiar with.

Risk-Assessment Templates

Art Room

1. Art Room (General)
2. Art (Ceramics)
3. Art (Use of Safety Cutters and Knives)

Canteen

4. Canteen (General)
5. Canteen (Working with Chemical Products)

Cleaning

6. Cleaning (General)
7. Cleaning (Hazardous Chemicals and Biological Agents)
8. Cleaning (Waste Compactor and Baler)
9. Cleaning (Work at Height - Ladders)
10. Cleaning (Welfare Provisions – Rest rooms, wash basins, showers)

Computers (Visual Display Units Workstations)

11. Computers VDU Workstations (General)

General (Whole School)

12. Slips, Trips and Falls
13. Manual Handling
14. General Access/Egress
15. Work at Height (General)
16. Platform Lifts
17. Passenger/Services Lifts
18. Fire (Specialist Rooms)
19. Fire (General Classrooms and Offices)
20. Fire – School Onsite Events (Plays, Musicals, Concerts, Meetings)
21. First Aid
22. Portable Electrical Appliances
23. Workplace Bullying
24. Workplace Stress
25. Carpark and External Areas
26. Staffroom
27. Pregnant, Post-Natal and Breastfeeding Women
28. Noise
29. Radon
30. Mould
31. Asbestos
32. Legionella
33. Lone Workers (e.g. caretakers)

Home Economics Room

34. Home Economics Room (General)
35. Home Economics (Use of Safety Cutters and Knives)
36. Home Economics (Portable Electrical Appliances)

Maintenance (Caretaking/Facilities Management, Contractors, etc.

37. Maintenance (General)
38. Construction Contractors
39. Maintenance (Tractors)
40. Boiler House and Fuel Tanks
41. Grass Cutting/Ride-On Mowers
42. Pressure Washers
43. Strimmers
44. Waste Compacter and/or Baler
45. Maintenance (Work at Height - Ladders)

P.E.

46. Exercise Equipment/Gym Equipment
47. Goal Posts

Student Considerations

48. Student Considerations

Science Room/Laboratory

49. Science (Bunsen Burners)
50. Science (Chemicals)
51. Science (Glassware)

Technologies

52. Technologies (Powered Hand Tools)
53. Technologies (Non-Powered Hand Tools)
54. Technologies (Hand-Fed Table-Band Saw)
55. Technologies (Electric Ovens)
56. Technologies (Metal-Working Centre Lathe [manually operated])
57. Technologies (Woodworking Bench Circular Saw)
58. Technologies (Bench/Pedestal Grinder)
59. Technologies (Hazardous Chemicals – Metalwork, Woodwork, etc.)
60. Technologies (Milling machine)
61. Technologies (Morticer)
62. Technologies (Pedestal Drill (Metalwork)
63. Technologies (Surface Planing and Thicknessing Machine)
64. Technologies (Portable Router)
65. Technologies (Hand-Held Portable Circular Power Saw)
66. Technologies (Bench-Mounted Scroll Saw)
67. Technologies (Vacuum Former)
68. Technologies (Wood Lathe)
69. Technologies (Powered Guillotines)
70. Technologies (Manual Treadle-Operated Metal-Cutting Guillotines)

School Offsite Activities

71. School Offsite Activities (School Excursions – Day Trips, Matches)
72. School Offsite Activities (Outdoor Adventure Activity)
73. School Offsite Activities (Work Placements)

Blank Risk-Assessment Template

74. Blank Risk-Assessment Template

9. Instruction, Training and Supervision

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that only trained and competent staff undertake tasks that could cause harm. She ensures that training requirements are met and that the effectiveness of training is reviewed to ensure that requirements are met.

Senior management ensures that all staff understand the importance of their training and experience and how they can work effectively to ensure safe working. They also ensure that staff are aware of the health and safety consequences of their work activities and the benefits of following safe working practices.

It is recognised that ongoing safety training is required to help maintain a high standard of service. Safety training and safe working procedures are made available to all staff as required.

Specialist health and safety training is provided as appropriate. This may include, but is not limited to:

- First Aid;
- Manual Lifting and Handling;
- Working at Height.

On-going instruction and awareness-raising in schools around safety, health and welfare, helps to foster a safety mind-set amongst members of the Board of Management/ETB, staff, contractors, visitors and students.

In addition to formal training, there is a range of free on-line awareness-raising short courses for schools available on the Health and Safety Authority's elearning portal https://hsalearning.ie. Courses are aimed at employers and employees and those with a safety role in the school environment. Teachers may also access courses for students preparing for the workplace. Detailed guidance and publications can also be downloaded on a wide range of topics from www.hsa.ie.

Schools assemblies, induction briefings and pre-class instruction and demonstrations in practical areas, are just some of the many on the ground (in-house) instruction,

training and supervision arrangements that are already being undertaken by school staff, and do not require external involvement.

Training is given as necessary to staff to ensure they understand their health and safety responsibilities as specified in relevant legislation, regulations and this Safety Statement. All staff are encouraged to partake in the HSA online training programmes.

Specific training is provided in the case of Fire Safety, First Aid and Emergency Procedures. Refresher training will also be included.

All staff will receive induction training when they commence work to include good housekeeping practices. The Principal will ensure that staff are made aware of the hazards present and safety precautions. The primary objective of the instruction and training is to create a disposition to think and act in terms of safe working practices at all times.

The objective of this training is to ensure that new staff become familiar with the premises, safety/evacuation procedures, rules, regulations, their working environment and their colleagues in accordance with all legal and contractual obligations. This induction training applies to all permanent, temporary and contract staff of Gaelcholáiste Synge. New staff members include students on temporary work experience. The Principal or a designated member of staff will provide a short induction to new employees. This will include:

- Receiving a copy of the staff handbook/diary;
- A tour of the premises;
- Fire emergency procedures, location of exits, assembly points and training on fire fighting equipment;
- Details of accident reporting and investigation procedures;
- Discussion of the hazards in the school, preventive measures in place and the Safety Statement.
- Explanation of the consultation process, staff meetings and the Safety Representative;
- Details of the new employee's safety responsibilities;

- Details of additional training (if required);
- A copy of the School's Safety Statement.

Staff are advised to be considerate of new staff members and ensure that they comply with all safety procedures. All staff are retrained periodically in safety rules, policies and procedures, and when changes are made to the school safety statement.

All training is recorded, and records are maintained by the school administration. Where deemed necessary, further training or retraining is provided to staff as required and this will also be recorded, and progress is reviewed.

10. Communication and Consultation

This section sets out how the school community is informed of the content of the safety statement and how they are consulted on safety, health and welfare matters. The school management ensures that all staff, including contractors and pupils, are informed of health and safety issues. They will also be responsible for receiving, recording and responding to any health and safety communications. The staff elect a safety representative who will be a permanent member of the Safety Committee. The Safety Committee will regularly review the effectiveness of the consultation arrangements.

There will be a number of notice boards throughout the school containing details of posters/displays/notices relating to safety, health and welfare matters, including emergency procedures, fire escapes, assembly areas, first aiders and first aid stations.

Versions of the safety statement are kept up to date with the latest revisions, amendments and additions available on the school website.

Communication

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that this safety statement is brought to the attention of all employees and others at the workplace that may be exposed to risks covered by the safety statement.

a. It is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that the latest revision of the safety statement is available on the network and reviewed / updated annually or as required by the Safety Committee to ensure its appropriateness and compliance with legal obligations.

b. All new employees (including temporary staff) will be made aware of the school's safety statement during the induction process. This is the responsibility of the person carrying out the induction training.

c. The Principal is responsible for advising employees via the email system of all changes to this safety statement.

d. The safety statement will be brought to the attention of staff annually or when there is a significant change.

Document Management

All Health & Safety related information and documents, including risk assessments, are managed and retained in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

11. Monitoring, Review and Update

The management of safety, health and welfare is an ongoing process. The safety statement should include a description of how the school ensures that its safety management system is being implemented. This is an account of the various measures taken throughout the school year to monitor or check that aspects of safety, health and welfare management are being carried out effectively. These includes:

- health and safety objectives have been agreed and targets set
- health and safety objectives are monitored for progress and continuous improvement
- safety, health and welfare matters discussed as an agenda item at Board of Management meetings
- a review of fire drills and evacuation exercises, regular checking of safety features of potentially dangerous equipment in laboratories and workshops etc.
- periodic inspections of fire safety equipment
- risk assessment of new hazards as they arise and
- a record of new control measures identified and implemented
- regular meetings of the safety committee where one exists
- a review of accidents and dangerous occurrences for lessons learned, corrective actions and after care of those involved
- monitoring instruction, training and supervision arrangements in accordance with training needs identified

The safety statement is a **live working document**. The safety statement is reviewed at least annually. It is also reviewed if changes occur, such as staff changes, equipment replacement, or new systems are implemented.

The school uses the **Safety Statement Checklist** in this process. The Principal and the Safety Committee hold regular meetings to review health and safety within the school.

The meeting is used as a forum to discuss general health and safety issues affecting the school and to record performance in relation to health and safety issues.

The following information will be reported at the meeting:

- Concerns regarding non-compliance;
- Risk assessments;
- Results of inspections;
- Accidents/Incidents;
- Status of objectives and targets;

The above information will be discussed and analysed and, where necessary, corrective and preventive actions agreed and recorded;

The meeting will also be used to discuss actions arising from accidents, complaints and concerns regarding non-compliance;

Periodic reviews of the status of objectives and targets will be used to monitor and measure health and safety performance;

The Safety Representative will conduct a safety check prior to Safety Committee meetings.

Control of Records

The school shall maintain evidence that the requirements of this safety management system have been met. The records shall be maintained in a manner that can be located and referred to easily. These records include:

- Minutes of Safety Committee meetings;
- Audit/Inspection reports;
- Non-conformance reports (and related documentation);
- Risk assessments;
- Communication records;
- Training records.

Management Review

The Principal will ensure that an annual safety review meeting is undertaken in the latter part of the academic year and all the pertinent aspects are reviewed and actions taken as required. The meeting is undertaken at least annually and as part of the agenda of the Safety Committee.

The management review meeting is used as the pivotal means of ensuring that the school's systems are fully implemented and effective.

The agenda for the meeting should be all elements of the Health and Safety Management System, which give an indication of its continuing effectiveness. The inputs to this meeting shall include the following:

- Minutes / actions of previous meeting;
- Risk Assessment Results;
- Accident/Incident / Near Miss Details;
- Communications from Interested Parties;
- Effectiveness of Consultation and Participation Measures;
- Performance of the Health and Safety Management System;
- Extent to which Health and Safety Objectives have been met;
- Status of Corrective and Preventive Actions;
- Changes which could affect the Health and Safety Management System e.g. legislation, work practices, equipment etc.;
- Review of Emergency Planning Arrangements;
- Recommendations for Improvement.

The results of the review meeting must be available in the form of minutes maintained. The output of the meeting is any actions to be taken, a time scale for implementation

and a date for a follow-up action. The results from this meeting will be brought to the last Board of Management meeting in the academic year for information purposes.

The outputs from management review may also include recommendations related to possible changes to the safety statement. Such recommendations will be forwarded to the Board of Management for consideration. The Board of Management shall evaluate all recommendations on an annual basis to ensure the integrity and effectiveness of the safety management system is maintained.

School management shall ensure that the Health and Safety Checklist is completed once per year, normally at the end of academic year in conjunction with the Safety Committee and submitted to the Board of Management by the end of June each year.

12. Emergency and General Procedures

Cuimseoidh an rannán seo den ráiteas sábháilteachta pleananna, gnásanna agus bearta na scoile le leanúint i gcás éigeandála nó dainséar tromchúiseach atá ar tí tarlú.

A detailed account of the school's plan for responding to an emergency or critical incident should include:

- a list of persons responsible for coordinating and implementing the plan and details of their specific duties
- a list of the steps in the school's procedures for dealing with a variety of emergency and critical incident situations including fire, flood, bomb scare and other incidents such as serious injury or death by accident or suicide
- procedures for liaison with families of those affected by the incident
- details of local and national emergency and support services such as Gardaí, Fire Service, Ambulance, NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service), local GPs and hospitals
- a list of the resources used by the school in drawing up its critical incident management plan, such as:
    - *Responding to Critical Incidents, Guidelines for Schools,* Department of Education and Skills and National Educational Psychological
    - *Contingency Planning in the Context of a National Emergency, www.education.ie*

This section is divided into two specific areas and contains the school's plans and procedures to be followed in the case of an emergency or critical incident as well as general operating procedures and guidelines.

Critical Incidents

This procedure aims to protect the well-being of students and staff by providing clarity on how the school will respond to incidents that affect the wider school community. The Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP) is one element of the school's policies and plans. The CIMP has been developed with reference to the guidance and training offered by NEPS and the NEPS booklet entitled '*Responding to Critical Incidents – NEPS Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools'*.

Definition

A critical incident is defined as "an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school". Critical incidents may involve one or more students or staff members, or members of our local community. Types of incidents might include:

- The death of a member of the school community through accident, violence, suicide or suspected suicide or other unexpected death;
- An intrusion into the school;
- An accident involving members of the school community;
- An accident / tragedy in the wider community;
- Serious damage to the school buildings through fire, flood, vandalism, etc; The disappearance of a member of the school community.

Aim

The aim of the CIMP is to help management and staff to react quickly and effectively in the event of an incident, to enable us to maintain a sense of control and to ensure that appropriate support is offered to students/learners and staff. Having a good plan should also help ensure that the effects on the students and staff will be limited. It should enable us to affect a return to normality as soon as possible.

Creation of a coping supportive and caring ethos

Systems are in place to help to build resilience in both staff and students, thus preparing them to cope with a range of life events. These include measures to address both the physical and psychological safety of the school community.

Physical Safety

- Evacuation plan formulated;
- Regular fire drills occur;
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked.

Sábháilteacht shíceolaíoch

Psychological safety

The management and staff of the school aim to use available programmes and resources to enhance a sense of safety and security in the schooll and to provide opportunities for reflection and discussion.

- Staff have access to training for their role in First Aid, Health & Safety etc;
- Staff are familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures;
- Information is provided on mental health in general and such specific areas as signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety;
- Staff are informed in the area of suicide awareness and some staff are trained in interventions for suicidal students;
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies;
- Inputs to students by external providers are carefully considered in the light of criteria about student safety;
- The has a clear policy on bullying and deals with bullying in accordance with this policy;
- Where provided for, there is a care system in place in the school steered by the Career Guidance and Counselling Service, Disability and Support Service;
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member (e.g. guidance counsellor, support teacher or other support services), concerns are explored and the appropriate level of assistance and support is provided. Parents are informed where a student is under the age of 18 and, where appropriate, a referral is made to an appropriate agency;
- Staff are informed about how to access support for themselves.

Critical Incident Management Team

A CIMT has been established in line with best practice. The members of the team are selected on a voluntary basis and will retain their roles for at least one academic year. The members of the team will meet annually to review and update the operational plan. Each member of the team has a dedicated critical incident folder. This contains a copy of the policy and plan and materials particular to their role, to be used in the event of an incident.

Team Leader

- Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting;
- Coordinates the tasks of the team;
- Liaises with the Principal;
- Liaises with the bereaved family where necessary.

Garda Liaison

- Liaises with the Gardaí;
- Ensures that information about deaths or other developments is checked out for accuracy before being shared.

Staff Liaison

- Leads briefing meetings for staff on the facts as known, gives staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and ask questions, and outlines the routine for the day;
- Advises staff on the procedures for identification of vulnerable students;
- Provides materials for staff (from their critical incident folder);
- Keeps staff updated as the day progresses;
- Is alert to vulnerable staff members and makes contact with them individually;
- Advises them of the availability of the Emergency Alert System (EAS) and gives them the contact number.

Confidentiality and Good Name Considerations

Management and staff have a responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of people involved in any incident and will be sensitive to the consequences of public statements. Members of school staff will bear this in mind, and seek to ensure that students do so also, e.g. the term 'suicide' will not be used unless there is solid information that death was due to suicide, *and* that the family involved consents to its use. The phrases 'tragic death' or 'sudden death' may be used instead. Similarly, the word 'murder' should not be used until it is legally established that a murder was committed. The term 'violent death' may be used instead.

Fire Safety

Evacuation plans are displayed in each building and in each classroom/room in the school, an example is in Appendix A. If floor plans have been removed, the Principal should be notified immediately to arrange for new notices. Equipment is in place that will give an indication when a fire breaks out or when the building(s) need to be evacuated. The school management is responsible to:

- Ensure that such equipment is serviced at least annually in accordance with the manufacturer's guidelines and relevant standards;
- Signs are clearly visible to ensure that everyone can follow a safe route to the nearest fire exit;
- Notices are posted on fire doors, fire exit points and external locations to ensure that exit routes are not restricted or obstructed.
- Ensure that at least two fire drills are conducted annually (1 per term if possible)

In addition, management implements a Personal Emergency Escape Plan (PEEP) for staff and students. This is a customized escape plan for individuals who would be unable to reach a final safe place without assistance or within a reasonable time frame in the event of any emergency.

Procedure in the event of a <u>Continuous Alarm</u>

A continuous alarm may signal that a fire may have broken out or that a situation has arisen which require an evacuation of the building. In the event of an evacuation the most appropriate procedure to follow is outlined in Appendix B procedure.

All Fire Wardens to put on their Hi-Viz Jackets & turn on appropriate Communication Devices

- A minimum of 3 people will report directly to the main fire alarm panel. [Chief fire warden and 2 fire locators];
- Locaters will investigate activation, deal with incident and report back to the chief fire warden the nature of the incident;
- The chief fire warden will liaise with alarm monitoring company and the emergency services;
- A minimum of 3 people will report to the lift area at the end of each corridor on each floor. [Floor sweepers];
- They will sweep the floor and report down through each of the stairwells, where they will take up positions at the main exits to make sure nobody re-enters the building; • Staff are responsible for evacuating their own individual classrooms / work areas, making sure that they are last to leave and closing the door behind them;
- Teachers and designated staff will act as assembly co-ordinators making sure everybody reports to the assembly points and stays at them;
- **PEEP** plans will be carried out as is necessary;
- Locators and sweepers will liaise with the chief fire warden to confirm the building has been made safe;
- The chief fire warden will liaise with the emergency services on their arrival and give them all relevant details for the building and the situation.

Procedures to be followed in the event of a fire emergency

- Raise the alarm (if the alarm is not already sounding) and yell 'Fire' to alert colleagues until you reach the nearest 'Break Glass'
- Set off the Fire Alarm at the nearest 'Break Glass' unit (if in case of fire and the fire alarm is not already sounding)
- Staff and students should follow the plan in place for safely evacuating from the school building. All staff, whether scheduled for lessons at the time or not, will assist with the immediate evacuation of the school buildings
- Open the nearest emergency exit in your vicinity and direct people towards the exit. Try to keep calm and WALK briskly (do not run or encourage others to run!) to the nearest exit and Assembly Point
- All staff should ensure that students exit swiftly and in silence. They should also ensure that students descend stairs in a safe manner
- Do NOT delay to pick up personal belongings, nor try to re-enter the building for any items. This could hinder evacuation of the building and put not only a person's own life in danger but also the lives of others
- Doors should always be closed on leaving a room to help restrict the spread of heat and smoke
- Obey the instructions of the Fire Wardens and the Emergency Services on site
- Stay at the assigned space in the assembly point, encourage others to avoid obstructing the safe means of passage for access by the emergency services.
- The school administration will bring the fire register clipboards for each class group to the assembly point
- The school administration will also bring the Visitors Book and the Sign-in/Sign-Out books in reception
- All staff must comply with any roll call / head check to establish that all persons are identified and present
- Each Year Head immediately collects the Fire Register clipboards for their year group from the relevant box and distributes the Fire Register clipboards to their team of tutors

- Teachers immediately call the roll for each class group and report any missing students (located at the front of the class lines for the relevant year group)
- Any issues are directly reported to the Principal/Deputy Principal
- Any issues/persons suspected to be missing must be reported to the Fire Wardens and emergency services immediately
- Remember! Stay at the assembly point and follow instructions from the emergency services/management/fire wardens. Do NOT re-enter the building until authorised to do so by the emergency services/ Principal.

Accident Investigation and Reporting Policy and Procedure

It is the policy of Gaelcholáiste Synge to comply with all statutory requirements regarding the reporting of incidents, accidents and dangerous occurrences. All accidents, whether they result in injury or not, and ill health that may be associated with work, must be reported, recorded and where appropriate, investigated.

- The Accident Report Form must be completed by the teacher or other staff member and given to the Principal as soon as possible but not later than one week after the accident.
- The detail required when carrying out an accident report is directly related to the severity of the accident.
- The teacher or other employee should carry out an investigation as soon as possible after the incident.
- Written reports from witnesses and the injured party should be obtained even if first aid or medical assistance is not required. Witnesses should be interviewed, and statements taken as soon as possible after the incident.
- The scene should be preserved until the investigation is complete.
- Materials and equipment associated with the accident should be collected and retained, where practical. It may be vital to establish the condition of the equipment later.
- Photographs and drawings should be used as necessary.
- In the case of road traffic accidents, where the accident results in damage to the vehicle only, accident details must be provided on an accident report form.
- Where road traffic accidents result in injury to an employee, student or member of the public the details of the accident must be reported.
- Our obligation to report extends not only to staff and students but also to non-staff such as visitors, contractors, service engineers, recreational users, or trespassers etc. who are injured on the premises.

Duties of the Principal

When an incident or accident is reported, the Principal will then:

- contact the specific teacher or employee in order to establish the level of investigation conducted and decide whether further investigation is necessary;
- notify the Health and Safety Authority and/or the State Claims Agency using the correct forms and procedures outlined below;
- monitor the process of investigation, reporting and action in order to ensure that the necessary response times are met; ensure the appropriate corrective action is implemented.

Reporting to the Health and Safety Authority

Completed forms, which are now web-based http://www.hsa.ie should be returned to the Health and Safety Authority in compliance with the legislation. Copies of the form should be retained in the school for inspection by the Health and Safety Authority Inspectors.

The legal requirement to report accidents is an external requirement and does not affect or change in any way the other internal accident reporting procedures.

Notification is required when:

- A work accident causes the death of an employee – immediate notification.
- A work accident prevents an employee from performing his or her normal work for more than three consecutive days. (This does not include the day of the accident).
- An accident arising from a work activity causes death or injury to a non-employee e.g. student, passers – by, visitors etc. which results in the person requiring treatment from a registered medical practitioner or treatment in a hospital as an inpatient or outpatient.

Dangerous Occurences

In the event of a dangerous occurrence, the Principal will inform the Health and Safety Authority using Form IR3 as soon as possible.

Dangerous occurrences should be notified by post after the event, provided a death has not occurred. In the event of death, the procedure outlined above for the reporting of accidents to the Health and Safety Authority should be followed.

Maintaining Accidents Records

The Principal must keep a record of accidents or dangerous occurrence reported, for a period of ten years after their occurrence. A copy of the approved form sent to the Health and Safety Authority and any other relevant documentation will suffice.

Auditing and Inspections

The Board of Management recognises its obligation to put in place an annual programme of auditing, which encompass all of the school's premises, procedures and organisation. In carrying out this duty the Board may employ the services of professionals, to advise on, or carry out risk assessments and audits where it is recognised that they do not have the necessary inhouse competence.

Cash Handling

Cash Handling will be kept to minimum Staff who have responsibilities for collecting cash should deposit cash in the bank as soon as possible after collection. If cash is to be stored on the premises it should be stored in the safe in the office. Staff responsible for lodging cash should vary their routine for lodgement. Staff should not resist if theft is the obvious motive for an attack.

Communication and Consultation

The Board of Management is committed to meeting its obligations under Chapter 3 part 4 of the *Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005*, on consultation with and participation of our staff. The Board recognises that staff involvement is an important cornerstone of a successful school safety program. Various channels exist for staff contact. The school recognises the staff' right to appoint a Safety Representative to represent them in consultations with management on safety issues. The school will co-operate with the Safety Representative in:

- providing information necessary for safety;
- advising the representative when a HSA inspector is touring the place of work;
- facilitating the representative in the discharge of his/her functions;
- allowing time off for training.

Contractors

The school has responsibilities for the safe management of contracts providing construction, engineering and other services. The activities of contractors working for Gaelcholáiste Synge are strictly regulated at all times. The following information is obtained from all contractors carrying out work at the school, including:

- An up-to-date Health & Safety Statement.
- A Method Statement & Risk Assessment for works carried out on site.
- Copies of Training Certificates (including Safe Pass etc.)
- Copies of Certificates for Equipment & Machinery brought on site.
- Up-to-date Insurance Details to be submitted prior to commencement on site.
- Proof of Garda vetting.

Dignity and Diversity at Work

Gaelcholáiste Synge strives to create an environment that is inclusive for all, where its staff and students are free to do their work without harassment or bullying from other members of the school. In accordance with the ASTI, FÓRSA, IMPACT and TUI Codes of Practice, Gaelcholáiste Synge has a Dignity at Work Policy in place. A separate policy in the Disciplinary Code deals with bullying and harassment between students.

Defibrillators

Defibrillators will be maintained by a designated teacher and will be checked regularly to ensure that it is functioning correctly and is stocked with the required items

Electrical Safety

Work on electrical equipment is restricted to the supplier or authorised competent contractors. Staff are required to use only equipment, plant, machinery, tools provided by the school.

Employee Assistance Service

Through the Employee Assistance Service EAS, confidential counselling services are available to teachers whose positions are funded by the Department of Education, their spouses or partners, their dependents above the age of 16 and mother/father where appropriate. The purpose of the EAS is to provide teachers and their immediate family members with easy access to confidential counselling and to assist in coping with the effect of personal and work related issues.

The EAS can help with issues in any of these areas:

- Work related issues;
- Family issues;
- Emotional concerns;
- Relationship difficulties;

Expectant Mothers

Management acknowledges their statutory responsibility to provide a safe environment to staff and students who are pregnant or have recently given birth. In accordance with the Safety, Health & Welfare (Pregnant Staff) Regulations, 2000 (Regulation 3) a pregnant employee of Gaelcholáiste Synge must notify management of her condition 'as soon as is practicable after it occurs and, at the time of the notification, given to her employer or produce for her employer's inspection a medical or other appropriate certificate confirming her condition'. In fulfilling legal obligations, there may be a need for temporary adjustment of duties, rest facilities etc. to ensure that staff are not exposed to ill health in any way. Pregnant students are also encouraged to inform the school of their condition such that an appropriate risk assessment may be carried out.

Breastfeeding Staff

The Board of Management of Gaelcholáiste Synge is conscious of its obligations under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007, Part 6, Chapter 2 'Protection of Pregnant, Post Natal and Breastfeeding Employees.'
It is the policy of Gaelcholáiste Synge to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that the normal safety precautions will adequately protect pregnant, post-natal and breastfeeding employees.

A pregnant employee, who feels she may be at risk, should inform the Principal without delay to ensure appropriate precautions can be taken. A detailed risk assessment for pregnant employees will be carried out and will inform the decisions of the school.

Facilities and supports include:

- The provision of breastfeeding breaks agreed in advance with the Principal giving due consideration to the unique working environment of schools i.e. timetabled classes and the availability of cover.
- The timing of these breaks must be negotiated between the breastfeeding mother and Principal in conjunction with the Board of Management.

- For the purposes of breastfeeding or breast milk expression, access will be provided to a clean, private room with power points, lockable door, comfortable chairs, a table, hand washing facilities and a secure breast pump storage area if required.

Lone Working

It is the policy of the school that staff (with the exception of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Administrative Staff, Maintenance Staff) are not permitted to be on the premises unaccompanied. At no stage will teaching staff be permitted to be on the premises unaccompanied out of school hours i.e. at night or weekends regardless of the activity to be carried out.
If working alone, Maintenance Staff are required to 'report in' to the Principal or designated person to inform that they are safely leaving the premises.

Manual Handling

Risks to staff from manual handling activities are eliminated or reduced through the provision of good task and workplace design, the provision of mechanical aids where appropriate, and the provision of information and training to those staff whose work involves significant manual handling.

Noise

Gaelcholáiste Synge considers potential noise levels in the selection of equipment and the design of work environments. The technologies rooms and other possible significantly noisy environments are identified and assessed, and appropriate precautions advised.

Personal Protective Equipment

Gaelcholáiste Synge recognises that where there is a risk to the health, safety and welfare of their staff and students that cannot be controlled by technical or organisational measures, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) e.g. goggles, earmuffs, gloves are provided and maintained.

The type of PPE provided for specific activities will be decided only after suitable and sufficient risk assessment has been conducted. Management are responsible for ensuring that staff and students are trained in the use, care and maintenance of PPE.

School Bags

Gaelcholáiste Synge is committed to making efforts to alleviate the problem of heavy school bags and school bag storage issues.

School Trips/Tours

Each trip is communicated and approved by the Board of Management. Parent/guardian's permission is obtained for each student before any excursions take place. Emergency preparedness is addressed (phone numbers, medical arrangements, first-aid) and an adequate number of supervisory adults are present on the trip. A head count is carried out before departure, routinely throughout the trip and in the event of an emergency, and before return journey by trip supervisor. Safety instructions are provided to students including information on correct clothing and equipment required, code of behaviour, etc.

Smoking and Vaping

In compliance with the *Public Health (Tobacco) (Amendment) Act 2004* regarding smoking in workplaces, smoking is strictly forbidden in the premises and on the grounds of Gaelcholáiste Synge.

Visitors

For evacuation reasons, visitors are asked to sign in on entering the premises and sign out on exiting. Host staff are responsible for the safety and conduct of visitors and for informing them of local welfare facilities, emergency procedures and any specific risks.

Waste Management

All waste is segregated at source and recycled where possible. Approved waste contractors are engaged for waste removal and recycling. In cases where staff cannot safely dispose of waste chemicals, specialist hazardous waste disposal firms must be consulted with.

Welfare Facilities

Gaelcholáiste Synge shall ensure that adequate welfare facilities are provided on the premises for all staff and students. Adequate toilet facilities are provided and maintained in a good clean hygienic condition. Adequate washing facilities (including hot water where necessary) and washing and drying materials/equipment are provided and maintained.

Weather

Due to unforeseen weather conditions that result in an orange/red weather warning, staff and students may experience difficulties arriving at school on time. The Principal will monitor these weather reports and advise the school community accordingly. The Principal may decide to close/dismiss school early to ensure that students and staff can travel home safely.

Work Experience

It usually involves students working in a place of employment under the supervision and guidance of a mentor. Prior to any placement being made, the course organisers should discuss the safety policy of the workplace with the employer and students should be made aware of the potential hazards in the workplace. Students who wish to gain work experience on construction are obliged to have a 'Safe Pass' certificate. The teacher organising the work experience shall contact each employer to ensure suitable arrangements are in place before student takes up work placement, e.g. safety induction, supervision arrangements, provision of appropriate PPE and insurance arrangements.

Specialised Classrooms

Specialised classrooms each have specific hazards, which are unique to these rooms. These rooms should be locked when the room is not in use. Where possible, classes in other subjects should not be taught in these rooms unless by the specialised teacher. If a specialised teacher is absent, the substitute teacher must be fully aware of the hazards in the room as well as the controls in place to deal with these hazards. If the substitute teacher is not trained in the specialised area then where possible classes should be supervised elsewhere.

Students with Physical/Additional Educational Needs

Students who have ongoing medical problems e.g. diabetic or other controlled conditions may need medical interventions during the school day. Staff will be informed and trained on how to deal with an emergency situation of 'at risk' students in their classrooms when the need arises.

Parents of children with known allergies are responsible for informing the Principal/Deputy Principal of any assistance that may be needed for a student with food allergies. Those students with significant medical needs will be identified in the staffroom to ensure that all staff are aware of any underlying conditions that may present during corridor supervision, break time supervision etc.

Students with special education needs will be supported through the SEN Department in the school in accordance with the guidance from the National Council for Special Education. Where necessary
i.e. on a case by case basis, risk assessments may need to be carried out to ensure that the safety of the students, his/her peers as well as teachers and other staff is maintained. Where teachers feel that there is a risk to the student, a risk assessment must take place in conjunction with SEN Coordinator / Team.

In the event of an evacuation these students will be evacuated from the building by their SNA or teacher (in the case of mainstream student).

Stress

What is Work-related Stress?

Stress can be broadly defined as the negative reactions people have to aspects of their environment. Work-related stress simply refers to those reactions due to pressure within the working environment.

“Stress occurs when an individual perceives an imbalance between the demands placed on them on the one hand, and their ability to cope on the other” (Professor Tom Cox, Institute of Work, Health and Organisation).

Each individual employee member brings into the school their own particular personality, medical history, psychological make-up and coping skills. As a result, what may be stressful for one employee may not be for another. However, some workplace factors inevitably lead to stress, such as poor communications, role ambiguity, career stagnation, low participation in decision-making, conflict, etc.

Effects of Stress

The effects of stress differ from individual to individual. The experience of stress can change the way a person feels, thinks and behaves and can also produce physical changes. A person will often experience stress in a number of ways. When you are stressed, you are less likely to eat well, get adequate sleep, take exercise and relax. You can also experience irritability, reduced attention span and memory impairment. Irritability due to stress can create secondary problems such as the loss of social support. Being stressed over a prolonged period of time has been associated with increased blood pressure and cardiovascular problems.

Introduction

Gaelcholáiste Synge is committed to a healthy workforce by placing value on both physical and mental health. The Board of Management acknowledges that stress problems have many causes, including in the workplace and the outside world. The Board of Management recognises that factors, which may lead to increased work-related stress for teachers, special needs assistants, ancillary staff, the Deputy Principals and the Principal, include unruly students, exam time, whole school inspections, subject inspections and work overload etc. It is also recognised that domestic factors (housing, family problems and bereavement) may also add to levels of stress experienced by our staff. The Board is committed to promoting a working environment where staff who feel they are at risk of suffering from the negative effects of stress can raise the issue in confidence, so that necessary support mechanisms can be put in place. This policy applies to all staff in Gaelcholáiste Synge.

Aims

Our policy aims to:

- encourage staff well-being within Gaelcholáiste Synge and discourage the stigma attached to stress;
- raise awareness of ill health associated with stress, its causes and associated factors;
- to reduce as far as is reasonably practicable within the confines of a school environment, the sources of stress;
- enhance the factors within Gaelcholáiste Synge that reduce the risk of stress;
- educate staff in techniques for coping with pressure and stress;
- provide systems of support and make sure they are well publicised;
- encourage staff to get help at an early stage;
- make sure there is confidentiality for those who want help.

Procedures

- Unruly students have been recognised as one of the major sources of stress for teachers. Gaelcholáiste Synge recognises this, and teachers should avail of the assistance that is provided to them by the Guidance Team, Deputy Principal and the Principal etc.
- Clear policies on behaviour exist in the school and these should be referred to. These policies are continually reviewed, and staff are consulted in policy development.
- The Board of Management ensures that each employee's role and responsibilities are clearly defined.
- High priority is given to staff training and the Board of Management supports and encourages participation in relevant in-service courses in so far as is reasonably practicable. The Board is also committed to promoting the professional development of its staff and will consider requests for financial support from teachers, special needs assistants and ancillary staff to undertake and complete relevant courses of study.
- The Board of Management recognises that communication and consultation with staff, which promotes openness and discussion, is essential.
- The Principal brings the concerns of the staff to the attention of the rest of the Board.
- The Board of Management and the Principal ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that the physical work environments for staff are safe and do not expose them to risks that may give rise to stress at work.
- It is school practice to make sure that staff take time to review and celebrate positive achievements.
- Social occasions for staff are organised throughout the school term to give staff a chance to relax and socialise with each other outside of the workplace.
- The Department of Education has provided a confidential counselling service for teachers, where counselling sessions can be availed to deal with work-related stress. (1800 411 057).
- If an employee feels that they are suffering from work-related stress it is important that they seek medical help. They should then discuss with the Principal the causes of their stress and as far as reasonably practicable, the Principal will deal with the issues concerned.

As staff how can I cope with stress at work?

- Manage your workload
- Set priorities & Manage time effectively;
- Set limits to work and draw boundaries;
- Define problems precisely;
- Break work up into manageable units;
- Recognise your own worth;

Develop Skills

- Improve communication;
- Be more assertive;
- Make decisions;
- Plan your time – including your free time;
- Decide your career goals;
- Avail of training opportunities;

Maintain Physical Fitness

- Eat a sensible diet;
- Have sufficient rest;
- Decide on some agreeable form of exercise and make it a habit;
- Develop interests outside work;

Violence

Scope of Policy

The Board of Management of Gaelcholáiste Synge is committed to the continuance of a school characterised by mutual respect, free from threat or intimidation. To this end dangerous, threatening, aggressive or violent behaviour (hereafter called violent behaviour), whether verbal, written, virtual or physical, is not permitted in the school or among the school community. A separate policy on Discipline in School deals with students.

Introduction

During the course of their work school staff may be at risk in the form of verbal abuse, threats, assaults or other forms of intimidation. This behaviour may come from pupils, parents, guardians, other staff members or visitors. Violent behaviour is categorised as acts against people or property.

Principles

The Board of Management of Gaelcholáiste Synge recognises its duties to:

- provide a safe environment for staff and other persons present in the school;
- minimise the risk of assaults on teachers / Principal / Deputy Principals or other staff employed in the school;
- support staff that have been assaulted or threatened with assault; and ensuring that appropriate action is taken to safeguard against a recurrence.

Preventative Measures

- Policies on violence go hand in hand with policies in relation to bullying, harassment, discipline etc. These policies need to be reviewed frequently to identify and resolve weaknesses to lessen the threat of violence.
- Communication between home and school should be frequent, open and positive. In this context policies and procedures in relation to visits to the school, meeting with teachers, school discipline, complaint procedures etc. should be in place and parents/ guardians encouraged to communicate with the school as appropriate.
- Parents /visitors who wish to have a consultation with a class teacher should make a prior appointment with the relevant teacher. In urgent cases where a prearranged appointment is not appropriate, parents should, in the first instance, report to the school secretary.
- All visitors are required to report to the school secretary's office. Signs displayed within the school grounds and premises outline this.

Steps to be followed in the Event of an Assault

- In the event of an assault, a staff member should not try to resist if cash or goods are the obvious motive for the attack. Depending on the circumstances and the level of training, the member should endeavour to calm down the assailant and seek assistance as quickly as possible.
- The incident should be immediately reported to the Principal/Deputy Principals.
- Where necessary, immediate medical assistance should be sought. Debriefing is essential as soon as possible after the event. Staff are entitled to time off work and counselling if needed.
- The matter should be reported to the Gardaí, where appropriate. The staff member who was assaulted would normally make this report.
- The details of the incident should be recorded. The information recorded should include personal details (name, age, occupation) of the victim and assailant where

available, description of what happened, why did it happen, when and where it happened, description of any injuries sustained and weapons used, what procedure failed. Situations in which staff members have been intimidated or threatened with physical violence should also be recorded. Reports should be made to the Health and Safety Authority and the States Claims Agency as required.

- The Board of Management should be notified of the incident and where necessary an emergency meeting of the Board of Management should take place. The Board should consider notifying its legal advisors and insurance company of the incident as appropriate.

- Where an assault is by a pupil the matter should be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.
- Repeatedly aggressive pupils should be referred, with the consent of parents/guardians, for psychological assessment in order to assess the pupils' social and emotional needs and to determine how these can be best met.
- Where a parent/guardian or visitor commits the assault, the Board of Management should immediately instruct the person in writing not to make direct contact with the staff member/school pending full consideration of the matter. Subsequently the Board of Management should correspond with the parent/guardian or visitor stating:
    - that it considers the assault unacceptable and what action the Board of Management intends to take;
- outlining what pre-conditions should be met before access to the school is restored.
- Where a staff member commits the alleged assault, the Board of Management should immediately instruct the member in writing not to make direct contact with the victim pending full consideration and investigation of the matter. The question of suspension may also need to be considered prior to further action/disciplinary measures being taken.

Chemical Spill

It is important to know what to do in the case of a chemical spill. In most cases such incidents will be classed as an accidental spill or release of a chemical which can be managed by the staff member. Reference must be made to Section 6 of the Safety Data Sheet for the chemical as it details what to do in the event of an accidental release or spill of the chemical. For this reason the Safety Data Sheet should be readily accessible to the staff member and should also be kept with the chemical register **(Appendix E)**

In the event of a chemical spill, the following procedures apply.

Before deciding it is safe to clean a spill:

- Make sure that the chemical in question has not mixed with other chemicals;
- Exercise extreme caution if the material is reacting (hissing, bubbling, smoking, burning);
- Exercise extreme caution if there is any sign that a chemical reaction is happening. If so contact school management who will contact the emergency services for help;
- School Management will be advised by the emergency services and will make a decision in respect of whether general evacuation procedures will apply.

Safe cleaning process:

- Remove people from the affected area;
- Ventilate by opening windows and doors;
- Refer to the Safety Data Sheet and follow the instructions therein;
- Wear personal protective equipment to avoid chemical burns;
- Place spilled material in a clean dry plastic container or bag or soak up using absorbents;
- Dispose of contaminated materials in accordance with manufacturer instructions
- Complete accident / incident report;
- Take appropriate precautions where safe to do so, in order to prevent any spillage entering water courses.

First Aid

Where a spill is on an individual, Section 4 of the Safety Data Sheet will provide detailed first aid measures, however, swift action will be required, and the following should be followed:

- Remove the person from the area;
- Quickly remove if possible contaminated clothing and footwear;
- As quickly as possible flush the contaminated area with (preferably) lukewarm, gently flowing water for at least 15-20 minutes;
- Call or have someone call for a First Aid Responder to attend; • Inform Senior Management.

13. First Aid

Part 7, Chapter 2 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007 deals with the issue of first aid in the workplace. The school is required to provide first aid equipment in every workplace where working conditions require it.

The Health and Safety Regulations require all First Aid Responders to complete the appropriate training courses to administer first aid in a workplace setting.

The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) only recognises the Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council First Aid Response (PHECC FAR) as a course that meets the requirements of Occupational First Aid in the workplace. This is a basic first aid course which trains course participants to provide first aid to a person who suddenly becomes ill or injured until the arrival of emergency medical services. The FAR also includes the full Community Cardiac Response standard. This means that learners who undertake training must complete a full or refresher course of the PHECC FAR.

The Safety Committee will consider, as part of its annual review, the training needs of FAR staff.

Location of First Aid Equipment and Supplies

First Aid supplies are provided as per H.S.A requirements and can be found in the following locations:

All specialist classroom, with extra-curricular kits, staffroom and front office.

First Aid Kits will be checked regularly and replenished by an outside agency procured for this function.

Accident Procedure and Incident Investigation

When a serious accident occurs or where there has been an incident where a serious accident could have occurred, the following procedures should be carried out:

Staff Member

On coming across an incident where either a colleague or student has sustained an injury the following procedure applies;

- Observe the accident location and the status of the injured person;
- If there is a risk of further injury and the area cannot be made safe, move the injured person to safety if possible;
- Call for immediate assistance by contacting a First Aid Responder and / or emergency services depending on severity of accident;
- If an ambulance has been called, make sure that the exact location has been given;
- Fully inform the First Aid Responder of all details and contact the Principal if not already informed.

First Aid Responder

The First Aid Responder will manage the accident scene and treat any injuries in accordance with their training and stay with the injured party until emergency services arrive and take over (where appropriate).

Principal/Board of Management

The Principal's role is to manage the accident and ensure that appropriate notifications are made and appropriate steps are taken to eliminate or reduce any risk.

- Ensure that parents/guardians are informed, if possible;
- Inform the safety representative;
- Inform the Board of Management, who will in turn inform the insurance company;
- The Board of Management will receive guidance on reports and steps to be taken by the Principal;
- Ensure that all relevant information is gathered as soon as possible about the accident and its causes, obtain witness statements, and record them as they are given;
- Complete an accident report form and submit it to the Board of Management along with any other necessary documentation;
- If the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) is to inspect the accident site, do not move anything unless it is to avoid further serious risks;

The causes of health and safety incidents that arise will be investigated and timely action will be taken to prevent a recurrence. It is the Principal's duty to record and report all incidents/accidents to the Board of Management.

The Board of Management is responsible for reporting accidents to the Health and Safety Authority and insurers.

It is therefore essential that all accidents, incidents and near misses are reported as soon as possible to ensure a safer working environment and to ensure that the school complies with its statutory accident reporting obligations.

The Board of Management will normally appoint the Principal or Safety Officer (if one has been appointed) to investigate all incidents and accidents. The level of investigation should be commensurate with the severity of the incident or accident. Information relating to investigations should be recorded and kept on file.

The conclusion of investigations should inform any action that may be necessary such as updating risk assessments, repairing equipment, organising training, disseminating information etc.

The following are considered incidents (although not limited to):

- Accident;
- Near miss;
- Any situation which could have resulted in harm and which is not subject to a current risk assessment.

All accidents in which any person (including persons not employed by the school) is injured as a result of its work activities or which occur on its premises must be reported to the Principal and subsequently to the Safety Officer using the designated form. This should be done on the day of the incident, or as soon as possible thereafter. All incidents resulting in significant material damage or near misses, where injury to any person or significant material damage is avoided, must be reported in the same manner.

14. Fire Safety Management

The primary objective is to minimise the risk to life and to reduce injury by maintaining the physical fire safety of the school, in ensuring that staff, pupils and visitors do not add to the fire risk and through safe evacuation of our buildings if a fire breaks out. The fire safety procedures and risk assessments at the school are designed to help our community to respond calmly and effectively in the event that fire breaks out in one of our buildings.

The school has identified emergency situations and incidents pertaining to its business operations and undertaken appropriate risk assessments. Where required, they are regularly reviewed and tested. Where necessary documented procedures have been prepared, implemented and maintained to define the emergency response.

Emergency procedures will be compiled and reviewed on an ongoing basis. Regular Fire Drills will be carried out and firefighting and detection equipment will be serviced regularly.

- A system of carrying out fire drills a minimum of twice a year and ideally every academic term involving all personnel on the premises to ensure the safe and swift evacuation to a predesignated point of safety;
- A system of reporting on and reviewing fire drills to ensure the detailed instructions in the school Fire Evacuation Procedure remain relevant and accurate. (See Appendix B);
- A system of regular in-house testing of fire alarms to ensure that any faults that may develop are detected and rectified in a timely manner;
- A schedule of service and maintenance for the fire alarm system and all linked and ancillary equipment, such as emergency lights, smoke alarms, fire panels etc;
- A system of waste management minimises the amount of rubbish and waste materials allowed to build up in order to remove as much flammable materials from the premises waste receptacles are kept in a designated locked store to prevent arson to the building;

The provision of appropriate storage cabinets in order to store those materials and substances that are known to be flammable. Flammable gas bottles are to be stored in the flammable gas cage. Inert gas bottles must be appropriately stored;
Annual record of gas appliance servicing, lightning conductors, gas shut off devices, kitchen extract servicing and deep clean, chimneys, private hydrants, dry risers, policy on inspection of metal fire escapes. Security locks on escape route, upholstered furniture.

Réamhchúraimí Ginearálta Dóiteáin

An escape route plan and an extinguisher location plan shall be displayed in each room and in appropriate locations throughout the school. The extinguisher location plan will also display the type of extinguisher available.

All staff members should familiarise themselves as soon as possible with:

1. The layout of the school;
2. The location and operation of emergency exits;
3. The location and operation of extinguishers, hose reels and break glass units where fitted;
4. The correct action to be taken on discovering a fire or if the alarm is sounded by somebody else.

Inspection and Testing of Fire Prevention Equipment

Emergency Lighting – Maintenance

Weekly Emergency lighting is visually checked to ensure:

- Every lamp is lighting;
- The LED in each emergency lighting unit is illuminated;
- A rolling system of battery checks to be undertaken and recorded; • Any fault found, and the action taken is recorded in the Fire Register.

Quarterly the following will be carried out:

- Exterior of luminaries and signs are cleaned;
- Ensure the correct operation of the luminaries and signs by operating the test facility or cutting the power to the lighting circuits;
- Record results in the Fire Register.

Annually the following will be carried out:

- Inspection and test procedure as described in I.S. 3217:2023 Irish Standard for Emergency Lighting will be carried out by a competent person;
- Results will be recorded in the Fire Register.

Fire Extinguishers – Maintenance

Irish Standard 291:2015 governs the selection, commissioning, installation, inspection and maintenance of portable fire extinguishers. The key requirements are:

User Inspection

- Fire extinguishers are inspected visually on a weekly basis in order to ensure appliances are in their proper position, have not been discharged or lost pressure or suffered obvious damage;
- At least every month (recorded in Fire Safety Register);
- More frequently where the environment, risks or other factors dictate so.

Competent Person Inspection Frequency

- At least every 12 months;
- More frequently where the environment, risks or other factors dictate so.

Test Discharge & Refilling Requirements

- All types of extinguishers (Foam, Water, CO_2, Powder, Chemical) must be Test Discharged & Refilled every three years;
- To this end, one third of each type should be selected during each annual inspection;
- Loan units should be provided to the client to ensure no loss of cover while units are removed, until they are returned again;
- Units selected for Test Discharge should be ideally used to provide training for personnel on site where practical;
- Where there are less than three of any type of unit on site, one should be removed for TD&R.

Pressure Testing Requirements

- All types of fire extinguisher should be considered under the European Pressure Equipment Directive;
- This requires that all extinguishers undergo a Pressure Test and Refill, 10 years after manufacture and every 5 years subsequently;
- Any units that are not practical or feasible to be Pressure Tested and Refilled, should be replaced at 10 years old;
- This would include liquid-based units, like Water, Foam, Wet Chemical (pressure test would crack the internal lining) and Powder units (too labour-intensive / impractical).

Fire Alarm – Maintenance

- A daily check shall be made to ensure that the panel is in working order. Any faults identified shall be recorded in the Fire Register and repaired immediately.
- The system shall be tested weekly at the 'Break Glass' units. A different zone shall be tested each week. The zone and its triggering device shall be recorded in the Fire Register;
- A quarterly inspection and testing shall be carried out in accordance with I.S. 3218:2013+A1:2019 Irish Standard for Fire Detection & Alarm System. Records shall be maintained in the Fire Register by the Appointed Person;
- An annual inspection and testing and testing procedures shall be carried out in accordance with I.S. 3218:2013+A1:2019 Irish Standard for Fire Detection & Alarm System. Records shall be maintained in the Fire Register by the Appointed Person.

Suspected Gas Leak

If you smell gas the following procedure is to be implemented

- If room is occupied, evacuate the room;
- If room is unoccupied, do not enter the room alone, vent the room to the corridor, open windows,
- Do not switch on lights;
- Ensure all gas appliance are turned off and have not been left on and unlit;
- Don't smoke or use a naked flame;
- Don't unplug or switch any electrical equipment on or off;
- Do not use mobile phones;
- Open windows and doors;
- Make arrangements for school Management to be notified of the event; • If you have concerns for the safety of staff or pupils in the immediate vicinity, before the arrival of school Management arrange for an evacuation to the main assembly point;
- If the smell is persisting school Management will make arrangements for the gas to be turned off at the meter;
- School Management will contact Gas Networks on 1850 20 50 50 and will follow any instructions issued.

Should evacuation be necessary then all staff must follow the appropriate evacuation procedures without delay.

15. Appendices

Appendix A



Appendix B

Fire Safety Evacuation Plan

The Emergency Evacuation Procedure is notified by a siren which will remain sounding during the procedure.

Role and Responsibilities

All teachers are responsible for the safety and wellbeing of the students in their care. The Principal has overall responsibility for ensuring proper procedures are in place.

ON HEARING THE EMERGENCY EVACUATION SIREN:

- Orders will be given by members of staff and it is extremely important that students remain silent so that they can clearly hear the instructions given
- Students should leave the room calmly and quietly in single file on the instruction of their teacher
- Students should leave all bags and property behind. The safe and smooth exit of people is the most important thing
- On hearing the alarm, students should drop everything, stand up, push in their chairs and quietly line up at the classroom door. The teacher will check the class room and then instruct the children to leave the classroom in single file in the direction of the exit indicated on the fire evacuation map inside their classroom door. The class teacher will take their roll book with them.
- The first student in the line will hold the door for their class and will join the end of their line as they exit. Students are to walk silently and are not to stop to take anything with them.
- The teacher is last to leave the room and shuts the door after them, hanging the room clear sign on the handle.
- Each class will proceed to their Fire Assembly point (indicated on the Fire Evacuation Plan inside their classroom door) on the indicated yard.

- Once at the Assembly Point, the class teacher will call the roll. Then the teacher will go to a member of the SLT and let them know that their class have got out to the yard safely. If anybody is missing this will be reported to a member of the SLT immediately.
- The Fire Marshals will scan the building in the event of a students being reported missing.
- Students who are in the corridor or out of their classroom on a message should proceed to the nearest exit and proceed to their own class line.
- Students who are out of class with the EAL, Learning support or Resource teacher should proceed with the teacher through the nearest exit and proceed to their own class assembly point.
- **If the fire alarm sounds between classes, all students go to the assembly point and line up with their previous class teacher.**
- All classes must stay in their lines at the Assembly Point until instructed to return to class by the Principal.
- **Under no circumstances should anyone re-enter the building without clear instruction to do so**
- Quiet, calm and order is to be observed during the emergency evacuation
- Since the safety of everyone is the most important issue, students must be on their absolute best behaviour during the whole procedure
- Any disruption of the emergency evacuation procedure will be viewed as a very serious infraction of school rules and will be dealt with as such
- Once the all clear is given, all staff will accompany the students back into the building in single file (line by line) **At all times:**
- DO NOT run
- DO NOT laugh, talk or make noise
- DO NOT attempt to pass others

- DO NOT return for anything you have forgotten

Procedure in the Event of Discovering a Fire/Suspected Fire

- Shout ‘’FIRE” as loud as you can to alert others
- Leave the area and close doors
- Press the nearest ‘’break glass unit” that you can safely reach

Procedure in the Event of Discovering a Fire/Suspected Fire

- Shout “FIRE” as loudly as you can to alert others.
- Leave the area and close the doors.
- Press the nearest ‘Glass Breaker’ unit that you can safely reach.
- Close doors behind you as you leave to limit the spread of heat and smoke
- **Do not use lifts**
- Follow the Fire and Emergency Evacuation Procedure as outlined above
- Go to your assembly point and inform the Principal of what has happened.



Use the correct fire extinguisher only if:

- The fire is small
- Your exit is clear
- You know how to use a fire extinguisher
- You have the correct fire extinguisher to use
- You are trained to do so

Appendix C

Safety Representative Checklist Form

Monthly Health and Safety Audit		
Location / Department: **Date Audit Completed:** **Completed By:**		
Fire Escape / walkways: Emergency exits / walkways clear / fire extinguishers (in situ, not damaged / obstructed) / fire signage other observations/ staff comments?	**Date action required**	**Date of resolution**
Equipment: Sockets, damaged leads, faulty equipment, other observations / staff comments? Equipment in good working order and adequately guarded?	**Date action required**	**Date of resolution**

Slips, Trips and Falls: Walkways free, floor surfaces even, passageways kept clear, cable management, spillages, other observations / staff comments?	**Date action required**	**Date of resolution**
Filing and Storage Rooms: Walkways free, shelves secure and tidy, heavy items stored between mid-thigh and shoulder height, step ladder required (if items stored at head height), other observations / staff comment?	**Date action required**	**Date of resolution**

Kitchen: Cleaning materials stored appropriately, kitchen tidy, other observations / staff comment?	**Date action required**	**Date of resolution**
Chemicals: Chemicals properly stored and identified?	**Date action required**	**Date of resolution**
Staff Comments / Requests: Do staff have any issues of concern or suggestions related to Health and Safety practice and procedures in the school?		

Improving Health and Safety As a result of this audit and discussions with staff what safety controls could be taken to eliminate risks and improve Health and Safety practice and procedures in the school or during any activities which you manage?

Appendix D

Annual Health & Safety Checklist

This form must be completed by each School on at least an annual basis, no later than the end of June of each year and submitted to the Board of Management.	
School	
Principal	
Date	
Check Item:	**Response – answer yes or no – where the answer is 'no' please provide an explanation.**
The Safety Statement has been reviewed and the areas, which have been identified for updates, are attached for approval?	
The Safety Statement has been communicated to all staff and records of same have been maintained?	
The Safety Statement requirements in respect of establishing a safety rep and a safety committee have been actively applied at this school?	

Meetings have taken place as required under the Safety Statement and records of such meetings are maintained?	
Risk assessments have been completed in accordance with the Safety Statement and are maintained?	
Fire equipment has been maintained and inspected?	
The number of fire drills carried out in the school during the academic term are (specify number)?	
Appropriate arrangements are in place in relation to the inspection and maintenance of equipment?	
Regular inspections are carried out within the school in order to check that the environment is clean, tidy and well maintained?	
Accidents and incidents are recorded and investigated?	

This school has carried out an annual management review of its own Safety and Health performance?	
Comments	

Appendix E

Chemical Register Template

Name of preparation or process	
Chemical contained	
Chemical Abstracts Service Number	
What volume is stored?	
Where is it stored	
What is it used for?	
Hazard information	

Supplier's Name and address	
Safety Data Sheet available	