

St. Mary's Health & Safety Policy

Version 1 /2023

Introductory Statement

This policy was developed in consultation with the staff and BOM of St. Mary's in 2023 in response to "*Guidelines on Managing Health, Safety & Welfare*". A Health and Safety Audit was completed by Staff representative for Health & Safety appointed by the Board of Management. This Health and Safety Audit informed the basis for this policy as well as all relevant Health and Safety legislation.

The Board of Management of St. Mary's NS brings to the attention of its staff the following arrangements for safeguarding the safety, health and welfare of those employed and working in the school. The Board of Management accepts responsibility to ensure that all safety measures are monitored and that the welfare and safety of its staff are safeguarded.

Rationale

It is a legal requirement under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 for every employer, in conjunction with staff, to prepare a Health and Safety policy. In addition, roles and responsibilities were revised with the publication of "*Guidelines on Managing Health, Safety & Welfare in Primary Schools*".

The policy represents the Board of Management's commitment to safety and health, and specifies the manner, the organisation and the resources necessary for maintaining and reviewing safety and health standards.

The Board of Management is required to document the school's health and safety policy and make it available to all staff, outside services providers and Inspectors of the Health and Safety Authority. The Board of Management must also consider its 'duty of care' in the school and this must be an integral part of any Health and Safety policy.

Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

The creation of a safe and healthy working environment for all members of the school community is a priority for the Board of Management of St. Mary's.

Aims

In the implementation of this Safety Statement, the Board of Management hopes to achieve the following aims

- to create a safe and healthy school environment by identifying, preventing, and tackling hazards and their accompanying risks
- to ensure understanding of the school's duty of care towards pupils

- to protect the school community from workplace accidents and ill health at work
- to outline procedures and practices in place to ensure safe systems of work
- to comply with all relevant health and safety legislation (so far as is reasonably practicable) to include the following areas
- **Provision of a safe workplace for all staff – teachers, SNAs, secretary, caretaker, cleaners etc.**
- **To ensure competent staff, who will carry out safe work practices**
- **Safe access and egress routes**
- **Safe handling and use of hazardous substances and equipment**
- **Safe equipment including maintenance and use of appropriate guards**
- **Provision of appropriate personal protective equipment.**

Responsibilities of employer - Board of Management

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

Responsibilities of employees

Health and safety is everyone's business. As a staff member you have legal duties designed to protect you and those you work with.

These responsibilities include (but are not limited to):

- Not to be under the influence of an intoxicant to the extent that they endanger your own or other persons' safety. To submit to tests for intoxicants if regulations specifying testing procedures are enacted;
- To co-operate with an employer or other relevant people to ensure that the Health and Safety law is implemented;
- Not to engage in improper conduct that will endanger you or anyone else;
- To attend Health and Safety training and correctly use any equipment at work;
- To use protective clothes and equipment provided;
- To report any dangerous practices or situations that you are aware of to an appropriate person;
- Not to interfere or misuse any safety equipment at your workplace;
- If you are suffering from a disease or illness that adds to risks (including known pregnancy), to tell your employer.

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

The safety representative has the right to:

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

Risk Assessment

A Health and Safety Audit/ risk assessment will be carried out annually by the Board of Management identifying hazards, assessing the risks, and specifying the actions required to eliminate or minimize them. Hazards may include physical, health, biological, chemical, and human hazards. Risk assessment templates from “*Guidelines on Managing Health, Safety & Welfare in Primary Schools*” will be used for this purpose. (Appendix A). The results of which will be examined and summarised by the Safety Representative & presented to the BOM who will be responsible for action taken to minimise risks. (See Risk Assessment Summary Sheet Appendix 2)

As part of the general approach to safety, other policies & practices which have a bearing on safety, health and welfare will need to be put in place and communicated to staff, pupils, parents and others using the premises

Health and safety issues are considered when any policy/plan is being drawn up, common examples are PE, Visual Arts, School Excursions, etc. The duty of care must also be considered in all areas and aspects of school life.

Procedures to deal with emergencies

- Emergency contact procedures – Also on Critical Incident Policy;
- Emergency contact details are updated annually & are uploaded onto Aladdin
- In case of emergency parents / guardians are contacted immediately;
- Fire-drill and school evacuation procedures: fire-drills held on a regular basis, normally one per term organised by Ms. Polgar (Deputy Principal);
- Teachers and pupils are aware of the designated assembly points following evacuation of the building. Assembly point is clearly marked;
- Procedures for evacuation are available in each teacher’s classroom, in staffroom, Principal’s office & secretary’s office;
- These procedures are revised annually before the first school term begins;
- New staff are provided with a copy of these procedures;

- A report must be made to the HSA in respect of the following types of incidents;
 - An accident-causing loss of life to any employed or self-employed person if sustained in the course of their employment;
 - An accident sustained in the course of their employment which prevents any employed or self-employed person from performing the normal duties of their employment for more than 3 calendar days not including the date of the accident;
 - An accident to any person not at work caused by a work activity which causes loss of life or requires medical treatment;
 - A Critical incident policy is in place in the school (see policy).

Health issues

- Registration Form - There is a section allowing parents/guardians to identify any allergies / illnesses of the applicant;
- Managing specific health issues;
- Permitted Staff made aware of the health issues in relation to certain pupils initially highlighted on the child's record on Aladdin.
- Where there is a serious / life threatening allergy or condition relevant members of staff are made aware of the condition & relevant training / support is provided;
- Accidents and the treatment of Injuries to Pupils Policy available in secretary's office and on school website.
- Sickness or Injury - Children who are sick or injured in class are treated by class teacher/trained first aider initially & parents are phoned where necessary;
- Children who are sick or injured on yard are treated in the yard by the teacher in charge and/or first aider present and where necessary parents are phoned by the secretary, principal, deputy principal, assistant principal 1;
- Illnesses and contagious infections such as rubella, chicken pox are treated according to '*Infectious diseases in the Primary School*' Health Service executive (H.S.E.) advice
- Head-lice - A letter / notice that is sent home to all parents in a class where head lice are apparent. In the event that the problem persists untreated a follow up phone call or meeting with parents might be arranged;
- School hygiene - Hand wash facilities with soap, towels etc for every child;
- Procedures are in place to ensure general cleanliness of the school environment; Checklists are available in areas for cleaners to sign off on cleaning routines;
- First Aid - At least one member of staff from each yard duty team has been trained in First Aid - refresher courses and information sessions will be arranged annually. First Aid kits are maintained by Deputy Principal Ms. Polgar and are available in several locations around the school;
- Healthy eating: The school promotes healthy eating at all times (Food Dudes Programme)

Safety and welfare issues

Pupils

- Assembly and Dismissal of Pupils;
- Teachers bring students to the relevant exit at home time;
- The Staff provides supervision in the mornings due to the number of children beginning school at the same time;
- Pupils leaving the school premises during the school day e.g. dentist or doctor appointment;
- Parents / guardians may not collect the pupil from the school/yard without first visiting the secretary's office to complete an early departure notice;

Supervision of Pupils:

- Where a teacher is absent, and the absence is not substitutable the class may be divided among other classes in the school;
- Supervision roster for playground duty is clearly displayed in the staff room and all supervision arrangements are contained in the supervision policy;
- Incident Records - In the event of a serious incident or accident the teacher supervising at that time must fill in an incident report form which will be kept on the child's file and /or forwarded to the Board of Management for notification to the Insurance company if necessary;
- The school has a Code of Behaviour and Anti Bullying Policy in place for dealing with behaviour which causes a risk to others;
- The school's Child Safeguarding Policy, in line with Child Safeguarding Guidelines, must be followed in the case of an allegation or suspicion of child abuse;

Staff

- Garda clearance - All staff members are recruited in line with Circular 63 2010 & as such have Garda vetting & statutory declaration in place before being employed in the school;
- Cases of alleged adult bullying/ harassment are dealt with according to procedures detailed in CPSMA handbook and INTO;
- Assaults on Teachers/School Employees are dealt with in accordance with our Code of Behaviour. Persistent offenders are referred with parental consent to NEPS psychologist for assessment; Support and advice of outside agencies e.g. NCSE may be sought;
- Caretaker provided with appropriate safety gear and protective equipment where necessary;
- Procedures followed by cleaners;
- Safety signs clearly visible – wet floors.

Equipment and materials

- Lawnmowers, ladders solvents, chemicals, cleaning agents etc. and any other equipment associated with school maintenance are stored in a safe area, not accessible to children. The storage area is locked during the school day.

Success Criteria

The ongoing provision of a safe & healthy environment for children & staff along with the absence of serious accidents or incidents is indicative of the success of the Health & Safety policy.

Roles and Responsibility

The following have particular responsibilities for aspects of the policy and how they fulfil their role

- Board of Management
- Principal: Bernie McVeigh
- Deputy Principal: Lorraine Polgar
- Safety Officer: TBA
- Safety Representative: TBA
- Each member of staff

Implementation Date

These procedures will apply from the 26th day of October 2023.

Timetable for Review

The Health and Safety Statement shall be reviewed yearly following a risk assessment as described in the policy.

Ratification & Communication

Board of Management officially ratified the policy on the 25th day of October 2023.

The Health and Safety Statement will be communicated to the school community through the Parent Association and through the school website

Signed: _____

Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: _____

Principal

Date:

