

Health & Safety Policy

Introductory Statement

This policy statement was adapted to the current format in accordance with the guidelines of the Primary Professional Development Service. Our previous Safety Statement was reviewed and updated to take into account the most recent legislation in regard to Health and Safety. It was disseminated to the wider school community through the school website and ratified by the Board of Management on the 26th of September, 2013.

Rationale

It is a legal requirement under the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act, 2005 for every employer, in conjunction with employees, to prepare a Health and Safety Statement. It represents the Board of Management (BOM)'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 BOM wishes to document their health and safety programme and make it available to all employees, outside services providers and Inspectors of the Health and Safety Authority.

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

According to our Mission Statement St. John the Evangelist NS strives to promote the full and harmonious development of all children, including intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual development. In our school we are committed to the holistic development of all students, preparing them to reach their full potential and to play a full and active role in their community. In keeping with this philosophy our Health and Safety policy emphasises the importance of the health and safety of our students and that of all school employees. The Board of Management, St. John the Evangelist NS recognises the importance of the Legislation enacted in the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005. This Safety Statement sets out the Safety Policy of the Board of Management, St. John the Evangelist NS and sets out the means to achieve that policy. The Board of Management's objective is to endeavour to provide a safe and healthy work environment for all our employees and students and to meet our duties to members of the public with whom we come into contact. This policy requires the co-operation of all employees.

It is our intention to undertake regular reviews of the statement in light of experience, changes in legal requirements and operational changes. The Board of Management will undertake to carry out a safety audit annually and report to staff. This inspection / safety audit will be carried out more frequently if requested by either staff or the Board of Management. All records of accidents or ill-health will be monitored in order to ensure that any safety measures required can be put in place, wherever possible, to minimise the recurrence of such accidents and ill-health.

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 students
- 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 employees – teachers, SNAs, secretary, caretaker, etc.*
 - *To ensure competent employees, 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.*

Guidelines (*content of policy*)

POLICY STATEMENT ON SAFETY, HEALTH AND WELFARE AT WORK OF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT OF ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST NS

The Board of Management will ensure that, in so far as is practicable, the highest standards of safety shall prevail and that, at a minimum, the provisions of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 are applied.

Specifically, the Board of Management wishes to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable:

- The design, provision and maintenance of all places in a condition that is safe and without risk to health.
- The design, provision and maintenance of safe means of access to and egress from places of work.

- The provision of systems of work that are planned, organised, performed and maintained so as to be safe and without risk to health.
- The provision of instruction to staff on proper lifting techniques of students and dealing with students with challenging behaviour when such children are enrolled.
- The provision of such information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure the safety and health at work of its employees.
- The provision and maintenance of suitable protective clothing or equivalent as necessary to ensure the safety and health at works of its employees.
- The preparation and revision as necessary of adequate plans to be followed in emergencies. e.g. fire evacuation, injuries etc.
- The safety and prevention of risk to health at work in connection with use of any article or substance.
- The provision and maintenance of facilities and arrangements for the welfare of employees at work.
- Obtaining where necessary, the services of competent persons for the purpose of advising on the safety and health at work of the employees e.g. Advisors from the HSE, Fire Officers, ICT Advisors re equipment, ergonomics etc.
- An annual review of this *Health & Safety Statement* and a log of issues raised and remediated.
- The provision of arrangements for consultation with employees on matters of Health and Safety
- The provision of arrangements for the selection from amongst its employees of a Health and Safety Representative.

1.4 The Board of Management recognises that its statutory obligations under legislation extend to employees, students, and any person legitimately conducting school business and the public.

1.5 The Board of Management of St. John the Evangelist NS will ensure that the provisions of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 are adhered to.

1.6 The Board of Management will form the Safety Committee to monitor the implementation of the Safety and Health policies of St. John the Evangelist NS and the requirement under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005.

1.7 The Board of Management will appoint a Safety Representative from the School Staff, normally the School Caretaker and a Safety Officer from the BOM.

CONSULTATION & INFORMATION

It is the policy of the Board of Management of St. John the Evangelist NS:

- To consult with staff in the preparation and completion of the Health and Safety Statement.
- To make available the *Health & Safety Statement* to all present and future staff.
- That any additional information or instructions regarding safety, health and welfare at work not contained in the document will be conveyed to all staff as it becomes available.
- That Health, Safety and Welfare will form an integral part of any future staff training and development plans.

HAZARDS

All staff will complete Hazard Control Forms (Appendix 3) as hazards are identified. Some hazards can be rectified but others remain constant. The hazards have been divided into two categories.

Hazards that can be rectified or minimised will be dealt with as a matter of urgency. Hazard Control Forms will be posted on the Staffroom Noticeboard. When a Staff Member notices a hazard, he/she will use the form to notify the Safety Representative (Caretaker), who will rectify the issue and sign with date and time of when the issue was resolved. Those hazards that cannot be rectified will be clearly indicated and appropriate procedures listed beside them.

The Board of Management in consultation with the employees will review and make recommendations on the elimination of hazards.

SPECIFIC HAZARDS

1. Fire

It is the policy of the Board of Management of St. John the Evangelist NS that:

- There is an adequate supply of fire extinguishers, which will deal with any type of fire.
- All fire equipment is identified and regularly serviced.
- Regular fire drills take place at least twice a year. (See Fire Drill Procedures)
- Instruction is given in the use of fire extinguishers for specific materials/equipment.
- Signs will be clearly visible to ensure visitors are aware of exit doors.
- All electrical equipment be unplugged or turned off outside school hours and when classrooms are vacated for lengthy periods.

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- An assembly area is designated (School Yard)
- Those leaving buildings/classrooms should let someone know as per fire drill procedures.
- Exit signs are clearly marked.
- The teacher in each classroom will be responsible for the implementation of fire evacuation and fire drills procedures.
- A fire officer has checked the school and equipment and all recommendations made by him/her have been implemented.
- The position of Deputy Principal has as one of its duties to act as overseer of the fire drill procedures aspect of the policy and may do so in conjunction with the Safety Officer and Safety Representative from time to time.

2. Other hazards

- Objects within the school yard that may pose significant risk of harm.
- Use of school grounds (yard) during weather which would pose a danger to the safety of students e.g. frost snow, and ice.
- Behaviours of a dangerous or threatening manner from a visitor, a student or staff member that poses a risk to the person themselves or to other students/staff members/visitors.
- Inclement weather - the Board of Management reserves the right to keep the school closed if it is felt that a risk is posed to staff and students by travelling to or attending school.

CONSTANT HAZARDS

1. Electrical Appliances

It is the policy of the Board of Management of St. John the Evangelist NS that only competent persons use Electrical Appliances. Such appliances and equipment will be subject to regular maintenance checks.

2. Chemicals

It is the policy of the Board of Management of that all chemicals, detergents etc., be stored in clearly identifiable containers bearing instructions and precautions for their use and kept in a locked area, and protection provided for use when handling them.

3. Drugs/Medications

It is the policy of the Board of Management of St. John the Evangelist NS that no drugs or medication be administered to students by members of school staff due to the fact that staff are not qualified to do so and therefore could pose a threat to the welfare of the students. In exceptional circumstances where emergency medication is required to safeguard a seriously ill child's welfare, a teacher or SNA may be requested to administer such medication. (e.g. Epipen) The procedure in such cases is included in individual student healthcare plans.

4. Wet Floors

It is the policy of the Board of Management of St. John the Evangelist NS that the washing of floors is conducted after school hours to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, elimination of danger of slipping. During heavy weather condensation can cause tiled areas to become slippery.

5. Behaviour

The Code of Behaviour in the school provides for a level of appropriate behaviour to minimise personal risk or stress to any employee.

6. Accidents and Injuries

However vigilant the school staff is in relation to pupil safety, accidents will happen and correct procedures in the event of accidents can prevent or minimise injuries. Our accident/illness procedure is included in the Appendices.

7. Bullying

The St. John the Evangelist NS Anti-Bullying Policy is a stand-alone policy, which provides a framework for dealing with instances of bullying among students. The procedures for dealing with Adult Bullying are in accordance with the INTO publication '**Working Together: Procedures and Policies for Positive Staff Relations (2000)**' and our '**Dignity at Work Statement**' included in the Appendices.

8. Access to Employees is by Consent

When an employee feels at risk from or threatened by a particular person on school property, this must be drawn to the Board of Management's attention. The Board of Management will undertake to ensure that in such circumstances all appropriate measures will be taken to protect employees.

9. Trained First Aid Personnel

It is the policy of the Board of Management that: -

Employees will be trained to apply First Aid to students and other employees.

All required remedies and equipment are made available for first aid function.

There will be an adequate supply of properly equipped First Aid Boxes available at all times to staff which will contain:

Elastoplast plasters

Wasp Eze

Tape

Disinfectant (e.g) Savlon

Eye lotion(e.g) Optrex

Antiseptic cream

Cotton Bandage

Cream for First Aid treatment of Burns

Antiseptic Wipes

Scissors

First Aid Chart

OTHER PROCEDURES

1. Educational Visits/Extra-curricular activities

Educational visits will be booked with a reputable, properly insured coach service with fully seat-belted coaches. Every effort will be made to ensure the safety of the students at events or activities they are participating in i.e. the theatre, swimming pool, playground, etc. will be properly equipped and manned by qualified staff.

2. Visitors to the School

Persons coming onto the school premises must identify themselves clearly to school personnel before gaining admittance to the school premises. Any contractor should make direct contact with the Principal, or Vice Principal before initiating any work on the school premises. All outside facilitators, teachers, coaches etc. who are delivering workshops to students will do so under the supervision and direction of the class teacher. Any outside professionals working with children without such supervision must have appropriate qualifications and Garda vetting.

3. Wet Days

On wet days, children will be supervised indoors. The students stay in their classroom.

4. Emergency Closures

On occasions where school is in progress and it becomes necessary to close the school for safety reasons, the parents are contacted. Every effort is made to ensure that all parents are made aware of the situation through email and text message.

5. Use of Staff vehicles

In the exceptional circumstances where a staff vehicle is required to transport a student/students, a second staff member will accompany the staff member and student/students in the vehicle.

Success Criteria

Our success criteria will be based on the achievement of our aims to provide a safe environment for our employees, students and visitors. We will use staff observation and parental feedback in addition to Health Inspector's Reports and our safety record as our benchmark for success or otherwise of the policy.

Roles and Responsibility

DUTIES OF ALL EMPLOYEES

1. It is the duty of every employee while at work:
 - (a) To take reasonable care for his/her own safety, health and welfare and that of any person who may be affected by his/her acts or omissions while at work.
 - (b) To co-operate with his/her employer and any other person to such an extent as will enable his/her employer and the other person to comply with any of the relevant statutory obligations.
 - (c) To use in such manner so as to provide the protection intended, any suitable appliance, protective clothing, convenience, equipment or anything provided (whether for his/her use alone or for use by him/her in common with others) for securing his/her safety, health and welfare while at work.
 - (d) To report to the Board of Management without unreasonable delay, any defects in plant, equipment, place of work or system of work, which might endanger safety, health or welfare, of which he/she might become aware.
2. No person will intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse any appliance, protective clothing, convenience, equipment or anything provided in pursuance of any of the relevant statutory provisions or otherwise, for securing safety, health and welfare arising out of work activities.

3. Employees will, by using available facilities and equipment provided, ensure that work practices are performed in the safest manner possible.

DUTIES OF SAFETY REPRESENTATIVE

- Conduct an assessment to identify all hazards on the appropriate form (Appendix 3). A Sample Checklist is included as Appendix 4.
- Assess the risks associated with these hazards.
- Detail arrangements made, resources supplied, and responsibility required to deal with the hazards and to keep them under review.

DUTIES OF SAFETY OFFICER

- To liaise with the Safety Rep on matters of Health and Safety.
- To make recommendations for the alleviation of potential hazards.
- To monitor progress in relation to dealing with hazards.
- Report on all of the above at appropriate BOM meetings.

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Implementation

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 25/10/23.

Communication, Monitoring and Review

This policy will be communicated to staff of St. John the Evangelist NS and the school community as appropriate and will be subjected to annual review.

Signed: Loe O'Driscoll Signed: James Cullen
(Chairperson of Board of Management) (Principal)

Date: 6/2/25

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Date of next review: JAN 2027