



## Health and Safety Statement

### Introduction

The school safety policy has been reviewed by the Board of Management (in 2024) in accordance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and with the Health and Safety Authority (HSA)- Safety and Health in Education Guidelines.

It is the policy of the Board of Management to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of all staff and to protect students, visitors, contractors and other persons at the school from injury and ill health arising from any work activity. The successful implementation of the policy requires the full support and active cooperation of all staff, students, contractors and visitors to the school

The Board recognizes that hazard identification; risk assessment and control measures are legislative requirements, which must be carried out by the employer to ensure the safety, health and welfare of all staff. The Board of Management, as employer undertakes in so far as is reasonably practical to:

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

To these ends the Board is committed to ensuring the following;

- The design, provision and maintenance of all places in the school shall be safe and



without risk to health

- There shall be safe access to and from places of work.
- Plant and Machinery may be opened safely in so far as is possible.
- Work systems shall be planned, organised, performed and maintained so as to be safe and without risk to health.
- Staff shall be instructed and supervised in so far as is reasonably possible so as to ensure the health and safety at work of its employees.
- Protective clothing or equivalent shall be provided as is necessary to ensure the safety and health at work of its employees.
- Plans for emergencies shall be complied with and revised as necessary.
- The Board of Management will continually revise this statement as necessity arises, and shall be re-examined by the Board on an annual basis.
- Employees shall be consulted on matters of health and safety.

### **Relationship to Ethos**

This policy has been drawn up in consultation with staff, parents' representatives and the Board of Management and with reference to the school's mission statement. St. Joseph's N.S. is a Catholic Primary school in which we strive to learn together in a happy and safe environment "pupils, parents, teachers and staff working together. " This document sets out the safety policy of the school and specifies the means to achieve that policy. The successful implementation of the policy requires the full support and active cooperation of all staff, students, contractors and visitors to the school. It is important to read the document carefully and understand your own role in the overall arrangements for health and safety in the school. Staff, parents and others are encouraged to put forward suggestions for improvements to the statement. This document should be considered in conjunction with other policies of the Board of Management, including;

- Critical Incident Policy
- Anti bullying policy,
- AUP policy,
- Administration of First aid /Medicines policy
- Substance abuse policy.
- Dignity at work policy
- Child Protection

### **Policy Rationale**



The Board of Management recognises and accepts not only its statutory responsibilities but also its obligations as an employer to direct, manage and achieve, in so far as it reasonably possible, the safety, health, and welfare at work of every employee, pupil and visitor alike.

The Board of Management believes that each employee accepts his or her legal and moral responsibilities for improving and maintaining safety, health and welfare in the workplace and for behaviour which does not jeopardise the individual's personal safety, health and welfare at work of that of others.

### **School Profile**

St. Joseph's N.S. operates according to the rules of the Department of Education and Skills under the patronage of the Bishop of Meath. At present there are 296 pupils. The staff consists of 1 principal, 18 teachers, 10 special needs assistants, a secretary, 2 bus escorts and a caretaker. The school building was completed in 2016. From time to time other adults such as students, parents and coaches may work also work in the school. It is a two-storey school with a single storey connected. There is a school yard, playground and football pitch/ running track. There are three wheelchair accessible toilets in the main school, 2 wheelchair accessible toilets in Tír na nÓg and the entrance to the school is also wheelchair accessible.

The statement applies to the use of the school buildings, schoolyard and school car park.

### **Resources for Health, Safety and Welfare**

The following resources are in place within the school;

- Fire extinguishers and a fire alarm system is in place in the school and are maintained annually in line with fire safety guidelines.
- A stocked first aid kit is kept in the secretary's office and classrooms.
- Class teachers store emergency medications needed by some pupils.
- Policies regarding behaviour in the school and the schoolyard, bullying and administrations of medicines are in place in the school.
- New employees are given induction on the health and safety practices in the school.
- SNA's are trained as occupational first aiders
- Procedures are in place for the monitoring of visitors /workers to the school.
- Access to the school is carefully monitored and procedures are in place for the safe collection of children.



- The health and safety officer on the Board together with the principal/health and safety representative undertake safety audits and arrange for repairs as necessary.
- Fire drills are carried out regularly and pupils are instructed in the safe evacuation procedures.

### **Roles & Responsibilities**

Overall responsibility for safety and health matters rests with the Board of Management. The Board will comply with its legal obligations as employer under the 2005 Act and will

- Ensure that the school has written risk assessments and an up to date safety statement.
- Guide and advise on all health, safety and welfare at work matters.
- Ensure that safety procedure is adequately communicated to staff
- Review the implementation of the safety management system and the safety statement at least annually or when changes that might affect workers' safety, health and welfare occur.
- Set safety, health and welfare objectives.
- Receive regular reports on safety, health and welfare matters and matters.
- Allocate adequate resources to deal with safety, health and welfare issues.
- Appoint competent persons as necessary, to advise and assist the board of management on safety, health and welfare at the school.
- Arrange for the appointment of a safety rep within the school.

### **Principal**

In consultation with the safety officer, the principal has responsibility for co-ordination of all safety and health matters including;

- Complying with the requirements of the 2005 Act;
- Managing safety, health and welfare in the school on a day-to-day basis Board of Management (employer), Principal, Staff teachers, Special Needs Assistants, Secretary, Caretaker, Visitors, Students, psychologist, therapists, parents, coaches, and other visitors, Safety officer and relevant post holder
- Communicating regularly with all members of the school community on safety health and welfare matters. Bring any changes to the attention of staff.
- Ensuring all accidents and incidents are investigated and all relevant statutory reports completed
- Coordinating fire drills, training, etc. with the relevant post holder



- Ensuring that firefighting equipment is tested annually.
- Carrying out safety audits with the safety officer and safety rep.
- Ensuring that all contracts provide a safety plan to the school before commencing work.

### **Relevant Post Holder/Safety Rep**

The responsibilities of the safety representative/post holder include;

- Organising fire drills on a regular basis and updating evacuation plan as necessary.
- Bringing to the attention of the safety officer any items of health and safety that need attention
- Ensuring an adequate supply of first aid kits for use on school trips.
- As far as reasonably practicable, taking account of any representations made on the subject of safety by the employees.
- Supplying a copy of the Safety Statement, together with additional information or instructions as they become available, to all present and future staff.
- Affording all possible co-operation to inspectors and officials of the relevant bodies concerned with safety and health standards.

### **Employees**

Employees have a specific responsibility (section 13 of the safety and Welfare at Work Act, 2005) for their own safety and that of any person who may be affected by his/her acts or omissions while at work. All staff are required to;

- co-operate with school management in the implementation of the safety statement;
- inform students of the safety procedures associated with individual subjects, rooms, yard, hall or tasks
- ensure that all activities are planned so that they may be carried out safely.
- check classroom/immediate work environment to ensure it is safe and free from fault or defect
- Ensure that all electrical appliances are turned off at the mains before going home.
- Co-operate with the employer and any other person to such extent as will enable the employer or the other person to comply with any of the relevant statutory provisions
- Use in such a manner as to provide the protection intended, any appliance, protective clothing, convenience equipment or other means or thing provided



(whether for own use alone or for shared use) for securing fire safety, health or welfare while at work.

- Report without delay, any health and safety issues or concerns to the school Health and Safety representative or Health and Safety officer on the Board of Management
- Never intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse any appliance, protective clothing, convenience, equipment or other means or thing provided in pursuance of any of the relevant statutory provisions or otherwise, for securing the safety, health or welfare of persons arising out of work activities.
- Attend such training as may be required by the Board of Management.
- Inform the principal if he/she is suffering from a health condition that adds to his/her own risk or that of others in the workplace.

### **Other school users**

Other school users such as students, parents, volunteers, visiting speakers, sales people and all other visitors must comply with school regulations and instructions relating to safety, health and welfare.

### **Large scale works contractors:**

Contractors must 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 and any other relevant legislation such as the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2006.

- The Board of Management will make available the relevant parts of the safety, health and welfare statement and safety file to any contractors working in the school on behalf of the school.
- The Board of Management will provide to contractors the school regulations and instructions relating to safety, health and welfare.
- Contractors must make available relevant parts of both their safety, health and welfare statement and risk assessments in relation to work being carried out
- Contractors must make available their public liability insurance certificates before commencement of work.
- If the school is sharing a workplace with a contractor it will co-operate and coordinate school activities in order to prevent risks to safety, health and welfare at work. Short duration, low risk, single contractor works involving routine maintenance, cleaning, decorating or repair Where this work involves a single



contractor and where there are no particular risks present and task duration will not exceed 30 working days or 500 person days, to comply with safety, health and welfare requirements and to ensure this type of work is carried out safely with minimal disruptions, the following key points should be followed:

- The board of management must ensure that the contractor is competent. This means that the contractor is suitably qualified and experienced and is registered. For instance, an electrician should be registered with the Register of Electrical Contractors of Ireland (RECI) or the Electrical Contractors Safety and Standards Association (ECSSA).
- The contractor and the principal will meet before the project commences to ensure communication links are established before work starts and throughout the contract. The contractor must advise the principal about the likely duration of the work, any possible hazards, and how these will be addressed. The contractor must also provide the principal with a copy of its safety statement including any relevant risk assessments for the project to be undertaken. Likewise, the principal will advise the contractor about necessary precautions which need to be considered, particularly if work is being carried out during school time.

### **Risk Assessment**

The Board of Management is committed to identifying and eliminating any hazards in the school through a risk assessment and annual audit. The Board will make use of advice available from such sources as the Department of Education, relevant national authorities such as the National Authority for Safety Health and Welfare at Work and Fire Prevention Section. Where necessary, competent consultants and bodies with special skills and services may be used for training and to augment the internal audits. The Board through its risk assessment will;

- Identify the risks
- Evaluate the risk in proportion to the hazard
- Put in place the appropriate control measure to eliminate or minimise the risk
- Consult with employees A detailed risk assessment of the various areas within the school is included in the appendices. The board of management may delegate the task of completing the risk assessment to the appropriate person for example the individual teacher of each classroom. There is no need to consider every minor hazard or risk that we accept as part of our lives.

### **Fire safety/emergency procedures.**



A Fire and Emergency Plan has been prepared covering the building. A copy of the plan is attached to this safety statement. The plan sets out the main emergency safety arrangements including:

- The layout of escape routes for each floor of the building
- The location of the assembly points
- The location of the firefighting equipment
- Special fire safety features of the building
- The routine for the practice of fire drills
- The routine for fire equipment inspections
- In all classrooms and at strategic locations, schematic maps are posted showing the advised evacuation routes.
- An adequate supply of fire extinguishers is provided and correctly sited to meet statutory and insurance requirements. Fire extinguishers are capable of dealing with any type of fire.
- All firefighting equipment is inspected regularly and is serviced by specialised contractors
- Instruction is given in the use of Fire Extinguishers for specific materials/sources of fire “Break Glass” units are provided at strategic locations to raise the alarm.
- Fire extinguishers are available in the staff room.
- All fire exits are clearly marked and are visible to visitors.
- Fire drill will be held during each term i.e. at least three times a year. An evacuation procedure has been prepared and is given to each employee. Employees are reminded to familiarise themselves with the procedures so that a fast and effective evacuation of the premises can be completed in the event of an emergency.
- All electrical equipment to be unplugged or turned off outside hours of the approved use of the school. Teachers are responsible for their own classrooms.
- Assembly areas are designated outside the buildings
- In the event of evacuation, each teacher will account for the pupils/personnel at the assembly area
- Smoking anywhere in the school building or school grounds is prohibited.

### **First Aid**

A separate Medications policy is in place in the school. Basic first aid training is made available to all staff. There is a comprehensive First Aid Box available in the secretary’s office to deal with minor injuries. Each classroom has their own First Aid Kit. The following is a list of essential supplies: plasters, cotton





bandage, tape, disinfectant, antiseptic wipes, scissors and tweezers. Disposable gloves must be worn at all times when administering First Aid. Staff member will as necessary replenish the First Aid kit.

### **Infectious Diseases**

It is school policy to notify all infectious diseases to parents and staff. Risk will be minimised with adherence to sound principles of cleanliness, hygiene and disinfectant. Disposable gloves are provided for use in all first aid applications, cleaning jobs etc. Staff has been provided with separate toilets with hot water and cold water, a disposal unit and soap.

### **Accident Reporting and Investigation**

All accidents/near misses to persons (staff/contractor/visitors), however slight, must be recorded on the appropriate accident form. The Principal will be informed of all accidents and where possible all other accident reporting will be completed before the end of the day on which the accident occurred. All notification of accidents or dangerous occurrences to the enforcement authority (Health and Safety Authority) will be completed by the principal on Form IR1 or IR3 ([www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie)).

Note: An IR1 must be completed if a person is away from their place of work for 3 consecutive days or more after the day of the accident.

Accidents on the yard/in the hall/ in classrooms

The teacher who is supervising should complete the accident form, detail any actions taken and where necessary determine the underlying causes of the accident and identify the appropriate corrective action to avoid a recurrence. Where necessary the appropriate form will be forwarded to the insurance broker for the school.

If I am investigating an accident, what should I record?

A. It is important and good practice to record all accidents that occur in school or during any school-related activity. The school must ensure that the information gleaned in the accident report is reviewed and control measures put in place to ensure a similar accident is avoided in the future. In addition, the school's accident reporting system must recognise the requirement to report certain accidents to their insurer and to the Health and Safety Authority. If there are civil proceedings, it is important to have recorded all the factual information in order to assist with the validity or otherwise of the case. The following list can be used as a guide to ensure that the required information is being collected. The Board of Management should



appoint a person, usually the principal or safety officer where one has been appointed, to conduct an investigation into all incidents and accidents. Where a safety representative has been selected he/she may also conduct an investigation. Information in relation to accidents and near-misses should be recorded on an accident report form or in an accident report book. This information can also be recorded on our Google Form template. This information should be reviewed and used to update risk assessments where necessary. The information gathered should include:

- date of incident;
- time of incident;
- person injured or involved and relevant contact details recorded;
- witnesses and relevant contact details recorded;
- detail of the activity being undertaken at the time of the incident;
- exact location of the incident and photographic evidence or plans of area if appropriate;
- circumstances of the incident - detailed description and cause of the accident;
- injuries sustained;
- medical treatment administered, e.g. first-aid;
- emergency services involved or called to scene of accident;
- details of equipment and service records for same if equipment was involved in the accident;
- details of notifier of accident, time, date.

#### Safety Instruction and Training

In accordance with legislation the Board of Management commits to providing instruction, training and supervision to its employees in relation to health and safety at work. All employees will be: -

- Advised of the nature and location of fire equipment and instructed on how it is safely operated (this instruction to include a practical demonstration of fire extinguishers)
- Notified of any changes in safety procedures.
- Advised of the health and safety requirements as part of their induction training.

A record will be kept of all safety training.

#### **Electrical Appliances**

Electrical appliances, machinery and kitchen equipment should only be used by competent persons. Arrangements will be made for all electrical appliances to be



checked on an annual basis by a competent person, i.e. a maintenance person, the supplier or his agent. Before using any appliances, the user should check that: -

- All safety guards which are a normal part of the appliance are fitted and are in working order
- Power supply cables/leads are intact and free of cuts and abrasions
- Suitable undamaged fused plug-tops are used and fitted with the correct fuse.

Photocopiers/ Laminators/IWBs

Staff should be careful when using any of the above as injury may occur from moving parts and hot elements inside protective covers.

### **Chemicals, Solvents, Detergents**

Members of staff using these materials should familiarise themselves with any hazard associated with the materials and precautions to be taken in the event of spillage, splashes etc. All such materials will be stored in clearly identifiable containers bearing instructions and precautions for their use. They will be kept in a locked storage area and protection for their use will be provided. Contract cleaners are employed in the school and they provide their own supplies for cleaning. These are also kept in a locked area.

Staff is not allowed to attend the premises or carry out duties while under the influence of illicit drugs or alcohol. Any staff member found breaking this rule will be liable to disciplinary procedures up to and including dismissal.

### **Welfare of staff**

To ensure the continued welfare of employees, a staffroom is provided. Staff should co-operate in maintaining a high standard of hygiene in these areas. Staff members using the fridges are expected to remove any perishable uneaten food at the end of each week.

A dignity in work policy is in place in the school and the Board of Management is committed to providing a work environment free from harassment of any kind. The Board will ensure that any allegations of harassment are fully investigated and will dealt with in a fair and objective manner. The Board acknowledges research by the ESRI that noted that stress, anxiety and depression are the second highest causes of work related illness in Ireland and are associated with the longest absence from work. Through the means of staff and peer support, Medmark and staff will be supported through illness and or injury. In addition, the school community will seek to develop a culture where a sense of belonging and



connectedness is fostered.

### **Smoking**

It is the policy of the Board of Management of St. Joseph's N.S. that the school shall be a non-smoking area to avoid hazard to staff and pupils of passive smoking.

#### Communication of Policy

Hard copies of this policy will be on display in the staffroom and in the school offices. Copies of the policy will be given to all staff members and will also be available in electronic form. The Board of Management will undertake a review of health and safety issues annually and any changes will be communicated to staff. Information will also be disseminated using the public address system, Aladdin, the display boards in the staff room and the public address system. Parents and guardians will receive updates via the school website, newsletters, notifications, emails and text message.

### **Concluding Comment**

The Safety Statement has been based on conditions existing in the premises of the school at the time of writing. The Board of Management is committed to playing an active role in the implementation of this occupational safety, health and welfare policy and undertakes to review and revise it in light of changes in legislation, experience and other relevant developments.

### **Ratification and Review**

This Health and Safety Policy was adopted by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_ 2024.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson of Board of Management

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_