

Our Lady of Good Counsel GNS

Safety, Health and Welfare Policy

Introduction and Rationale

The Board of Management of Our Lady of Good Counsel G.N.S., Ferrybank together with its employees has formulated this statement in accordance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005, and in the context of the 'Guidelines on Managing Safety, Health and Welfare in Primary Schools'.

This Health and Safety Policy is aimed at protecting our employees and pupils from accidents and ill health while on the school premises. It is our programme in writing to manage health and safety. The Policy is available to our employees, outside service providers and Inspectors of the Health and Safety Authority (HSA).

In particular we undertake, so far as is reasonably practicable, to comply with all relevant health and safety legislation to include the following areas:

- *Provision of a safe workplace*
- *Safe access and egress routes*
- *Safe handling and use of laboratory chemicals*
- *Safe equipment including maintenance and use of appropriate guards*
- *Provision of appropriate personal protective equipment.*

Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School

In keeping with the characteristic spirit of the school, the Health and Safety Policy is in place to create a safe and healthy working environment for all members of the school community.

Aims

By drawing up this Health and Safety Policy 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:

The provision of a safe workplace for all employees – teachers, SNAs, secretary, caretaker, etc.

To ensure competent employees, who will carry out safe work practices

The provision of safe access and egress routes

To ensure the safe handling and use of hazardous substances and equipment and the use of appropriate guards

The provision of appropriate personal protective equipment, as necessary

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Responsibilities of the Employer - Board of Management

- To manage work activities to ensure the safety, health and welfare of employees
- To ensure that risks are assessed and hazards are eliminated or minimized as far as is reasonably practicable
- Prepare a safety statement and regularly update it, particularly when there have been significant changes or when the risk assessment is no longer valid
- Provide and maintain decent welfare facilities for employees
- 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 and Outside Contractors

Health and safety is everyone's business. Workers have legal duties designed to protect themselves and those with whom they work. Employees of the Board of Management and outside contractors carrying out work at the school have the following responsibilities:

Responsibilities include:

- Not to be under the influence of an intoxicant to the extent that they endanger your own or another person's safety.
- To submit to tests for intoxicants as and when regulations specifying testing procedures are adopted
- To co-operate with your employer or other people to ensure that 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 with or misuse any safety equipment at your workplace
- To tell your employer if you are suffering from a disease or illness that adds to risks

Role of Safety Representative (Section 25 Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act, 2005)

The safety representative may:

- 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
- Engage in 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.

Procedures to Deal with Emergencies

- Emergency contact numbers are displayed on the First Aid cabinet, in the Staff Room and in the offices of the Principal and the School Secretary. Contact details will be updated as part of the annual review of this policy.
- Contact details for parents/ guardians are maintained in the school office. It is the responsibility of parents/ guardians to inform the school of any changes to contact details.

Fire Safety

- The school is fitted with an automatic fire alarm system and fire extinguishers. The system is checked annually by the Fire Safety Company.
- Fire extinguishers are in their designated places and are visible and unobstructed. They are checked and certified annually by the supplier.
- In the event of a fire, staff members are aware of how to raise the alarm.
- Fire drills are held once per term.
- Break glass tests are conducted by the Caretaker once a term and a record of the tests is maintained in the Fire Safety Register.
- The procedure for Fire Drills is as follows:
As soon as the alarm sounds, teachers take the laminated page containing the names of their pupils and lead their pupils out to the playground to assemble in designated areas.
Pupils walk in single file and in an orderly manner.
Any pupils who are not with their class group when the alarm sounds, should go directly to their designated area and join their class group.
All other staff members go directly to their designated area.
Teachers call the Roll to check that all pupils are present.
No one re-enters the building until the 'all clear' has been given by the Safety Representative or by the Principal
A record of the fire drill is written by the Safety Representative. Records are stored in the School Secretary's office (See Appendix 1).
- A Pre-Fire Planning Information Card has been sent to the Waterford City Fire Service. (Copy attached as an Appendix).

Serious Accident Procedure

A report will be made to the HSA in respect of the following types of incident:

- A work accident causing the death of an employed person
- A work accident that prevents any employed person from working for more than three days
- An accident caused by work activity which causes the death of or requires medical treatment to, a person not at work, e.g. a passer-by or a pupil

A 'Form of Notice of Accident' IR1 will be used to make such a report (Attached as an Appendix). The report will be written by the Chairperson of the Board of Management and a copy will be retained in the Health and Safety File in the Principal's Office.

A report will also be made by the Chairperson /Principal to the school's insurers.

Critical Incidents

The Board of Management has drawn up a policy to outline procedures in the case of a critical incident. A copy of this policy is attached to the Health and Safety Policy in the School Plan.

Exceptional Closures

In the case of exceptional closures of the school, parents/guardians will be notified by text through the Text-a-Parent service, through the school's website and/or by announcement on local radio.

Health Issues

Parents/guardians of pupils are requested to inform the Principal on enrolment of any illness/allergy and to inform the Class teacher with each change of class. (See Code of Behaviour). Emergency Plan Notices for children with specific conditions or allergies are displayed on a red background in the Staffroom and copies are maintained in the relevant class Roll Books.

Administration of Medicines

Teachers or other members of staff should not administer medicines without the specific authorisation of the Board of Management.

Accident Procedure

The following arrangements have been put in place for the administration of First Aid:

- First Aid boxes are kept in the storage area adjoining the staff toilet and on the table inside the front door. These contain antiseptic wipes, adhesive plasters, bandages, first aid powder, surgical gloves, Wasp-eze, scissors. Supplies for re-stocking the boxes are kept in a locked cabinet. Boxes are checked regularly by the Safety Representative. Each class teacher has been provided with a small box containing gloves, wipes and plasters. It is the responsibility of the class teacher to refill these as required. Ice packs are kept in the freezer section of the fridge.
- All accidents are logged in the Accident Report book, by the staff member involved in looking after the injured pupil. At present there are two staff members who have undergone First Aid training. They are consulted by other staff members when necessary. Staff members have also received training in the use of Anapens, CPR, responding to choking, dealing with absences and seizures, the administration of Buccal Midazolam (Epilepsy), how to monitor blood sugar testing and the administration of insulin.
- Parents will be contacted by phone when it is deemed necessary
- In the case of a serious injury, the emergency services will be contacted immediately. Written consent to do so is sought on the school's Enrolment Form.

Infectious Illnesses/Head Lice

In the case of an outbreak of head lice, parents/guardians are requested to inform the class teacher or the Principal. A letter will be sent to the parents/guardians of all children in that particular class (See Appendix 2). The Principal and Staff regularly remind pupils to keep their hair tied back and to have their hair checked at home.

In the case of other infectious illnesses, the advice of the HSE will be sought.

Hygiene

Water, soap and electric hand dryers are provided in all cloakrooms.

Cleanliness of the School Environment

The school is maintained to the highest possible standard, decoratively and structurally. The Board of Management employs two cleaners and the classrooms, toilets, corridors and staff areas are cleaned daily. Cleaning agents and other solvents are stored in locked or restricted areas.

Healthy Eating

Healthy eating is promoted through the school curricular plan for SPHE and through the promotion of healthy lunches. Pupils are involved in growing vegetables and herbs on the school grounds.

Assembly and Dismissal of Pupils

The following arrangements have been put in place for the assembly and dismissal of pupils:

- The school day starts at 9.20 a.m. The school day ends at 2.00 p.m. for Junior and Senior Infants and at 3.00 p.m. for other classes. Parents/guardians are made aware that the Board of Management takes no responsibility for pupils outside these times. (See Code of Behaviour)
- Pupils are collected from the yard by their teachers at 9.20a.m. and dismissed from the building by their teachers at 2.00p.m. or 3.00p.m.
- When entering and leaving the school building, pupils are required to walk in an orderly manner
- If a parent/guardian wishes to collect a pupil during the school day, a note must be provided, or the person collecting the child must sign the early finish form when collecting the pupil. Pupils must be collected from the school. Adults collecting pupils early must wait in the front hall.

Within the School Building

Pupils must walk in an orderly manner.

Pupils must keep clear of all doorways, including toilet doorways.

Pupils must use the left-hand side of the stairs when ascending and descending.

Pupils may not enter the following restricted areas without specific permission from a member of staff:

Staff Room Offices Store Rooms

The School Playground

Teachers and other staff members supervise during breaks. A supervision roster is drawn up by the Deputy Principal and displayed in the Staff Room. Each teacher receives a copy.

Pupils are required to be in the playground during break and lunch times, except for toilet emergency or accidental injury. Leaving the play area for any reason during breaks without the permission of the supervising teacher is forbidden.

Pupils are instructed not to leave the playground boundaries.

Pupils must keep off grassy areas when instructed by Staff.

Pupils are not allowed to jump from the steps or to jump from the benches under the shelter.

Climbing on railings is not allowed.

Access to the shelter roof is strictly forbidden.

Basketballs are only allowed on the basketball court.

Pupil Behaviour and Bullying

The expected standards of behaviour for pupils are outlined in the school's Code of Behaviour and in the Anti-Bullying Policy. Copies of these policies are provided to parents/guardians prior to enrolment. For the safety of all, the Board of Management requires, as a condition of enrolment, that parents/guardians agree in writing to abide by these policies. Copies of these policies are also available on the school's website.

School Tours

School tours will be undertaken in line with the school's policy on School Tours and Outings.

Child Protection

In line with Child Protection Guidelines, the Board of Management has drawn up, discussed and ratified a Child Protection Policy. Copies of the policy have been made available to all staff members and it is available on the school's website.

Access to Employees

An intercom system is in place for access by visitors. For the safety of all staff and pupils, parents/guardians are required to remain in the front hall while waiting for a pupil, and to give any messages e.g. lunches, etc. to the School Secretary who will pass them on to the pupil.

Parents/ guardians may meet with teachers by making an appointment through the school office.

If an employee feels threatened by any visitor, the matter will be reported to the Board of Management. The Board will take any steps necessary to protect employees.

Following the implementation of this policy, visitors who need to move around the school will be required to wear a 'Visitor' badge. During events where there may be public access to the school, e.g. on Sports' Day, staff members and volunteers will wear high visibility vests marked 'GCGNS Staff' and 'GCGNS Volunteer'.

Equipment

Maintenance equipment (e.g. tools, vacuum cleaners, etc.) is kept in locked or restricted areas.

Repairs are carried out by qualified personnel e.g. the school's electrician

Protective clothing is provided and should be worn when necessary. Each employee is responsible for ensuring his/her own safety by wearing protective clothing.

Teachers and staff members are required to keep computer screens, keyboards, printers, etc. free of dust. A 'Guide for the VDU Operator' has been provided to each staff member. A notice relating to the safe use of the photocopier has been placed on a noticeboard in the photocopying room.

Success Criteria

Some measures to ensure the successful implementation of this policy include:

Monitoring and recording the time taken to evacuate the building during a Fire Drill
Pupil knowledge of school rules and procedures when asked by staff members

Monitoring the level of compliance by parents/guardians in relation to access to staff members

Spot checks by members of the Safety Committee

Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Management has overall responsibility for the maintenance of the school's Health and Safety Policy. The Board has established a Safety Committee to help to ensure that the policy is implemented. The members of the committee are:

Chairperson:	Dermot Walsh
School Principal:	Catriona O' Reilly
Safety Officer:	Billy Doyle
Safety Representative:	Aisling Shanahan (Mary Ryan – substitute)

The Board has also carried out a Risk Assessment as part of its annual review of this policy (attached as an Appendix). The following Checklists are used:

Cloakrooms and Toilets
Classrooms
General – school building and premises
Fire
Lone Workers

Employees must take reasonable care for their own safety, health and welfare at work and for that of any other person who may be affected by acts or omissions while at work. Employees must co-operate with the Board of Management and others in meeting the requirements of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 and other relevant legislation.

Implementation

This Safety, Health and Welfare Policy will be implemented from the date of ratification by the school's Board of Management.

Review

A review of the Health and Safety Policy will take place annually.

Ratification and Communication

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management on 15th May 2018.