



St. Vincent's Convent Primary School **Health and Safety Policy Statement**

Policy Statement

It is a legal requirement under the Safety, Health and 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 Board of Management of St. Vincent's 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.

This policy is in place to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare in school of the pupils, of all those working in the school and of visitors to the school. By putting the policy in place:

- The Board is acknowledging its duty to manage all activities so that they do not endanger any person engaged in those activities.
- The duty of staff, children (where appropriate) and other persons involved with the school (e.g., parents and contractors) to avoid improper or harmful conduct is acknowledged.

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 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.*
 - *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 pupils and dealing with pupils 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.*
- *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.*

Safety and Physical Hazards

Electricity

- An annual general safety inspection will be carried out by the school electrician.
- Children will not be allowed to plug in or unplug electrical appliances.
- Children will be made aware of electrical safety.

Fire Safety

- Fire safety equipment will be tested annually and updated as required.
- Training in fire safety precautions will be provided annually for staff.
- Fire Drills will be carried out monthly.
- Matches will be kept out of the reach of children
- A Test fire drill will be held once/twice per year. A record of all fire drills will be kept.
- Fire Alarms will be tested once a term outside of school hours.

Lighting of Candles

- As a general rule, only nightlights (as opposed to larger candles) will be lit in classrooms. These must be placed in containers and put out of the reach of children and must only be lit for short durations, e.g., at prayer services. Care must be taken that objects (e.g., papers) that could catch fire are not placed near lighted candles.
- Children should never be left unattended in a room with a lighted candle, e.g., at lunchtime.
- Lighted candles may never be placed on corridors.
- Candles other than nightlights in protective containers may only be used at religious ceremonies (i.e., where numbers present are small and typically not moving around) and not at other celebrations, e.g., parties, concerts. Where

candles other than nightlights are used (at religious ceremonies) these must be treated with extreme care. All safety precautions must be taken at these times.

Cleaning Materials

- Cleaning materials must be kept out of the reach of children.
- Children must never be asked to use a chemical substance for cleaning purposes.

Floors

- All reasonable care must be taken to ensure that objects are not placed in such a way as to cause people to trip. Especial care is required in the case of wires (e.g., computer wires) and the placing of schoolbags in classrooms.
- No objects should be stored around and under coat racks in classrooms.
- Spillages should be dealt with at once and access to slippery areas should be restricted until safe.
- 'Wet floor' signs should be used by cleaners to denote areas newly washed.
- Safe practices with regard to floor safety should be encouraged amongst the children.

Children Moving around Building

From their earliest days at school, children will be taught safe habits and practices. These include moving safely in the classrooms, corridors, stairs, playgrounds and PE Hall. Running and jumping inside the building is forbidden, except at PE. Children will be under the supervision of a teacher most of the time but, to ensure the smooth running of the school as well as social/civic education of the children, it will be necessary for them to perform some activities unsupervised, e.g., bringing messages to office or other classrooms, going to the compost bin or engaging in some curricular activities. Children from Junior Infants – 4th Class must always undertake these activities in groups of two or more. Where practicable, the older children should also travel in groups.

Children should never be sent unsupervised into the Car Yard. Children should not be asked to retrieve objects from or bring objects to teachers' cars unless accompanied by a teacher.

Children of any age should not be required to carry breakable objects, e.g., cups, around the school.

Playground /Sport Equipment

- Teachers will accompany classes into playground at going-home time or play times.
- Each playground will be supervised by a teacher at all times during playtime.
- Should the children remain indoors at playtime, each corridor will be supervised by a teacher. In addition, 6th Class girls are assigned to each classroom. The 6th Class pupils have a care role and must be supervised themselves by the teacher on corridor duty.

- Each class is assigned to a particular yard. Children may not move from one yard to another during playtime.
- If a serious accident occurs during playtime, the teacher on duty will send a child to get the Principal. The teacher on duty will make the injured child/children as comfortable as possible until help arrives.
- Children, accompanied by two older children, may be sent to the office to have minor injuries dealt with.
- Parents are contacted in the case of a more serious injury and always in the case of a head injury of concern.
- If children have immediate need to go to the toilet during playtime, they are allowed into the school building accompanied by two older children. Children from Junior Infants – 4th Class may only be sent from yard to toilets on ground floor.
- Use of playground equipment must be supervised by a teacher at all times.

Traffic in Playgrounds

- Since cars and other vehicular traffic have access to the playground, due care must be taken at all times when walking through the playgrounds or bringing children into the playgrounds.
- Vehicles may not enter or leave the playgrounds during playtime. A notice to this effect will be displayed at the playground entry.
- Children must use the gate in St. Vincent's Lane when entering and leaving the school at normal opening and closing times and must not enter or leave the premises via the Convent Lodge entrance. Parents must be made aware of this.
- Where parents repeatedly use the Lodge entrance to bring their children to/collect them from school, the Board of Management will formally write to the parents in question requesting them to cease this practice forthwith and pointing out the inherent safety risks.
- Staff parking in the playgrounds must exercise the greatest care when driving in the playgrounds.

Contractors

All contractors working in the school must be shown the Safety Statement and must sign it. Additionally, contractors will be asked for a copy of their insurance before commencing work in the school, unless this has been deemed unnecessary by the Insurance Brokers.

Manual Handling

Cleaners and Caretakers may receive manual handling training before commencing work, except in the case of short-term substitute work.

Letting of School to Outside Agencies

A licence agreement will be entered into with outside agencies who lease part of the school building. These outside agencies will be bound by the school's Health and Safety procedures.

Use of Substances

Smoking is prohibited by law in the school building. A separate policy is in place governing the use of substances in the school.

First Aid

School staff (but not children) may administer First Aid for the use of minor scratches, cuts and bruises. More serious injuries may not be dealt with by school staff. Parents must be contacted in these cases. Where parents cannot be contacted, professional medical attention will be sought if necessary.

Hygiene Incidents

Where children have wetting or soiling incidents, parents will always be contacted. School staff may not change a child's clothing. However, children should be made as comfortable as possible and incidents should be dealt with the utmost privacy and discretion (in so far as is possible).

If a parent cannot come into the school, or cannot send a representative, the parent may give permission for the child to change his/her own clothes. In the case of younger children TWO staff members will assist by instructing the child, in a step by step manner to change clothing.

This section does not concern children with special needs who have a Special Needs Assistant to assist them in the area of toileting. Each of the latter cases will have procedures specific to the child in question.

School Security

Due care will be given to the area of security, bearing in mind that St. Vincent's is a school and therefore cannot be locked at all times.

The school doors will be open at the start and end of the school day. At these times, access is ensured to all.

At other times, those wishing to enter the school must use the security entrance, i.e., a bell is rung which is answered at the office. Entry will be permitted for valid reasons.

At the start of the day, the Principal and/or senior staff members will be present on the ground corridor to oversee all who enter and leave the building.

Once the school day starts (8.45am, 9am) the children will be under the care of a teacher at all times until they are accompanied into the yard by the teacher at the end of the school day.

At the start of the school year, all parents must supply a list to the office of adults who are allowed to collect children early.

Children leaving school early with an adult for any reason must be signed out by said adult who, if not the parent, must be on the approved list to collect. Where this is not the case, a call must be made to the parent/guardian before the child is released to the care of the collecting adult.

Young people under 18 are not allowed to take children early except in a case of emergency and always with the parent's prior permission.

Where parents request that their child is not to be collected by a certain individual, all relevant parties must be informed, viz., Class Teacher, Principal, Deputy Principal, Assistant Principals, Special Duties Teachers and Secretary. In these cases, the parent will be asked to confirm the list of people who can collect his/her child. Furthermore, the parent will be asked to phone the school if someone other than himself/herself is coming early to collect the child. The parent will be asked to make those others on the list of approved collectors aware of the fact that the child is not to be collected by a certain individual and to stress that they may not, under any circumstances, delegate their collecting duties to that individual.

School Trips

The children's safety will be of paramount importance during school outings and adequate supervision will be maintained.

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