

St. Joseph's N.S

Health and Safety Policy

Rationale

The Safety Statement approved by the Board of Management of St. Joseph's N.S, Glenealy under the 'Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005' sets out the policy and organisation of safety, health and welfare in the school. The school seeks to make every effort to preserve and promote the safety, health and welfare of our school community.

The Board of Management of St. Joseph's N.S, Glenealy is committed to securing high standards of health and safety in and around the school. It strives at all times to create a working and learning environment that is safe and healthy for all that uses it, namely staff, pupils, parents/guardians and relevant members of the public.

The school will apply the provisions of all applicable health, safety and welfare legislation and codes of practice to ensure that places and systems of work are safe and without risk to health. Continuous improvements in health and safety performance will be sought, but interventions will reflect the reality of identified risks.

Aims

The aim of the policy is to:

- Ensure that all reasonably practical steps are taken to ensure the health, safety, welfare and wellbeing of all members of the school community while on the school grounds
- Ensure that all reasonably practical steps are taken to ensure the health and safety of staff, pupils and other supervising adults participating in off-site visits
- Establish and maintain safe working procedures amongst staff and pupils
- Make arrangements for ensuring safety and absence of risks to health in connection with the use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances
- Develop safety awareness amongst staff, pupils and other supervising adults.
- Formulate and implement effective procedures for use in the event of fire and other emergencies

Responsibilities

Board of Management

- The Board is the employer of the school's staff. As such, it has overall responsibility for ensuring healthy and safe places and systems of work for staff, as well as a duty of care to all other building users.
- The Board will ensure that an up-to-date Safety Statement is in place. It will undertake a regular risk assessment and will ensure that identified hazards are eliminated or minimised as far as is

reasonably practical. The Board will devote sufficient resources to ensuring the health and safety of all members of the school community and will ensure that there is adequate insurance in place to cover the activities of the school.

- The Board will appoint at least one person to the role of Safety Officer to assure health and safety compliance. This may be an external expert or a BOM member, but not the Principal or Teachers' Representative on the BOM. The BOM will sanction relevant health and safety training for this person if necessary.

Principal and Deputy Principal

- The Principal is the link between the BOM and the staff.
- The Principal will ensure that all staff, including temporary and part-time staff, receive induction, on-going training and regular information on health and safety matters and will consult with them, on behalf of the BOM, at least annually on such matters.
- The Principal will support and assist staff to enable them to reach correct decisions about health and safety and will check at intervals that safe working methods are being observed that are in accordance with school and statutory procedures.
- The Principal will also receive and deal initially with any health and safety concerns that she receives from staff, parents, guardians and others.
- The Deputy Principal will take on the duties of the Principal in her absence.

Other Employees

- All staff, including temporary and part-time staff, are required to cooperate with the Board and others to ensure health and safety law in general and this policy in particular, are implemented.
- They have responsibility to take reasonable care of their own safety, health and welfare and that of any person who may be affected by their acts or omissions. This applies to any work they do on behalf of the school, both within the school premises and outside.
- Specifically in terms of child welfare, teachers are *in loco parentis* and are expected to do what a reasonably careful parent would do in any situation involving risk.
- Being mindful of their role as being in loco parentis, if any member of staff suspects that a parent/guardian may be under the influence of any medication and/or intoxicant to the extent that it endangers their own or another person's safety, the Principal must be informed immediately.
- Staff are required to attend any health and safety training that is deemed essential by the BOM and are encouraged to undertake appropriate additional training. All training must be delivered by individuals/organisations competent to do so.
- Records of all health and safety training completed by staff will be maintained by the school. Staff must use available facilities and equipment and other forms of protection to ensure work practices are performed in the safest manner possible and must never intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse any such facilities, equipment or protection.
- Staff may not be under the influence of any medication and/or intoxicant to the extent that it endangers their own or another person's safety and must inform the Principal if they are suffering from any injury, disease or illness or are taking any medication that potentially adds to risks within the school.

- Any dangerous practices or situations that staff becomes aware of must be reported to the Principal and/or staff Safety Representative without unreasonable delay.

Staff Safety Representative

This Health and Safety Policy names **Aine Brophy** as the Staff Safety Representative and the duties associated with this position this include but are not limited to:

- Represent employees on health and safety matters
- Inspect the place of work on health and safety grounds
- Investigate accidents and dangerous occurrences
- Investigate health and safety complaints made by employees
- Accompany a health and safety inspector carrying out an inspection if and when required
- Make representations to, and receive information from, an Inspector
- Make representations to the Board on health and safety matters
- Liaise with other relevant persons engaged in health and safety matters
- Receive appropriate training for this role.

Parents and Guardians

- Parents and guardians are requested to cooperate with the Board and others to ensure health and safety law in general and this policy in particular, are implemented.
- They have responsibility to take reasonable care of their own safety, health and welfare and that of any person who may be affected by their acts or omissions. Parents are especially reminded that they must not allow their children to engage in dangerous play in and around the school.
- Once a pupil enters the school building, the teachers and specifically assigned Special Needs Assistants are *in loco parentis* and thus primarily responsible for the children's health, safety and welfare.
- Parents and guardians, however, must take specific responsibility for other children not enrolled in the school, especially young children, accompanying them in the school and its environs.
- Parents and guardians are requested to report any health and safety concerns to the Principal and/or the Chairperson of the Board. Additionally, or alternatively, they may raise any concerns with the Chairperson of the Parents' Association Committee. High-risk concerns must be reported promptly to the Principal.
- Parents and guardians are also entitled to receive information on, and be consulted on, the school's health and safety policy and procedures.

Pupils

- Pupils will be advised of any relevant health and safety procedures and are required to comply with the staff and Board in implementing these.

Members of the Public

- Members of the public who visit the school will be informed of any relevant health and safety regulations in place and will be required to abide by these.

- Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that any outside contractors used by the school are covered by adequate insurance and comply with health, safety and welfare legislation.

Access to School

- The front door and back door are opened at 9:20am every school morning.
- At 9:10am the children enter the school via the front gates. Children enter the school building according to their class level. The three Junior classes enter the school at the front and the Senior classes enter through the back door. The main entrance is at the front of the building. The main door must be kept securely closed at all times and all members of staff, parents and visitors must make sure that this is done.
- Parents are not permitted to park in the school grounds at any time
- Visitors, contractors, etc., must park in the place designated to them.
- In as far as it is possible with the practical layout of the school premises, anyone entering the school premises shall be required to identify themselves to the secretary or a member of staff as relevant before gaining admittance to the school.

Please note that reception times are as currently as follows:

Monday – Thursday

Open: 9am -2.00pm

Friday

Open 9:00am-1:00pm

Collecting Children from School

- All parents/guardians/authorised adults, in the interest of safety, must wait at the fence along the front yard until the children are released from their classroom door. The teacher ensures that each child is collected by his/her parent or guardian. Both classes finish at 2:00pm sharp.
- All other children from 1st class to 6th class are also collected early from their teachers by parents/guardians/authorised adults from the reception leading from their respective classrooms.
- Any parent/guardian who wishes for his/her child to regularly walk home unattended must give written consent to the class teacher.
- Any parent/guardian who usually collects the child but who wishes the child to walk home unattended on certain occasions must give permission in writing for the attention of the class teacher.
- In the case of any child who has written permission to leave the school unattended, the Board of Management St. Joseph's N.S, Glenealy is not responsible for their safety.
- Parents/guardians/authorised adults are reminded to drive slowly when approaching the school to collecting children.
- If parents arrange to collect their children at a place other than the school, the Board of Management St. Joseph's N.S, Glenealy is not responsible for their safety.
- If they are not collected on time, if pupils need to leave school early (for example, for a dental appointment), the parents or guardians must notify the school in advance. If a person other than a

parent or guardian is collecting the child, the parent/guardian must give written permission to the class teacher (unless it is an emergency situation, in which case the school office may be contacted by telephone).

- Any child who leaves early must be signed out from their classroom with their class teacher's knowledge and permission prior to leaving the premises.

Traffic Management

The Board of Management recognises that large numbers of staff, pupils, parents/guardians and visitors travel within the direct vicinity of the school. They ordinarily arrive and leave at concentrated times of the day using different modes of transport, which poses safety concerns. The Board wants traffic in and around the school grounds to be managed as safely as possible, but this requires the full cooperation of all parties concerned.

- Parents/guardians are reminded that they are responsible for their children once collected from the class teacher or before the front door opens in the morning.
- Parents/guardians are reminded that there is no car parking facilities within the school grounds available at any time.
- For parents travelling by car, children can be dropped off at the front fence in the designated car park space. All vehicle users coming to the school must comply with the rules set down by the Road Safety Authority. In instances of illegal road usage, the school may inform the local Garda station.

Safe Access and Leaving Routes

- Every effort will be made to ensure that all building users can safely access, leave and move around the school grounds and building where necessary.
- Entrances and corridors will be kept free from obstruction.
- Fire exits will be kept free from obstruction.

Health and Wellbeing

General Health and Hygiene

- Parents/guardians should not send a child to school who is sick or who may have a contagious infection.
- While the Board of Management encourage full attendance, parents/guardians should use their best judgment in deciding if a child is sick and therefore should not be in school.
- Should a teacher, acting *in loco parentis*, determine that a child is sick and should not be in school, he/she will inform the principal for a second opinion. The parent/guardian will, if necessary, be contacted to collect the child during the school day. If the parents/guardians are not available, the emergency contact will be contacted to collect the child. If the emergency contact is not available, medical assistance may be sought by the school.
- A doctor's certificate is required should your child need to remain indoors at break/lunchtime.
- Parents/guardians are required to inform the school of any on-going health problems that the child may have and the medications being used.

- Parents/guardians are asked to give details of any immediate health problems that a pupil may have and the medications being used.
- In case of a food allergy, either a doctor's certificate or a report from a qualified professional is required.
- If pupils have a medical condition which may affect their work at school, parents should tell their teacher. This is particularly important with any physical, hearing or eyesight problems.

Hygiene and Tidiness at School

The Board of Management makes every effort to ensure that the school is hygienically clean and tidy. Children have their part to play too!

- The school is cleaned daily and thoroughly with particular attention paid to toilet areas.
- Toilets should be flushed after use.
- Any sanitary products must be placed in the provided units.
- Litter is to be put into the bins provided in the classrooms. All lunch litter must be taken home for disposal.
- Students should feel responsible for their school-home; they should take care of it and keep it as clean and neat as possible. Concern for the environment is part of the formation of ecological awareness.

Personal Hygiene

- All children enrolled in our school must be fully toilet trained. In a case where a child cannot self-toilet due to a condition or special education need, a doctor's certificate or report is required.
- "Coughs and sneeze, elbows please".
- All children must wash their hands after using the toilet.
- When a child used a tissue to blow his or her nose, the used tissue must be immediately placed in the correct bin.
- Hand-soap, paper towels and toilet roll are in regular supply around the school while tissues and hand sanitiser are available in the classrooms and staff room.
- Female pupils in 5th and 6th class are informed of where to find a store of female sanitary products should they need them and how to dispose of these correctly.
- All members of staff reserve the right to inform the Principal if supplies of personal hygiene products are not sufficient at any time.
- Food items must never be brought into the toilet areas.
- Children are not allowed to swop or share previously-opened food items
- Children are not allowed to swop or share water bottles, milk cartons, cups or any other such items.

Long-term Health Conditions

- So that our school can provide the best level of care for all children, parents/guardians must inform the school if the child has any long-term health conditions.
- Examples of such long-term health conditions include but are not limited to asthma, epilepsy, diabetes, etc.

- This information is requested via the enrolment form.
- If such a long-term health condition is diagnosed after a child has been enrolled, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to inform the school of any such diagnosis immediately.

Infectious Illness

The Board of Management encourages full attendance where possible but must be mindful of the health of other members of the school community, staff members and other parents included.

- If a child is suspected of having a relatively minor infectious illness (stomach bug, etc.), parents/guardians should keep the child away from school until deemed well to return. Upon return, a written note must be provided to the class teacher to explain the child's absence from school.
- If a parent/guardian is unsure of the seriousness of any such possibly infectious illness, medical advice should be sought and followed. Examples of such illnesses include but are not limited to chicken pox, measles, impetigo, conjunctivitis, flu, etc.
- If a child has been diagnosed by a doctor as having an infectious illness, parents/guardians must do the following:
 - inform the school at the first opportunity of the nature of the illness so that any possible immediate cases in other children in any class may be identified quickly
 - follow medical advice to determine the date for safe return to school
 - understand that in the case of some illnesses, the school may require a medical fitness cert to determine that the child is well and does not pose an infectious threat to other children, staff or other members of the school community.

Head Lice

To prevent the possibility and spread of head lice, parents/guardians are reminded to tie back their child's hair every school day.

- A normal part of growing up, head lice are highly contagious.
- The school will regularly remind all parents/guardians to check for head lice.
- Parents/guardians must inform the class teacher if their child has head lice so that the rest of the school can be notified. All such information received will be treated anonymously when informing the rest of the school community.

Clothing

- Children must wear our school uniform and tracksuit on the relevant days along with appropriate footwear.
- In times of cold weather, children must come to school with appropriate coats or jackets. Other cold weather gear, such as hats, scarves, gloves, etc., are at the discretion of parents/guardians.
- All items of personal clothing must be labelled with the child's name.
- Children are not allowed to wear makeup or nail varnish.
- Children are not allowed to wear jewellery, except for small stud earrings.

- Parents/guardians are required to check their child's hair regularly otherwise head lice can become a problem in school.

Medical Information

- All parents/guardians must ensure that teachers are aware in writing of any on-going medical condition that their child may have.
- Parents/guardians must complete the medical section of the application form and are reminded that they are responsible for any and all updates as necessary.

Mobile Phone Use

To promote a more focused learning environment, improve student wellbeing, and encourage face-to-face social interaction St Joseph's National School have complied with Departmental Circular 0044/2025 in banning the use of mobile phones in our school. The ban, it is anticipated, will also reduce distractions and the risks associated with cyberbullying and exposure to inappropriate content.

Medicines

- Parents/guardians must inform the class teacher if their child is on any form of medication, either short term or long term.
- Examples of short-term medications include but are limited to antibiotics, medicines containing paracetamol, antihistamines, etc.
- Examples of long-term medications include but are not limited to inhalers, Ritalin, etc.
- Non-prescriptive medicines will neither be stored nor administered to pupils in school.
- Prescribed medicines will not be administered in school without the written consent of parents and the specific authorisation of the Board of Management.
- The medicine should not be kept by the pupil but by the authorised teacher and out of reach of pupils.
- Certain medicines, such as inhalers used by asthmatic children, must be readily accessible at all times of the school day.
- Children with acute illness (i.e. colds, temperatures, etc.) are not allowed to bring any medicines to school, either prescription or non-prescription.
- If a child has a diagnosed chronic illness (such as asthma, diabetes, etc.) and may need to take medication, a parent/guardian must write to the Board of Management to request this. A doctor's certificate must accompany this request. The medicine should be self-administered if possible, under the supervision of an authorised adult.
- The above request to the Board must give the name of the child, name and dose of medication, must state whether the child should be responsible for his/her own medication, the circumstances in which medication is to be given by the teacher and consent for it to be given.
- If the child cannot self-administer the required medicine, the request to the Board must include the exact dosage and times for administration.
- A teacher should not administer medication without the specific authorisation of the Board.

- Any teacher who is authorised to administer any medication does so on a voluntary basis and reserves the right to refuse.
- In cases where class teachers have been authorised to administer medication, it is the parents'/guardians' duty to ensure that the class teacher is present on any given school day.
- In any case where the class teacher is not present to administer a prescribed medication as per the Board's permission, the Principal will administer the medication instead. If the Principal is not available, the Deputy Principal fills this role.
- Where possible, parents/guardians should ask the prescribing doctor to prescribe the administration of prescribed medicines outside of school hours.
- Parents are further required to indemnify the Board of Management and authorised members of staff in respect of any liability that may arise regarding the administration of prescribed medicines in school. The Board of Management will inform the school's insurers accordingly.
- Where permission has been given by the Board of Management for the administration of medicine the smallest possible dose should be brought to school, preferably by the parent, with clear written instructions for administration, giving the name of the pupil.
- Changes in prescribed medication (or dosage) should be notified immediately to the school with clear written instructions of the procedure to be followed in storing and administering the new medication.

Parents should ensure that these procedures are clearly understood before submitting any request to the Board of Management.

School Medical Inspections

- The HSE will carry out vaccinations or school medical inspections (including but not limited to hearing, sight and dental) according to their policy during the school year.
- Consent forms will be issued and no child will be submitted to any vaccination or medical inspection without the direct and signed permission of parents/guardians. In the case of vaccinations in Junior Infant classes, parents/guardians must be in attendance on the day of these taking place. More information is available on www.hse.ie (School Immunisation Programme)

Food Allergies

- If a parent/guardian has a concern that the child has a specific food allergy, the Board insists that a medical diagnosis must be sought before the school is officially informed of any such possible allergy.
- Where children are suffering from certain and specific diagnosed on-going food allergy conditions (for example, nut allergy), parents should outline clearly in writing the nature of the allergy and provide this to the class teacher.
- This written report relating to the allergy must state what can and cannot be done in a particular emergency situation, with particular reference to what may be a risk to the child.
- Teachers must be made aware of any such diagnosed on-going conditions as they occur.
- Children who are identified as having diagnosed food allergies will not under any circumstances be offered any items of food that may contain ingredients that the class teacher knows are unsuitable.

- If a teacher is unsure on the exact ingredients of any food item that may be available to the class, he or she will act on the side of caution and not allow the child with a diagnosed food allergy to eat or drink it.
- Parents/guardians are reminded that if their child has a certain and specific diagnosed food allergy, they are responsible for informing the school of this as and when such a diagnosis may be provided.
- Parents and guardians are further reminded that they also have an important role in helping the child know and understand what he or she can and cannot eat.
- Bearing in mind the role of all teachers *in loco parentis*, parents are further required to indemnify the Board of Management of any liability that may arise regarding a child with a diagnosed and specific food allergy consuming any food product that he or she is allergic to.

Identification of Children with Diagnosed and Specific On-Going Medical Conditions, Food Allergies and/or Board-approved Administration of Medication

- The Board wants to ensure that all staff, permanent or temporary, can correctly identify children with diagnosed and specific on-going medical conditions, food allergies and/or board-approved administration of medication.
- Therefore, each such child will have their photograph displayed in the staff room, along with their name, class and diagnosed and specific on-going medical conditions, food allergies and/or board-approved administration of medication.

Accidents

- Parents/guardians are reminded that although children will be supervised by designated teachers and other staff who are *in loco parentis* during breaks and at all other times, accidents can occur.
- The Board of Management and all parents/guardians recognise that members of staff are not medical professionals but rather act *in loco parentis*.
- Minor accidents are treated at school, such as slight cuts and abrasions etc. The supervising staff or other designated staff members at the school will deal with these by washing the affected area with cold water. Parents/guardians are expected to check injuries when the child returns home from school.
- Hypo-allergenic plasters will only be used at the discretion of the supervising teacher.
- It is the policy of St. Joseph's N.S, Glenealy not to use disinfectant, salves or any such products on cuts or grazes in case child is allergic to any of these products.
- If the injury requires more attention than a wash with cold water or the use of an ice pack, then the parents/guardian will be notified.
- A member of staff will never administer medication due to an accident.
- When a child receives a blow to the head, no matter how minor it may be deemed by the supervising teacher, parents/guardians will also be notified.
- When an accident occurs during the school day that the supervising teacher deems more serious than a minor accident, an entry into the Yard Incident book must be made and signed by the

supervising teacher and by any other members of staff who witnessed or attended the accident as a true and accurate reflection of what occurred.

- All parents/guardians must inform the school of any changes to mobile, work or home phone numbers as they may occur.
- All parents/guardians must provide the school with the details of an emergency contact in case the parents/guardians cannot be reached.
- In the event of an accident, every possible effort will be made to contact the child's parents/guardians or the persons delegated to take responsibility for the child.

First Aid

- All school staff will receive and be certified in first aid training on a regular basis.
- Certification of all first aiders details will be kept in reception
- If available, the designated certified first aiders will administer any first aid in the first instance. However, in the absence of such a person, any competent adult will make every effort to attend to an injured person.
- There will be a first aid box kept in the reception area of school –The first aid box in the reception is stocked in accordance with guidelines issued by the Health and Safety Authority.
- Medication may never be stored in first aid boxes and will never be administered by first responders
- A defibrillator will be stored at the front of the school. Appropriate training will be provided for staff members.

Investigation, Recording and Reporting

- All instances of serious and potentially serious accidents are recorded and investigated. To this end, the school maintains a logbook of all such instances, which is kept in the staffroom.
- The Principal will report on these at the next meeting of the BOM (and sooner to the Chairperson of the BOM if the instance is deemed sufficiently serious).
- Any accident deemed serious involving a child will also be notified on the day itself to the relevant parent/guardian, ordinarily by the class teacher.
- Furthermore, the Principal will make a report to the Health and Safety Authority in the case of dangerous occurrences, death or serious accidents (that is, an accident requiring absence from work/school for more than three days, not including the day of the accident itself, or requiring medical treatment by a registered medical practitioner or hospital).
- Additionally, if required, the Principal will make a report to the school's insurance company.

Emergencies

Emergency Routes and Exits

- The school has, and will maintain, an adequate number of emergency routes and exits, which meet statutory regulations.
- These will be clearly signed and kept free from obstruction at all times.
- All rooms will have evacuation instructions on the inside of each door.
- School evacuation will be practiced as part of regular fire drills.

- Special provisions will be made for evacuations that take place during extra-curricular activities.

Fire Protection

- The school has, and will maintain, appropriate fire detection and fire-fighting equipment, which meets statutory obligations.
- Fire drills will be held at least three times per school year and a logbook will be maintained of all such drills.
- Staff will be trained in the use of fire-fighting equipment on a regular basis to ensure that at any given time that there are sufficient staff with such knowledge employed.
- Any contractor completing hot work (including welding, soldering, use of blow lamps, blow torches and cutting equipment) must be qualified and insured to do so, must carry a fully charged fire extinguisher and must make a full check one hour after completion of the work.
- No naked flames are permitted to remain unattended at any time. Examples include but are not limited to candles lit for Religious Education lessons.

Emergency contact details

- Emergency contact details of the parents and guardians of all children in the school as well the next of kin of all staff, will be kept in the school office.
- The responsibility lies with parents/guardians to inform the school of any changes to the emergency contact details.

Emergency closures

- In the event of, for instance, heavy snowfall, high winds, thunderstorms, disconnection of services, death or critical incident, the Principal will consult as soon as feasible with the Chairperson of the BOM to decide whether it is in the interests of all parties to close the school.
- If it is decided that it would be unsafe to keep the school open, an exceptional closure will be deemed to have been granted by the BOM.
- Exceptional closures will be kept to an absolute minimum.
- Parents and guardians will be informed at the earliest opportunity of any such closure using a range of communication techniques (SMS, email, telephone calls, posting on school website, note at school gate, etc.).
- If school is open when an incident occurs, staff will remain on the premises until all children have been collected.

Heating

The Board will endeavour to ensure that the school is kept comfortably warm for all members of the school community. This is particularly important during winter.

Similarly, especially during warmer weather, all classrooms must be kept properly ventilated to ensure an appropriate level of comfort for everyone. The below procedure is taken from the Department of Education's Circular 21/79 which deals with school heating.

- The lowest acceptable temperature in the classrooms is 16 degrees centigrade.
- If the temperature in the classrooms has not reached 16 degrees C within one hour of the opening time of the school, the Principal must take immediate action.

- Unless there is a definite chance that the minimum temperature will be reached very soon, the Principal must inform the Chairperson of the Board of Management to decide if the school will have to be closed. If the Chairperson cannot be contacted then the Principal must use his or her judgement.
- If the school must be closed due to a lack of proper heating, the principal will make arrangements for the pupils to be sent home, provided this can be done without risk to the children.
- Where it is not possible to send all children home, teachers continue to have a legal obligation to supervise the children for the remainder of the school day. Teachers should not, however, be expected to carry out their normal teaching programme in these circumstances.
- Where the principal fails to carry follow out the above procedure, any member of staff has the right to report the matter to the Chairperson.

Supervision of children during the school day

General Supervision

- The children are supervised by the school from the time they enter the school until the time they are collected.
- If class teachers are unexpectedly absent for any reason, for example, an illness or family emergency, a member of the Special Education team will be appointed to the class.
- Depending on the age profile of the class, the children may be divided up between the other classes for the school day.
- In cases of longer term absences, substitute teachers may be engaged.
- Any children who attend our After Schools Homework club are escorted there by a designated member of staff.
- Children who leave the class to use the toilet are reminded to go straight there and return immediately.
- On occasion, a teacher may have to leave the classroom for a short period of time. If so, s/he will ensure that a colleague will provide temporary supervision cover.
- At an age-appropriate stage, sometimes children may be allowed to leave their classrooms for limited periods of time to undertake specific errands or appropriate responsibilities. Another child should always accompany them.
- Unless it is deemed age-appropriate and related to a particular and prepared-for responsibility, at no time will any child be left unsupervised in the school hall, the yard or in the garden.

Yard Supervision

- During yard time, our school operates a termly yard timetable of supervising staff – two rostered teachers will always be on duty and will be assisted by one rostered Special Needs Assistant. The appropriate yard supervision rota will be displayed outside the staff room.
- The teachers rostered for yard duty are responsible for the health and safety of all children on yard at that time. The teachers should not leave the yard for any reason.
- The Special Needs Assistant is allocated specific areas for support and follows the direction of the supervising teacher responsible.

- Teachers rostered for yard duty are reminded that Special Needs Assistants are not responsible for yard supervision should the teacher leave the yard for any reason.
- The teacher rostered for yard duty on any given day is responsible for deciding whether or not the weather is suitable for going to yard. If unsure the teacher must check with the Principal for a second opinion.

School Excursions

- As either part of the enrolment form or otherwise, parents/guardians are asked to provide permission for the children to take part in age-appropriate, relevant and educational excursions and field trips.
- Based on the age and profile of any class, parents/guardians may be asked to accompany specific groups on excursions. They may not bring younger children with them.
- Where transport is required, the school will only engage buses that are adequate for the size of the group from a reputable company that provides safe vehicles and drivers. Every effort will be made to source buses that have seat belts and all passengers will be required to make use of these.
- Pupils are paired up for each excursion and must follow their teacher's instructions at all times.
- A teacher or other responsible adult always leads the way and the group is required to stay together, using waiting points where necessary.
- Children are counted when leaving school and at various points during the excursion.

Student Self-Harm

As per the guidance the school has received from NEPS in relation to student self-harm, the school management team and staff have adopted the response protocol outlined in the guide document 'Responding to Self-Harm in Schools: *Guidance for school staff*'.

The purpose of our self harm protocol

As part of the school's core mission and values, and continued dedication to the health and wellbeing of its students, this protocol provides a clear set of guidelines to school staff for dealing with any issues that may arise in relation to selfharm, including:

- > Recognising the warning signs that a student may be selfharming.
- > Broaching the subject of selfharm with a student you suspect is deliberately hurting themselves. Reacting positively if a student comes to you wishing to discuss their selfharm.
- > Devising a shortterm plan of action for the care and management of the student in school with regard to the student's unique and individual needs.
- > Devising a longterm plan of action for supporting the student while in school in liaison with mental health services.
- > Assisting in building the confidence, selfesteem and emotional wellbeing of the student,
- > Practical and emotional support for staff members who are dealing with a student who is self-harming.
- > Provision of clear and standard guidelines for all staff in contact with the student.

- > Training and education surrounding the issue of selfharm for all staff.
- > Developing links with outside agencies for onward referral and ongoing care.
- > Education and awareness campaigns for students.

Introduction of a SelfHarm Protocol

In relation to supporting those who selfharm, the role of each responsible adult in the school setting should sit within a whole school approach to wellbeing using the SET Team structures in primary and Student Support Team structures in post primary. A whole school approach to self-harm management and development of protocols should:

- > Outline established systems within school to ensure awareness and education of staff and the wider school community around selfharm. Research suggests basic training for all staff around selfharm is good practice.
- > Detail clear organisational procedures for responding at both systems and individual level and from low to high levels of concern.
- > It is suggested that the school identifies a designated person/s with overall responsibility for selfharm within an established SET, Student Support Team. It is good practice to have a designated member of staff to manage and coordinate the school's response to selfharm.
- > Create and maintain links with outside agencies ensuring strong working relationships and fluid and effective care pathways.
- > Establish protocols.
- > Highlight information around selfcare and support for staff.

Roles and responsibilities

School Management will:

- > Identify designated key staff to be responsible for all incidents relating to selfharm.
- > Ensure that all designated staff receive full and appropriate training surrounding selfharm and are fully confident with the procedures to follow. (See here for NOSP training).
- > Provide practical and emotional support for key staff dealing with selfharm. (See Appendix 5).
- > Ensure that all staff, including SNAs, and other nonteaching staff are made aware of, and understand, the selfharm protocols.
- > Provide children and young people with information about how and who to go to for help and support in school.
- > Provide parents with information about how and who to go to in the school if they are concerned about their child.
- > Establish a protocol for discussing selfharm with parents/carers once a disclosure has been made.
- > Ensure that responding to selfharm procedures are followed by staff.
- > Oversee the development of a Student Support Plan for children or young people who self-harm.

- > Ensure confidentiality for the child or young person and their family.
- > Ensure that all firstaiders are well informed about selfharm.

All Staff will:

- > Be aware of Children First Guidance and teachers roles as mandated persons.
 - > Be aware of procedure and communication pathways for dealing with selfharm in the school.
- > Be aware and familiar with information and resources regarding selfharm.
- > Signpost to external agencies for help and support if the student is not already linked to services.
- > Observe the reactions of students who are aware of selfharming behaviour of their peers.
- > Report the concern to a designated key member of staff as soon as you become aware of a student self harming, and inform the student that you are doing this.
- > Engage in CPD on identifying, assessing and supporting the needs of students who selfharm.

Under the Children First Guidance, it is important to remember that teachers in the school are mandated persons, who are required to make a Child Protection report to Tusla if they have reasonable grounds for concern that a parent/carer is not taking appropriate actions in relation to concerns about selfharm – e.g. taking the child/young person to their GP; follow up with CAMHS etc.

Designated staff member(s) from the SET or Student Support Team will:

- > Inform the children and young people parents/carers and liaise with them as to what steps to take to support their child in the immediate term.
- > Contact other organisations and key local services to establish what help and support is available for children or young people who selfharm.
- > Be aware of when it is essential for other professionals or agencies to be informed such as GP; Primary Care Psychology; TUSLA; NEPS.
- > Ensure the implementation of the selfharm protocol.
- > Communicate with the principal on a regular basis and keep them informed of all incidents and developments.
- > Maintain upto date records of children or young people experiencing selfharm, incidents of selfharm and all other concerns surrounding the issue.
- > Monitor the help, support and progress of the children and young people in your care and maintain communication with them.
- > Ensure you are fully confident in your understanding of selfharm and seek additional information and /or training if you feel it necessary.
- > Liaise with the principal and children and young people to decide if any other members of staff who have contact with the children and young people should be made aware of the selfharm and underlying concerns.
- > Maintain confidentiality with school staff as needed. Teachers who may be asked to modify their teaching and interaction with children and young people should have a reason provided to help them understand student's behaviour. However, they do not need to know the exact nature

of the concern and information should only be shared with the children and young people/parent's/carer's consent.

> Report any mention of suicidal feelings or behaviour to the Principal as a matter of urgency and agree immediate actions .

> Take care of your own emotional wellbeing and seek support as and when necessary (see supports available from Spectrum Life EAS service for teachers).

Other

- The school will provide safe equipment for both its staff and pupils, including where necessary, guards and appropriate personal protective equipment.
- Equipment will be appropriately certified, maintained to a high standard and disposed of if it poses a safety risk.
- Electrical equipment will only be used and maintained by staff qualified to do so. Wherever possible, fuses and power breakers shall be used and all portable power equipment shall operate on 110V.
- Equipment and substances for maintenance, cleaning, catering and similar will be stored securely away from children. Cleaning and maintenance will normally be done outside of school hours.
- Appropriate training will be provided in the safe handling and use of equipment and hazardous substances. This will include training in manual handling, which will focus on: avoidance of manual handling wherever possible, reduction of manual handling through the use of mechanical aids and the sharing of loads, and skills for safe manual handling.
- Work at height will be avoided wherever possible and must never take place without other people being on the premises. Safe ladder practice must be observed and ordinary school furniture must never be used to undertake work at height.

Animals

- No animals may be brought into the school grounds at any time, with the exception of assistance dogs.
- Any organisation/individual who brings any animals onto school grounds must have the permission of the Board of Management.

This policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis. Health and Safety risk assessments will take place at least annually and sooner if circumstances require this.

This policy was reviewed in consultation with the children, parents and staff and it was ratified by the Board of Management on December 2021.

Signed: 

Date: 3/12/2025

Chairperson

Signed: Cliona Harby

Principal

Date: 3/12/25