

# Health and Safety Policy Statement

## St. Paul's N.S.

### Introductory Statement

This policy statement was adapted to the current format in accordance with the guidelines of the Primary Professional Development Service. Our previous Safety Statement was reviewed and updated to take into account the most recent legislation in regard to Health and Safety. It was disseminated to the wider school community through the school website and ratified by the Board of Management on 5<sup>th</sup> October, 2023.

### Rationale

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 BOM wishes to document their health and safety programme and make it available to all employees, outside services providers and Inspectors of the Health and Safety Authority.

### Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

According to our Mission Statement St. Paul's N.S. strives to provide a well-ordered, caring, happy and safe environment for our pupils. In keeping with this philosophy our Health and Safety policy emphasises the importance of the health and safety of our pupils and that of all school employees. The Board of Management recognises the importance of the Legislation enacted in the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005. This Safety Statement sets out the Safety Policy of the Board of Management and sets out the means to achieve that policy. The Board of Management's objective is to endeavour to provide a safe and healthy work environment for all our employees and pupils and to meet our duties to members of the public with whom we come into contact. This policy requires the co-operation of all employees.

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

### Aims

- to create a safe and healthy school environment by identifying, preventing and tackling hazards and their accompanying risks
- to ensure understanding of the school's duty of care towards 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, secretary, etc
- To ensure competent employees, who will carry out safe work practices
- Safe access and egress routes
- Safe handling and use of hazardous substances and equipment
- Safe equipment including maintenance and use of appropriate guards
- Provision of appropriate personal protective equipment.

### Guidelines (content of policy)

#### **POLICY STATEMENT ON SAFETY, HEALTH AND WELFARE AT WORK OF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT OF ST. PAUL'S N.S.**

1.1. The members of the Board of Management of St. Paul's N.S. are

Chairperson: Canon Andrew Ison  
Secretary: Clodagh Redican  
Treasurer: Gillian Shaw

Other Board Members: Gemma Sherlock, Barbara Goulden, Ian Craig, Gordon Lyttle and Josephine Barber

- 1.2. The Board of Management will ensure that, in so far as is practicable, the highest standards of safety shall prevail and that, at a minimum, the provisions of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 are applied.
- 1.3. Specifically, the Board of Management wishes to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable:
  - The design, provision and maintenance of all places in a condition that is safe and without risk to health.
  - The design, provision and maintenance of safe means of access to and egress from places of work
  - The provision of systems of work that are planned, organised, performed and maintained so as to be safe and without risk to health.
  - The provision of instruction to staff on proper lifting techniques of 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.
  - The provision and maintenance of suitable protective clothing or equivalent as necessary to ensure the safety and health at works of its employees.
  - The preparation and revision as necessary of adequate plans to be followed in emergencies. e.g. fire evacuation, injuries etc.
  - The safety and prevention of risk to health at work in connection with use of any article or substance.
  - The provision and maintenance of facilities and arrangements for the welfare of employees at work.
  - Obtaining where necessary, the services of competent persons for the purpose of advising on the safety and health at work of the employees e.g. Advisors from the HSE, Fire Officers, ICT Advisors re equipment, ergonomics etc.
  - An annual review of this Health & Safety Statement and a log of issues raised and remediated.
  - The provision of arrangements for consultation with employees on matters of Health and Safety
  - The provision of arrangements for the selection from amongst its employees of a Health and Safety Representative.
- 1.4. The Board of Management recognises that its statutory obligations under legislation extend to employees, pupils, and any person legitimately conducting school business and the public.
- 1.5. The Board of Management of St. Paul's N.S. will ensure that the provisions of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 are adhered to.
- 1.6. The Board of Management will form the Safety Committee to monitor the implementation of the Safety and Health policies of St. Paul's N.S. and the requirement under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005.
- 1.7. To form the Safety Committee, the Board of Management will appoint a Safety Representative from the School Staff and a Safety Officer from the BOM.  
(Gemma Sherlock, is the Safety Representative and Board Member, Gordon Lyttle was appointed as Safety Officer for the term 2019 - 2023).

### **Consultation and Information**

It is the policy of the Board of Management of St. Paul's N.S.

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

### **Hazards**

All staff will complete Hazard Control Forms (Appendix 1) as hazards are identified. Some hazards can be rectified but others remain constant. The hazards have been divided into two categories.

Hazards that can be rectified or minimised will be dealt with as a matter of urgency. Hazard Control Forms will be posted on the Staffroom Noticeboard. When a Staff Member notices a hazard, he/she will

use the form to notify the Safety Representative, who will rectify the issue and sign with date and time of when the issue was resolved. Those hazards that cannot be rectified will be clearly indicated and appropriate procedures listed beside them.

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

## **Specific Hazards**

### **1. Fire**

It is the policy of the Board of Management of St. Paul's N.S. that

- There is an adequate supply of fire extinguishers, which will deal with any type of fire.
- All fire equipment is identified and regularly serviced.
- A fire officer has checked the school and equipment and all recommendations made by him/her have been implemented.
- Regular fire drills take place at least twice a year. (See Fire Evacuation Procedure Policy)
- Instruction is given in the use of fire extinguishers for specific materials/equipment.
- Pupils leaving school prior to finishing time should be signed out by a parent/guardian.
- Signs will be clearly visible to ensure visitors are aware of exit doors.
- Electrical equipment be unplugged or turned off outside school hours and when classrooms are vacated for lengthy periods.
- An assembly area is designated (Tarmac Area at the front of school – beside fire assembly point).
- Those leaving buildings/classrooms should let someone know.
- Exit signs are clearly marked.
- The teacher in each classroom will be responsible for fire evacuation and fire drills procedures.
- The position of AP11 has as one of its duties to act as Safety Representative and oversee in conjunction with the Safety Officer the above aspects of the policy.

### **2. Other Hazards**

- The surface of some of the playing areas is uneven and potentially hazardous. Fallen leaves/moss can leave surface slippery and potentially hazardous.
- On occasions the tiled surface of hallways and toilets become slippery due to condensation and splashes and pose a risk.
- There are goalposts on the school football pitch.
- Pupils are not allowed to play in the school grounds during weather which would pose a danger to their safety e.g. frost snow, ice and strong wind.
- During particularly inclement weather the Board of Management or Department of Education and Science reserves the right to keep the school closed if it is felt that a risk is posed to staff and pupils by travelling to or attending school.
- There are mats in porches and cloakrooms.
- Infectious diseases will be notified and steps taken to ensure the safety of staff and students against all such diseases. The Board of Management will endeavour to minimise the risk by adherence to sound principles of cleanliness, hygiene and disinfection. Proper disposable gloves will be available for first aid applications and cleaning tasks.

## **Constant Hazards**

### **1. Electrical Appliances**

It is the policy of the Board of Management of St. Paul's N.S. that only competent persons use Electrical Appliances. Such appliances and equipment will be subject to regular maintenance checks.

### **2. Chemicals**

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

### **3. Drugs/Medications**

It is the policy of the Board of Management of St. Paul's N.S. that no drugs or medication be administered to pupils by members of school staff due to the fact that staff are not qualified to do so and therefore could pose a threat to the welfare of the pupils. In exceptional circumstances where emergency medication is required to safeguard a seriously ill child's welfare, a teacher may be requested to administer such medication. The procedure in such cases is outlined in the Administration of Medication Policy.

#### **4. Wet Floors**

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

#### **5. The Code of Conduct**

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

#### **6. Accidents and Injuries**

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

#### **7. Bullying**

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

#### **8. Access to Employees is by Consent**

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

#### **9. Trained First Aid Personnel**

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

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

Required remedies and equipment are made available for first aid function.

There will be one main First Aid Box available at all times to staff which will contain:

- Anti-septic wipes
- Plasters
- Selection of dressings and bandages
- Medical latex gloves
- Disinfectant e.g. Savlon
- Cotton wool
- Eye wash e.g. Optrex
- Burn gel
- Bug bite relief
- Thermometers
- Safety pins
- Scissors
- First aid advice pamphlet

A smaller first aid box containing anti-septic wipes and plasters will also be kept in the Junior Room, Middle Room and Learning Support Room.

#### **Other Procedures**

##### **1. Educational Visits**

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

##### **2. Visitors to the School**

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

##### **3. Wet Days**

On wet days, children will be supervised indoors. The pupils stay in their classroom, where they read, draw, play board games or chat. Children may participate in active indoor games/activities as planned by the Active School Co-ordinator and staff.

#### **4. Emergency Closures**

On occasions where school is in progress and it becomes necessary to close the school for safety reasons, the school bus operators and parents who bring their children to school are contacted. Every effort is made to ensure that all parents are made aware of the situation through Aladdin, local media, school website etc. Transport home is arranged and where there is nobody at home pupils can stay with neighbouring parents with their own parents' consent.

#### **Success Criteria**

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

#### **Roles and Responsibility**

##### **DUTIES OF ALL EMPLOYEES**

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

##### **DUTIES OF SAFETY OFFICER AND/OR SAFETY REPRESENTATIVE**

- Conduct an assessment to identify all hazards on the appropriate form (Appendix 1). A Sample Checklist is included as Appendix 2.
- Assess the risks associated with these hazards.
- Detail arrangements made, resources supplied, and responsibility required to deal with the hazards and to keep them under review.
- To liaise with the Safety Rep on matters of Health and Safety.
- To make recommendations for the alleviation of potential hazards.
- To monitor progress in relation to dealing with hazards.
- Report on all of the above at appropriate BOM meetings.

#### **Timeframe for Implementation**

The revised policy will be implemented from September 2023.

#### **Timeframe for Review**

This policy is reviewed annually.

#### **Responsibility for Review**

The BOM will be responsible for reviewing the policy.

#### **Ratification and Communication**

The Board of Management ratified this policy on the .




## Appendix 2

### SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES' CHECKLIST

#### **1 CIRCULATION AREAS**

##### **1.1 Passages**

Check that

- 1.1.1 floor surfaces are even and are not slippery;
- 1.1.2 passages are adequately lit;
- 1.1.3 litter or rubbish has not been allowed to accumulate;
- 1.1.4 mats, etc, are not positioned in such a way as to be tripping hazards;
- 1.1.5 there are no areas of loose, flaking or damaged paint, plaster or plasterboard.

##### **1.2 Doors and Windows**

Check that

- 1.2.1 doors are unobstructed;
- 1.2.2 doors with glass windows have toughened or laminated glass;
- 1.2.3 doors with a fire resistance requirement have wire reinforced glass;
- 1.2.4 there are no doors with:
  - loose or broken hinges;
  - damaged or sticking catches;
  - broken wood panels or glass panels;
  - loose or stiff handles;
- 1.2.5 doors are not allowed to swing freely without restraint;
- 1.2.6 windows are not broken or cracked;
- 1.2.7 windows open easily without undue force being applied;
- 1.2.8 windows do not jut out dangerously when open;
- 1.2.9 windows are cleaned regularly;
- 1.2.10 windows do not have broken fastenings or cords.

#### **2 HEATING AND VENTILATION**

Check that

- 2.1 the heating system is regularly serviced and maintained in good order.
  - 2.2 the heating system is adequate to comply with the requirements of circular 24/82;
  - 2.3 where there are large areas of glass facing direct sunlight, there is provision for shading, e.g. Venetian blinds;
  - 2.4 windows can be easily opened to allow for adequate ventilation.
- Further advice on heating and ventilation is given in the next section.

#### **3 FIRE SAFETY**

Check that

- 3.1 the fire exits and escape routes are clear from obstructions;

- 3.2 fire doors are kept unlocked and unobstructed whilst people are on the premises;
  - 3.3 all designated fire exits are clearly marked;
  - 3.4 evacuation procedures are clearly displayed;
  - 3.5 staff and children are familiar with evacuation procedures;
  - 3.6 staff are familiar with and have been adequately trained in the procedure to be followed when using fire fighting equipment;
  - 3.7 there have been practice evacuations/fire drills held at least once per term;
  - 3.8 fire doors open outwards and are not held or wedged open;
  - 3.9 fire extinguishers and fire blankets are checked and maintained in accordance with manufacturer's instructions;
  - 3.10 the fire fighting equipment available is that recommended by the local authority's fire officer and is located in accordance with the fire officers recommendations;
  - 3.11 the fire alarm system is tested at regular intervals whilst the school is in session to ensure that it works and is audible in all parts of the building;
  - 3.12 flammable substances e.g. cleaning fluids, photocopying chemicals etc, are stored correctly, away from any sources of heat.
- More detailed advice on fire safety is given in the next section.

## **4 ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT**

### **4.1 General**

All electrical equipment should be maintained and checked regularly by a competent person. Such maintenance should include checking that:

- equipment is correctly wired and earthed;
- plugs are correctly wired;
- use ratings that are correct for the type of equipment being used (fuse ratings should be marked on the equipment and the plug).
- the mains supply is still capable of meeting the maximum demand;
- the distribution system (i.e. sockets, bench supplies etc) is suitable for the type of work being carried out;
- the isolating switches are marked, well-sited, accessible and known to staff;
- residual current (earth leakage) circuit breakers are used where appropriate.

### **4.2 Lighting**

Visually check that

- 4.2.1 all the light fittings are working and are kept in a clean condition;
- 4.2.2 light switches are not broken and appear to be in a safe condition;
- 4.2.3 the lighting is adequate for the type of work being undertaken as specified in Circular 24/82.

### **4.3 Plugs/Sockets/Leads**

Visually check that

- 4.3.1 plugs are in good condition with no cracks or pieces missing;
- 4.3.2 sockets are in good condition with no cracks or pieces missing;
- 4.3.3 socket screws and mountings are secure;
- 4.3.4 sockets are situated in safe positions, convenient for the equipment to be used and not subject to damp;
- 4.3.5 indicator lights on sockets function correctly;
- 4.3.6 insulation on leads is not cracked or frayed;
- 4.3.7 leads are without knots or joins and are reasonably free of 'kinks';
- 4.3.8 Leads are the correct length for the equipment being used;
- 4.3.9 there are no trailing leads;
- 4.3.10 surge protection adaptors are being used and not overloaded;
- 4.3.11 leads and flexible cable are securely fixed at both equipment and plug ends.

### **4.4 Equipment**

Check that

- 4.4.1 fixed and portable electrical equipment is not damaged and, as far as you are aware, is operating correctly;
- 4.4.2 copies of manufacturers' instructions/operating manuals are easily accessible;
- 4.4.3 equipment is only being used for purposes for which it was intended;
- 4.4.4 where appropriate, all electrical equipment is switched off and, unplugged when not in use;
- 4.4.5 mains isolating switches are easily accessible and known to staff;
- 4.4.6 on/off indicator lights function correctly;
- 4.4.7 equipment incorporating heating has a thermal safety cut-out in addition to a thermostat;
- 4.4.8 equipment containing liquid has a leakage detector;



4.4.9 all items of electrical equipment are properly and regularly maintained and serviced.

## **5 USE OF GAS**

There are currently no gas installations in the *school*.

## **6 FIRST AID**

Check that

6.1 notices are posted in prominent positions detailing:

- procedure for calling ambulances etc;
- telephone number of local doctor, gardai, hospital.
- procedure for dealing with individual pupils emergencies due to known conditions/allergies etc

6.2 first aid boxes are readily available and adequately stocked

6.3 the accident book is readily available and kept up-to-date.

## **7 GENERAL PURPOSE CLASSROOMS**

7.1 look again at sections 1-4;

Check that

7.2 hazards are not arising from overcrowded classrooms;

7.3 all cupboards, fixed blackboards, display units are stable;

7.4 classroom furniture is not damaged;

7.5 wherever possible, there are no sharp edges or corners on the furniture;

7.6 furniture is positioned safely;

7.7 all shelf mountings are secure.

## **8 HALLA**

Check that

8.1 floors are clean, even, non-slip and splinter proof;

8.2 PE equipment is stacked securely and positioned so as not to cause a hazard;

8.3 there is a regular routine for inspecting furniture, floors, apparatus, equipment and fittings;

8.4 wooden benches etc are free from splinters and generally sound;

8.5 benches are stable and do not wobble when in use;

## **9 NON-TEACHING AREAS**

### **9.1 Offices**

Check that

9.1.1 substances for use with photocopying/duplicating machines are stored correctly, and that the room where photocopying/duplicating machines are operated is adequately ventilated;

### **9.2 Kitchen Areas**

9.2.1 the kitchen/dining area is kept clean;

9.2.2 the kitchen floors are sound and non-slip, especially when wet;

9.2.3 equipment is adequately guarded.

### **9.3 Boiler Rooms**

9.3.1 there is no combustible waste stored in boiler rooms or elsewhere (e.g. oily rags);

9.3.2 all safety devices in the boiler room are in proper working order;

9.3.3 the boiler is regularly maintained by a competent person;

9.3.4 all cleaning materials, particularly those which might be hazardous, are securely stored;

9.3.5 in the case of solid fuel boilers, there are covered containers to enable ashes to be removed without delay to an area where pupils are not liable to come into contact with them.

### **9.4 Staff Facilities**

9.4.1 the staffroom is clean, warm and well lit;

9.4.2 there are adequate cloakroom facilities and storage facilities for personal belongings, books etc;

9.4.3 the staffroom is large enough for the numbers to be accommodated and sufficient seating is provided, both with upright chairs and tables or desks for working and with comfortable seating;

9.4.4 there is provision for tea and coffee to be made;

9.4.5 staff sanitary facilities are suitable, sufficient and properly cleaned.

### **9.5 Hygiene**

Check that the following are available

9.5.1 soap

- 9.5.2 hand drying facilities
- 9.5.3 hot water
- 9.5.4 toilet paper
- 9.5.5 litter bin per classroom
- 9.5.6 provision for disposal of sanitary towels
- 9.5.7 safe, suitable, sufficient and properly cleaned sanitary facilities.

## **9.6 Outside Areas**

- 9.6.1 there are no uneven/broken/cracked paving slabs;
- 9.6.2 outside steps are secure;
- 9.6.3 roofs, guttering, drain pipes etc are, as far as can be seen, sound and well maintained;
- 9.6.4 all play areas, are kept clean and free from glass;
- 9.6.5 outside play/PE appliances are securely anchored;
- 9.6.6 holes for goalposts are covered when posts are not in position;
- 9.6.7 outside lighting works and is sufficient;
- 9.6.8 all parking facilities for cars and cycles are safe in regard to the presence of pedestrians;
- 9.6.9 all builders' materials, caretakers' maintenance equipment etc are kept securely.