



SAOL *Christian School*

Teaching children how to live, not just how to make a living.

Health & Safety Policy

Introductory Statement

In accordance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, it is the policy of the Management of Saol Christian School to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of all staff (paid and volunteer) and to protect students, visitors, contractors and other persons at the school from injury and ill health arising from any work activity. The successful implementation of this policy requires the full support and active cooperation of all staff, students, contractors and visitors to the school. It is recognised that hazard identification, risk assessment and control measures are legislative requirements which must be carried out by the employer to ensure the safety, health and welfare of all staff.

The Management, as employer, undertakes in so far as is reasonably practicable to:

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

The Management of Saol Christian School is committed to playing an active role in the implementation of this occupational safety, health and welfare policy and undertakes to review and revise it in light of changes in legislation, experience and other relevant developments.

Rationale

The policy represents the Management of Saol Christian School'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 Management is required to document the school's health and safety policy and make it available to all employees, outside services providers and Inspectors of the Health and Safety Authority. The Management also considers its duty-of-care in the school and this must be an integral part of any Health and Safety Policy.

Aims

With this policy, the school ideally hopes:

- 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/volunteers
 - Ensuring competent employees, who will carry out safe work practices
 - Ensuring safe access and escape routes
 - Ensuring safe handling and use of hazardous substances and equipment
 - Provision of safe equipment including maintenance and use of appropriate guards
 - Provision of appropriate personal protective equipment.

Safety Statement

Saol Christian School

Guidelines

An integral part of a school's Safety, Health & Welfare Policy is the preparation and display of a Safety Statement.

Responsibilities of employer - The Management of Saol Christian School

- Provide and maintain a workplace that is safe and do likewise for all machinery and equipment etc.
- Manage work activities to ensure the safety, health and welfare of employees
- 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, including the provision of a safe place of work in which the risk of assault to teachers is prevented or minimised
- 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 Management 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

Health and safety is everyone's responsibility. As a worker you have legal duties designed to protect you and those you work with.

Responsibilities include:

- Not to be under the influence of an intoxicant to the extent that they endanger your own or other persons' safety. To submit to tests for intoxicants as and when regulations specifying testing procedures are adopted

- To co-operate with an employer or other people to ensure that the 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 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

Entitlements of safety representative of the Management (Section 25 Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act, 2005)

The safety representative has the right to:

- 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
- Receive 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.

Carrying Out of a Risk Assessment

Each year, the Management should carry out a risk assessment, identifying hazards, assessing the risks and specifying the actions required to eliminate or minimize them. They will enlist the help of the teachers and other relevant parties to carry this out. Hazards may include physical, health, biological, chemical and human hazards.

Using the HSA format from their publication '*Guidelines on Managing Safety, Health and Welfare in Primary Schools*' available on http://www.hsa.ie/eng/Education/Guidelines_on_Managing_Safety_Health_and_Welfare_in_Primary_Schools.pdf will assist the recording of the whole process. Please refer to Part 2, Pages 18-110.

As part of the general approach to safety, other policies & practices which have a bearing on safety, health and welfare have been put in place and communicated to employees, pupils, parents and others using the premises.

A school environment audit is carried out annually in August/September also using the HSA format from their publication 'Guidelines on Managing Safety, Health and Welfare in Primary Schools' available on http://www.hsa.ie/eng/Education/Guidelines_on_Managing_Safety_Health_and_Welfare_in_Primary_Schools.pdf - refer to Part 2, Pages 5-8.

Procedures to deal with emergencies

- Emergency contact procedures
 - Contact details are updated annually. The contact details are kept on file in the school office. A copy of staff emergency contact details are also kept in the school office. The Principal has access to all records kept on file.
 - The Principal usually contacts parents/guardians in case of an emergency
- Fire-drill and school evacuation procedures
 - Fire-drills are held on a regular basis
 - Teachers and pupils are aware of the designated assembly points following evacuation of the building.
 - Procedures for evacuation displayed near the door of each room
 - The school revises these procedures after each drill
 - New staff are notified of these procedures by the Principal at the first staff meeting each year. Staff taking up positions during the school year are informed by the Principal.
 - Pupils are notified of these procedures by the class teachers at the start of the year and they are regularly reminded throughout the year
- A Serious Accident Procedure & Accident Report Form is available in the school office. A report of this kind must be made to the HSA in respect of the following types of incident:
 - An accident causing loss of life to any employed or self-employed person if sustained in the course of their employment
 - An accident sustained in the course of their employment which prevents any employed or self-employed person from performing the normal duties of their employment for more than 3 calendar days not including the date of the accident
 - An accident to any person not at work caused by a work activity which causes loss of life or requires medical treatment.
- A Critical Incident Management Plan is in place in the school. Please refer to the plan. A copy of this and relevant accompanying information is available in the Critical Incident Management Plan file located in the office
- Exceptional closures
 - In the event of an exceptional closure, parents receive a text via WhatsApp to their mobile device

Health issues

- Registration Form
 - There is a form that accompanies the enrolment form allowing parents to identify any allergies/illnesses of a new pupil
- Managing specific health issues
 - Staff are made aware of the health issues in relation to certain pupils by the Principal and/or previous class teacher at staff meetings and/or on a one-to-one basis
- Administration of Medication – refer to the Administration of Medicine Policy
- Sickness or Injury
 - If children are sick or injured, the Principal usually contacts parents/guardians
- Illnesses and contagious infections such as rubella, chicken pox etc. - See 'Infectious diseases in the Primary School: Health Service executive (H.S.E.)
- Head-lice
 - Parents are notified by text, email or note. They are reminded to check their child's hair regularly and of ways in which to treat them if they're present
- School hygiene
 - Children are instructed to sanitise hands on entry into the school building on arrival each morning, and after break and lunch if they have been playing outside.
 - Children are encouraged to wash their hands regularly. Soap and water and a towel are available in the restroom and kitchen areas.
- General cleanliness of school environment
 - The school ensures a consistent standard of cleanliness throughout the school, including refuse, toilets, classrooms, floors etc. A cleaning and sanitising list is followed each day after students have finished.
- First Aid
 - At least 2 members of staff should have a qualification in First Aid
- Water
 - There is an adequate supply of drinking water in the school for staff and pupils
- Clothing/protection
 - Parents/pupils are made aware of the need for proper clothing and protection

Safety and welfare issues

Pupils

- Assembly and Dismissal of Pupils
 - Assembly:
 - Children assemble each morning between 8.45 a.m. and 9.00 a.m in the Primary Learning Centre. They are supervised by members of staff. After assembly, class teachers lead their class to their classroom
 - Dismissal:
 - Junior Infants and Senior Infants are collected from the back door at 2.30p.m by a parent/guardian/designated person. The teacher calls individual children as their parent/guardian/designated person arrive at the door and they are escorted off the premises by this person
 - All other classes are brought to the kitchen/cloakroom area at 3.00p.m. The teacher calls the individual children as their parent/guardian/designated person arrive at the door and they are escorted off the premises by this person
 - In the event of a child not being collected, they are brought to the office, where the teacher calls home. The child stays in a supervised area until they are collected.
 - Ensuring pupil safety on the grounds
 - Parking - There are public parking bays situated on the North Strand beside the school. There are also public parking bays across from the school by the river. Parking is prohibited in the school yard or on the footpath outside the school building.
 - Footpaths – The school can be accessed by all from the yard. It can also be accessed by the front door although students should use the yard entrances.
- Pupils leaving the school premises during the school day e.g. dentist or doctor appointment
 - The parent notifies the teacher by note in advance of the departure e.g. earlier that morning
 - On arriving to collect the child, the parent speaks to the teacher
 - Parent/guardian will sign out the child being collected
- Supervision of Pupils:
 - Supervision in the event of a teacher being absent

Staff

- Garda clearance
 - The school ensures that all successful staff at interview have recently been vetted by the gardaí
 - The school endeavours to maintain a high standard in its 'duty of care' to all staff by encouraging a positive and safe environment and taking precautions to ensure that this exists e.g. clear signs, planned evacuation procedures etc.

- Positive Staff Relations
 - Practices to support positive staff relations in the school include
 - Internal communication board, staff meetings, circulation of minutes, emails
 - Process of decision-making – insofar as is possible, staffed are called upon to make decisions on the basis of consultation and consensus within the school community e.g. adoption of school plans
 - Effective school policies and procedures – all teachers are aware and have a soft copy of school plans, policies, practices and procedures
 - Mutual respect
 - A sense of fairness
 - Informal meetings and communication e.g. outings, positive news texts etc.
 - Staff are made aware of the procedures to address cases of adult bullying/harassment or to initiate a grievance procedure at staff meetings, informal meetings, emails from Principal, through access to policies and reminders to read policies. These procedures are as follows:
 - Stage 1 – Decide to address the problem
 - Stage 2 – Informally address the problem
 - Stage 3 – Involvement of the Principal
 - Stage 4 - Referring the matter to the Management for further investigation

- Assaults on Teachers/School Employees:
 - Practices that create and maintain a culture where acts of violence are not tolerated include
 - Good practice for the conduct of communication between home and school
 - Admitting parents/visitors to the school e.g. dropping children in the morning, collecting early, 'appointment-only' meetings
 - Arrangement and facilitating parent-teacher meeting
 - A detailed Code of Behaviour which is available online for all to view
 - Clear complaints procedure in place

- Parents should always go to the class teacher first. In most cases, things can be resolved at this level. The teacher will inform the principal of any serious complaints
 - At this stage, if a parent feels that the issue has not been resolved, they are welcome to make an appointment with the principal to discuss the matter
 - If they still feel unhappy with the outcome, they can then bring their concerns to the Management of the school. In order to do this, the concerns must be put in writing and addressed to the Management
- o In the event of an incident occurring, the procedures outlined below should be followed
- The incident should be immediately reported to the Principal. All staff are encouraged to then debrief with a trusted colleague of their choice. The details of the incident are recorded by the teacher in their own notes and the Principal in her notes
 - Where necessary, immediate medical assistance should be sought
 - The matter should be reported to the Gardaí, where appropriate. The report would normally be made by the teacher who was assaulted. However, the Principal may also report it
 - The Board of Management should be notified of the incident and where necessary, an emergency meeting of the Board should take place. The Board should notify its legal advisers of the assault. The Board's insurance company should also be notified
 - Where the assault is by a pupil the matter should be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour
 - Repeatedly aggressive pupils should be referred to, with the consent of the parents, for psychological assessment in order to assess the pupil's social and emotional needs and to determine how these can be best met
 - Where the assault is committed by a parent/guardian, the parent/guardian should be immediately instructed in writing not to make direct contact with the teacher/school pending full consideration of the matter by the Management. Subsequently, the Management should correspond with the parent/guardian stating:
 - That the Management considers the matter unacceptable
 - What action the Management intends to take
 - Outlining what pre-conditions before access to the school is restored
- Employees work in a reasonably comfortable and safe environment that is well heated and ventilated, appropriately lit, suitable chairs etc.
 - There are safeguards in place for pregnant staff members e.g. they are notified immediately in the event of an infectious diseases and encouraged to seek immediate medical advice on how to proceed

- Online Training is being offered to staff in the areas of First Aid, Fire Safety, Heavy Lifting.

Success criteria of Safety, Health & Welfare Policy

The policy will be successful if it has

- Created a safe and healthy school environment by identifying, preventing and tackling hazards and their accompanying risks
- Ensured understanding of the school's duty of care towards pupils
- Protected the school community from workplace accidents and ill health at work
- Outlined procedures and practices in place to ensure safe systems of work
- Complied 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
 - Ensuring competent employees, who will carry out safe work practices
 - Ensuring safe access and escape routes
 - Ensuring safe handling and use of hazardous substances and equipment
 - Provision of safe equipment including maintenance and use of appropriate guards
 - Provision of appropriate personal protective equipment.

Roles and Responsibility

The people who have particular responsibilities for aspects of the policy and how they fulfil their role include

- The Management - Sharon Reilly
- Safety Officer – Sharon Reilly
- Safety Representative – Sharon Reilly
- Each member of staff

Implementation Date

This policy was implemented in September 2018

Timetable for Review

The Health and Safety Policy will be reviewed biannually or as the need arises. The next review for this policy will take place during the school year 2022/2023. The HSA recommended that a review should be conducted when any changes have been made to work practices, personnel, where a practice is no longer valid or under the direction from the HSA inspector. It is recommended by the HSA that the statement be reviewed at least annually.

Ratification & Communication

This revised plan was ratified at a Board of Management meeting in term one of the school year 2021/2022.

Date of ratification: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____