

St. Thomas' Senior National School, Jobstown

Health and Safety Policy

Introduction

St. Thomas Senior School places emphasis on the importance of having a Health and Safety Policy in place. The central objective of this policy is the welfare, care and protection of every young person in line with the Education Act 1998, the Education Welfare Act 2000 and Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005. This policy was revised and ratified by the Board of Management in June 2012.

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 policy. St. Thomas Senior School is committed to addressing the needs of the whole school in relation to health and safety. The school believes that teachers, parents and the Board of Management, in cooperation with other agencies in the community dealing with this issue, need to work together to implement this policy.

We recognise that safety is paramount in the school and its environs. The Board of Management's objective is to endeavour to provide a safe and healthy work environment for all employees and pupils and to meet duties to members of the public with whom we come in contact.

The Policy undertakes to outline the

1. Responsibilities of the employer - Board of Management
2. Responsibilities of the employees
3. The entitlements of the Safety Representative

The school ethos

St. Thomas Senior National School is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin. While it is a school with a Catholic ethos, it has due recognition for pupils of all other faiths or of no faith. Our school motto "Every Child is Valued" is inherent in everything we do. We are committed to creating a caring,

supportive and respectful atmosphere at school where every pupil can achieve their full potential.

Our primary aim is to promote the academic, moral, physical, social and emotional development of our pupils appropriate to their age and abilities in a caring, safe and nurturing environment. The ethos of the school is reflected in our Code of Behaviour with the emphasis on respect for self, for others and for the environment. We commit ourselves to creating an ethos of care, concern, support and respect throughout the school and we place an emphasis on the pastoral care of our pupils.

Aims

1. This Safety statement aims to create a safe and healthy school environment by identifying, preventing and tackling hazards and their accompanying risks
2. It aims to protect the school community from workplace accidents and ill health at work.
3. It aims, so far as is reasonably practicable, to comply with all relevant health and safety legislation.

The Policy in action

The Health and Safety policy is a combination of responsibilities that require cooperation of all the parties involved in the management of St. Thomas Senior School. The parties involved are:

- Board of Management
- School employees
- Parents/guardians and children who attend the school

Responsibilities of employer - Board of Management (*See Solas, December 2005*):

- 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
- Prepare and update procedures to deal with an emergency situation and communicate these procedures to employees
- Appoint a competent person to oversee the functions of the Board in relation to Health & Safety
- Provide where possible, training and information to workers in a format and language that is appropriate
- 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...*)
- Ensure that a member of the Board of Management is nominated as a Safety Officer
- Ensure that a copy of the Health and Safety policy is available in the school and available to the Board of Management on request

Responsibilities of employees:

Health and safety is everyone's business. As a worker you have legal duties designed to protect you and those you work with (*Solas, December 2005*).

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 (See Substance Abuse Policy)
- To co-operate with the Board of Management or other people (Medical Officer, Fire Officer, Maintenance Contractor) 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, if provided, 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
- If you are suffering from a disease or illness that adds to risks, inform Principal Teacher.

Responsibilities of parents/guardians and children

Health and safety is everyone's business. Parents/guardians, once informed of health and safety regulations, are duly expected to observe the rules in their own interests and that of their children. Parents/guardians are notified of health and safety regulations through newsletters from the Principal Teacher, letters from the Board of Management and signs on the school premises.

- Encourage the children to know, understand and observe school rules in relation to their own health and safety and that of others in the school community
- Not to be under the influence of an intoxicant to the extent that they endanger their own or other persons' safety on the school premises.
- Not to engage in improper conduct that will endanger themselves or anyone else
- To report any dangerous practices or situations that they become aware of to an appropriate person or the Principal Teacher
- Not to interfere or misuse any safety equipment in the school
- To familiarise themselves with the school's Health and Safety Policy either through hard copy or email

Entitlements of safety representative (*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 along with the principal, on a schedule agreed with the Board of Management or immediately in the event of an accident, dangerous occurrence or imminent danger or risk to the safety, health and welfare of any person
- Participate in appropriate training if provided
- Investigate accidents and dangerous occurrences

- Investigate complaints made by employees
- Accompany an inspector carrying out an inspection at the workplace
- Make representations to the Principal Teacher on matters relating to safety, health and welfare
- Make representations to and receive information from a Health and Safety inspector
- Consult and liaise with Principal Teacher on matters of safety on and off the school premises

Risk Assessment

See safety statement in principal's office

a. Safety Checks

A review of safety in the school will be conducted annually. The review covers issues that may give concern for the overall safety in the school and its environs. Teachers will monitor safety within their own classroom. They will report any issues of concern to the Special Duties teacher with responsibility for Health and Safety, and to the Principal. If any of the matters arising are considered to be of a serious nature that may involve considerable expenditure, the Principal Teacher will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Management and if necessary, a meeting will be called to deal with the matter.

b. Identification of Hazards

All staff members are requested to be vigilant in matters of safety in the school and its environs and report matters requiring attention to the Special Duties Teacher/Principal Teacher/Caretaker.

Good practice in school

Assembling of pupils

- Senior staff members and SNAs supervise yard from 8:50 - 9:00
- Pupils who attend the Breakfast Club must remain there until 8.55 a.m.
- Pupils, some with their parents/guardians, assemble in the Yard at 9:00am
- Parents/guardians who drive to the school are asked to observe legal parking regulations i.e. to leave the zig-zag lined area free of cars, and not to use the staff car-park. (the staff car-park is for staff cars only)

- The class teachers collect the pupils at 9.00am and escort them to the classroom. If parents/guardians wish to give the teacher a brief message, they must make an appointment in advance.
- Late arrivals enter the school through the main door that operates on a buzzer system from the Secretary's office.

Dismissal of pupils

- At official closing time (2:40 pm) corridors are supervised by class/support teachers. The school yard and exit points are supervised by members of staff as children exit from the school grounds. If a child is not collected, the parents / guardians are notified by phone
- Children who have leave school before official closing time have to be signed out by parents/guardians. They may do so at the Secretary's office.

School grounds

The caretaker and staff monitor the school grounds to ensure its safety. The school yard is checked for debris every morning.

Gates: the caretaker has keys

Yard: Caretaker is alerted to matters requiring attention

Pathways: checked by the caretaker. Members of the school community may also alert matters requiring attention.

Mats: are placed in lobby

Boiler House: this area is out of bounds for the children and is kept locked. The caretaker is the key holder.

Cleaning agents: this area is out of bounds for pupils.

Staff-room: this area is out of bounds for pupils unless accompanied by an adult. Staff monitor all electrical apparatus to ensure its safety.

Classrooms: teachers monitor the safety of classrooms. Issues that require attention are brought to the attention of the caretaker.

Yard Supervision

- A rota for yard supervision is drawn up by the Deputy Principal Teacher and provided to teachers.

- The teacher on yard duty uses a yard book to note misdemeanours. These are followed up by the deputy principal. A range of sanctions are used in the yard to ensure that it is a safe place for children at break times.
- A child may leave the yard and re-enter the school building only with permission from teacher on duty.
- If an accident occurs, the child is treated as per school policy. A note of the accident is made in the yard book and an accident report form is filled out. Yard supervision is frequently reviewed at staff meetings during the school year.
- When break is over, pupils on hearing the bell, stop play and return to their designated lines. Classes are accompanied back to their rooms by their teacher.

Classroom Supervision

- Classes are to be supervised by the teacher.
- If the class teacher has to leave the room, he/she must alert the teacher next door/Principal Teacher / Deputy Principal. Classes are not left unattended.

General health and well-being in the school

Staff members must exercise duty of care at all times. However if there is a threat to a child being physically hurt or if a child is being physically hurt, staff members may need to use reasonable restraint or minimum intervention in order to lessen the risk to the safety of children /staff members. In so doing the child is protected from further harm.

The following procedures, which have been agreed by the staff and Board of Management, will be followed in the event of an incident involving actual or threatened physical harm to a pupil / staff members.

On yard:

1. Assess the situation
2. Use your voice, stay calm and in control
3. Call for another staff member if necessary
4. The other staff member will disperse the children
5. Ask those involved to stop, to calm down and stay with you

6. Where restraint is deemed appropriate, stand in between the pupils with back to one, keeping the other at arm's length
7. Lead the least aggressive pupil away, in order to diffuse the situation
8. Walk calmly away with the pupil from the yard

In class:

1. Ask a child /SNA to alert the teacher next door and to notify the principal or deputy principal
2. Use your voice, stay calm and in control
3. Stand in between the pupils with back to one, keeping the other at arm's length
4. Lead the least aggressive child away, in order to diffuse the situation
5. If the child will not leave the classroom, notify another adult and bring the class out of the room or to the hall

Policies and procedures are in place for all of the following in St. Thomas S.N.S.

- Emergency contact procedures
- Fire-drill and school evacuation procedures
- Serious accident procedure
- Critical incident procedures
- Emergency closures
- Assembly and dismissal of pupils
- Supervision of pupils
- First Aid policy
- Substance use policy
- Authorised user policy/internet
- Healthy eating policy
- Child protection guidelines
- Administration of medication
- Enrolment policy

Monitoring and Evaluation of the Policy

The whole school staff of St. Thomas Senior School will ensure that it is a safe and healthy place to be in and will monitor the Health and Safety Policy. Monthly maintenance checks are done and any matters arising or in need of repair, replacement

or removal is brought to the attention of the caretaker or principal. Suggestions that may have arisen at staff meetings or offered by members of the school community or alerted to by professionals in the course of consultation will be borne in mind and amended as necessary in consultation with the Board of Management as required.

Dissemination of the policy

- A copy of the policy will be available to staff members and the Board of Management.
- A hard copy of the policy will be available to parents in the school, and will be issued on request. Alternatively, the policy document may also be e-mailed on request.
- (St. Thomas Senior School is committed to a Waste Reduction Programme and is aware of reducing the use of paper in the school.)

Review and Monitoring

This policy will be monitored and reviewed by the Board of Management on an annual basis and when the need arises. The board of management will ensure that adequate training and support is provided for all staff.

Policy ratified and adopted by the BOM on 8 June 2012.

Signed: _____
Chairperson

Date : _____