

Safety Statement School of the Divine Child

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 School of the Divine Child 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 use 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 consider regular risk assessments 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.

In School Management Team

- Is the link between the BOM and the staff.
- Is responsible for induction, on-going training and regular information on health and safety matters

- supports and assists staff to enable members to reach correct decisions about health and safety. The ISM will check at intervals that safe working methods are being observed that are in accordance with school and statutory procedures.
- Will conduct risk assessments and deal initially with any health and safety concerns received from staff, parents, guardians and others.

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.
- Staff members have individual responsibility to take 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.
- Staff members 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 an medication and/or intoxicant to the extent that it endangers their own or another person's safety and must inform the In School management team 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 become 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 **Mary O'Hanlon** 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 ground
- 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

- Parents 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 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. 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

- Entrance to the School is at reception. All callers must check in there. 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
- The back gates will be kept locked at all times and if opened, must be monitored by staff member who has opened the gate for whatever purpose

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.

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 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 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 nurse for her advice. The parent 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.
- Parents are required to inform the school of any on-going health problems that the child 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.

Hygiene and Tidiness at School

The Board of Management makes every effort to ensure that the school is hygienically clean and tidy.

- 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, and collected every day and put in bins outside.

Personal Hygiene

"Coughs and sneeze, elbows please". Bin your tissues
Pupils and staff must wash their hands after using the toilet.

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 parent 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 must do the following:

inform the school at the first opportunity of the nature of the illness

follow medical advice to determine the date for safe return to school

Clothing

- All items of personal clothing must be labelled with the child's name.
- Parents/guardians are required to check their child's hair regularly otherwise head lice can become a problem in school.

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.
- Nurse will check pupil if an accident occurs and be responsible for reporting.

Investigation, Recording and Reporting

All instances of serious and potentially serious accidents are recorded and investigated. 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 practised 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 and online via Aladdin, our online records system.
- 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, message on school voicemail, 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 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.
- 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.
- During break time, our school operates a monthly timetable of supervising staff – one rostered teacher will always be on duty and will be assisted by Special Needs Assistants.

School Excursions

- 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.

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.