



***St. Kevin's National School Health and Safety Policy  
2021-2022***

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## **Introduction**

This Safety Statement outlines policy on occupational health and safety matters. Specific health and safety issues of relevance to the School as a whole are detailed. Hazards, risks, risk control measures and arrangements and resources for ensuring a safe and healthy work environment are outlined. This Safety Statement is aimed at protecting staff, pupils and visitors from workplace accidents and ill health at work. This statement will be updated as necessary in light of new legislation, feedback, school structural changes and practical experience. The Safety Statement is reviewed annually. This Safety Statement is available to all persons affected by its operation (i.e. BOM, staff, pupils, parents, visitors and contractors).

## **Statement of Safety, Health & Welfare at St. Kevin's National School**

The policy of St. Kevin's National School is, in so far as is reasonably practicable, to ensure the safety, health and welfare of all our staff and pupils and further to ensure that persons not in our employment, who may be affected by our activities, are not thereby exposed to risks to their safety and health.

We will provide the necessary resources, structures and procedures required to safeguard against the risks arising from activities in the school and with regard to school related activities.

It is the strict duty of all employees to conform to School's safety policies and practices and to carry out their responsibilities as detailed in this document and in accordance with any other relevant legislation.

Each employee is expected to familiarise him/herself with the contents of this Statement and to cooperate fully in the execution of these procedures. It is the responsibility of the BOM to ensure same.

Currently the Safety Officer and Staff Health and Safety Representative undertake a joint annual check of the facility and report their findings to the Board. Thereafter the Board provides for any remedial action needed.

## **Duties of the BoM under the Safety Health & Welfare at Work Act 2005**

The Board is primarily responsible for creating and maintaining a safe and healthy workplace. These duties under include:

- a. Managing and conducting all work activities so as to ensure the safety, health and welfare of people at work,
- b. Designing, providing and maintaining a safe place of work that has safe access and egress, and uses plant and equipment that is safe and without risk to health.
- c. Prevention of risks from the use of any article or substance, or from exposure to physical agents, noise, vibration and ionising or other radiations.
- d. Planning, organising, performing, maintaining and, where appropriate, revising systems of work that are safe and without risk to health.
- e. Providing and maintaining welfare facilities for employees at the workplace.
- f. Providing information, instruction, training and supervision regarding safety and health to employees; this must be in a form, manner, and language that they are likely to understand.
- g. Cooperating with other employers who share the workplace so as to ensure that safety and health measures apply to all employees (including fixed-term and temporary workers) and providing employees with all relevant safety and health information.
- h. Providing appropriate protective equipment and clothing to employees (and at no cost to the employees).
- i. Appointing one or more competent persons to specifically advise the employer on compliance with the safety and health laws.
- j. Preventing risks to other people at the place of work,

- k. Ensuring that reportable accidents and dangerous occurrences are reported to the Health and Safety Authority.
- l. Obtaining where necessary, the services of a competent person for the purpose of ensuring the safety health & welfare of their employees.

### **Scope of Safety Statement**

*This safety statement deals with the health and safety issues that fall within the remit of this school's BoM. For the most part the business of this school is conducted in our school building and grounds at Sallynoggin. However part of school life is the undertaking of school excursions of the school premises. Our school practices and procedures with regard to the health and safety of participants on such excursions fall within the remit of school policy and are outlined above.*

*All staff, Parents' Council members and BoM members are circulated with the school plan annually, including this Safety Statement.*

### **Health and Safety Management Structure and Responsibilities**

*In accordance with this Safety Statement, and in compliance with relevant legislation, the School Principal, as part of his management function, is responsible to the school BoM for ensuring – so far as is reasonably practical – the safety and health of persons working, studying or visiting the school. In particular he is responsible for the following:*

- a. To ensure that we have prepared a Safety Statement relevant to our operations that complies with the 2005 Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act.
- b. To ensure that all reasonable hazards are identified and risks controlled.
- c. To ensure that regular safety inspections/audits are carried out to monitor compliance with the Safety Statement and legal requirements.
- d. To investigate all accidents to staff/pupils and to have the relevant Injury Report forms/Incident Book complete as appropriate.
- e. To ensure that the school Evacuation and First Aid Procedures are implemented.
- f. To ensure that the school staff is appropriately trained to carry out their duties safely and to ensure the attendance of staff at designated training courses as appropriate.
- g. Based on risk assessment, to arrange for the provision of adequate and appropriate personal protective equipment for employees.
- h. To ensure that pupils are adequately supervised. (Adequate level of supervision to be determined having regard to the age, maturity and status of the pupils).

### **Staff Responsibility**

*All staff (including full or part-time, permanent or temporary, regardless of any employment or contractual arrangement they may have) has the following duties under the Safety Health & Welfare at Work Act 2005:*

- a. Comply with relevant laws and protect their own safety and health, as well as the safety and health of anyone who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work,
- b. Ensure that they are not under the influence of any intoxicant to the extent that they could be a danger to themselves or others while at work,
- c. Cooperate with their employer with regard to safety, health and welfare at work,
- d. Not engage in any improper conduct that could endanger their safety or health or that of anyone else.
- e. Participate in safety and health training offered by their employer.

- f. *Make proper use of all machinery, tools, substances, etc. and of all personal protective equipment provided for use at work,*
- g. *Report any defects in the place of work, equipment, etc. which might endanger safety and health.*

*Additionally, employees are required to immediately report to the School Health and Safety Representative any accident resulting in loss or injury and any incident that could have resulted in loss or injury. Where he deems it necessary the representative will prepare a report for the BoM which will be passed to the Safety Officer to deal with the matter. The injured party is also required to co-operate with the investigation of the accident and the completion of the Incident Report. It is the responsibility of employees to report any hazards/risks, problems or concerns.*

### ***Health & Safety Resources and Training***

*Considerable resources are expended in securing, the health, safety and welfare of employees in terms of personnel, time, materials, equipment and the purchase of goods and services.*

*Where additional equipment, training etc. is required (whether as a result of on-going risk assessment or legislative change), resources will be allocated as required.*

*Access to the Health & Safety Authority (HSA) website <http://www.hsa.ie/eng/> to keep up to date with safety legislation, codes of practice and international standards is available to all staff through school online access.*

*The BoM is responsible for providing the following specific Health and Safety Training on an on-going basis.*

- a. *Manual Handling*
- b. *Fire Warden Training*
- c. *First Aid Training*
- d. *Training in Health and Safety*
- e. *Emergency Response Plan*
- f. *Risk Assessment & Control*
- g. *Office Ergonomics*
- h. *Other central training where risk assessment identifies specific school needs*

### ***Evacuation Drills***

*Evacuation Drills are organised twice annually by the Staff Safety Rep in cooperation with the Principal. Feedback on performance in terms of time taken to evacuate and particular difficulties with alarm systems /building fabric are notified to all staff.*

*The Evacuation procedures are posted in the door in each room of the school.*

*All staff are required to familiarise themselves with the locations of*

- a. *Escape routes.*
- b. *Fire alarm call points (red break glass units).*
- c. *Fire extinguishers and fire blankets.*
- d. *The Fire assembly point.*

### ***First Aid and Injury/Illness Management***

*Fully stocked First Aid boxes are available in the outside the principal's office.*

All new and amended equipment, procedures and processes are assessed as they arise and the results recorded. Staff members are encouraged to be watchful for hazards – to identify any issues that are not currently assessed – and to feedback to the Principal.

- a. A hazard is any substance, article, material or practice within the school, which has the potential to cause harm to any person in the school. Hazards are categorised as Physical, Chemical, Biological, Organisational, Environmental or Human.
- b. Risk is the potential of the hazard to cause harm in the actual circumstances of use. Risk Assessment is the evaluation of the likelihood that harm could arise from the hazard and the likely severity and extent of the harm.

The outcome of qualitative risk assessment requires that the identified hazards be given a risk rating of 'high', 'medium', or 'low'. Control measures are prioritised based on the risk rating and are commensurate with the level of risk.

Risk Control: In selecting controls the following hierarchy is adopted.

1. Elimination
2. Substitution
3. Enclosure
4. Guarding
5. Safe systems of work
6. Supervision
7. Training/Information

All final decisions on risk control must take into account the relevant legal requirements and relevant codes of practice.

Unacceptable Risk: Where the risk cannot be reduced to acceptable levels and finance is not available to implement appropriate controls, it is the policy to require that the activity cease or the area close.

### **Management of Contractors**

St. Kevin's operates a mandatory Permit to Work system for all contractors. All work undertaken by outside contractors on behalf of the School must be carried out under a Permit to Work System.

### **Adult Bullying and Harassment**

This section endeavours to protect the dignity of those working in the school. It outlines the procedures which should be followed by any member of the School's Community who may experience sexual harassment, harassment or bullying.

### **Definition of Adult Bullying**

Bullying in the workplace is repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person or persons. Bullying is where aggression or cruelty, viciousness, intimidation or a need to humiliate, dominate the relationships. Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour while to be condemned should not be described as bullying. In the workplace environment there can be conflicts and interpersonal difficulties. Many of these are legitimate industrial relations difficulties, which should be dealt with through the appropriate industrial relations channels. Only aggressive behaviour which is systematic and on-going should be regarded as bullying'.

In summary, Adult Bullying can take many different forms, which usually include:

- a. *Intimidation or harassment*
- b. *Aggression*
- c. *Verbal abuse*
- d. *Humiliation*
- e. *Undermining*
- f. *Dominance or abuse of power*
- g. *Different or unfavourable treatment*
- h. *Exclusion or isolation*

Key factors of Adult Bullying are that the behaviour is generally;

- a. *Persistent*
- b. *Unwanted*
- c. *Subtle*
- d. *Non-physical*

### ***Making a Complaint of Sexual Harassment and/or Adult Bullying***

*Any employee who feels he or she has been or is being sexually harassed or bullied should ask the perpetrator to stop. Where this form of action is unsuccessful, the employee may report the matter to any of the following - the Principal, INTO staff representative, member of the BoM.*

*Attempts will be made to resolve the matter informally, if appropriate. If it is not possible to resolve the matter informally, a formal complaints procedure shall be applied incorporating the following steps:*

- a. *A written report to the Board of Management should be made by the complainant or an authorised person to whom the complaint is being made and signed by the complainant.*
- b. *The complaint will be investigated with minimum delay as confidentially as possible by two individuals named by the Board of Management, one of whom shall be the same sex as the complainant and the alleged perpetrator.*
- c. *Both parties may be accompanied/represented at all interviews/meetings held, and these shall be recorded.*
- d. *Where a complaint is found to be substantiated, the extent and the nature of the sexual harassment will determine the form of action to be taken. These actions may include a verbal warning, a written warning and suspension from some duties with or without pay or suspension from full duties with or without pay or dismissal.*
- e. *Where an employee is victimised as a result of invoking or participating in any aspect of the complaints procedure, including acting as a witness for another employee, such behaviour will also be subject to disciplinary action.*

*No record of any complaint will be registered on an employee's file unless the formal procedure outlined above has been invoked. It is the policy of the school that issues of sexual harassment are best dealt with within the school. However, no aspect of this policy affects any employee's individual legal rights to take their complaint outside of the school.*

### ***Stress at Work***

*Occupational stress can be defined as 'the reaction a person may have to excessive demands or pressures arising when they try to cope with tasks, responsibilities or other types of pressures connected with their job but find*

difficulty, strain or excessive worry in doing so'. Stress can result when the cumulative demands on a person (both occupational and personal/family) exceed the person's capacity to cope at a given time. Examples of sources of stress are:

- a. Organisational change
- b. Strained working relationships
- c. Overwork/under work
- d. Lack of control
- e. Unattainable / constant deadlines
- f. Skills shortfalls to cope with job requirements
- g. Bullying and harassment
- h. Personal, non-work related difficulties

The effects of stress – particularly where pressure is intense and continues for some time – can be sustained and damaging both physically and psychologically. It is our aim to be proactive in the reduction/management of sources of stress. Members of staff that are subject to occupational stressors beyond their control are encouraged to seek assistance from a suitably qualified professional. Staff experiencing personal difficulties may, in the first instance, speak with the school Principal.

### **Pregnant Employees**

St. Kevin's is committed to protecting the reproductive health of all employees and minimising risks to the unborn. Pregnant employees must make the Principal aware of their condition as soon as possible. Health and Safety concerns may constitute a change or reduction in the duties of a pregnant employee. The BoM requires evidence of same in the form of a qualified medical practitioner report.

### **Out of Hours Work**

The school is available to staff and (supervised) pupils for work/clubs outside of the standard school day. The terms of this Safety Statement apply equally outside the standard school day, when on the school premises or on any school related activity.

### **Smoking**

Smoking is prohibited in the presence of pupils, at school or at school related activities.

### **Dignity at Work**

#### **Introduction**

The Board of Management recognises that all employees have the right to a workplace free from harassment, sexual harassment and adult bullying. It is fully committed to ensuring that all employees are able to enjoy that right. There is a responsibility on all employees to ensure a workplace free from harassment, sexual harassment and adult bullying for all other employees, and to be aware of this policy. Any complaint of harassment, sexual harassment or adult bullying shall be fully and properly investigated and, if substantiated, will be regarded as grounds for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. An attempt will be made to resolve the complaint informally in the first instance but if this is not possible, a formal procedure will be invoked. Confidentiality will be ensured, insofar as is possible, at all times during the investigation for all parties involved.

**Definition of Sexual Harassment**

*Sexual harassment means unwanted conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct based on a person's sex which affects the dignity of men and women at work. This can include unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct which is offensive and causes discomfort or humiliation to the individual concerned.*

*Examples of sexual harassment include:*

- a. Unwanted physical or verbal advances*
- b. Unwanted touching or physical gestures*
- c. Comments and remarks of a sexual or discriminatory nature*
- d. Unwelcome comments about personal appearance*
- e. Demands of sexual favours*
- f. Displays of pinups and pornographic material*
- g. Innuendoes of a sexual nature or based on a person's sex*
- h. Bullying*
- i. This list is not exhaustive.*

**Implementation**

*This policy is subject to annual review and will be fully implemented following ratification by the Board of Management.*

*Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chairperson of Board of Management)*

*Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal)*

*Date: \_\_\_\_\_*

*Date: \_\_\_\_\_*

*Date of next review: \_\_\_\_\_*