

St. Kevin's G.N.S.

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St. Kevin's G.N.S. Health and Safety Policy

Rationale

The Safety Statement approved by the Board of Management of St. Kevin's G.N.S. under the 'Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005' sets out the policy and organisation of safety, health and welfare in the school. 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 St. Kevin's G.N.S. 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 undertake a regular risk assessment 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.

Principal and Deputy Principal

- The Principal is the link between the BOM and the staff.
- The Principal will ensure that all staff, including temporary and part-time staff, receive induction, on-going training and regular information on health and safety matters and will consult with them, on behalf of the BOM, at least annually on such matters.

- The Principal will support and assist staff to enable them to reach correct decisions about health and safety and will check at intervals that safe working methods are being observed that are in accordance with school and statutory procedures.
- The Principal will also receive and deal initially with any health and safety concerns that she receives from staff, parents, guardians and others.
- The Deputy Principal will take on the duties of the Principal in her absence.

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.
- 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. 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.
- Being mindful of their role as being in *loco parentis*, if any member of staff suspects that a parent/guardian may be under the influence of an medication and/or intoxicant to the extent that it endangers their own or another person's safety, the Principal must be informed immediately.
- Staff 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 Principal 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 **Marie Linehan (Deputy Principal)** 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 grounds
- 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 and Guardians

- Parents and guardians 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 specifically assigned 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. Additionally, or alternatively, they may raise any concerns with the Chairperson of the Parents' Association Committee. 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.
- Parents and Guardians will provide the school with a doctor's note if a child needs to come to school on crutches.

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

- The main door must be securely closed at all times and all members of staff, parents and visitors must make sure that this is done.
- Parents and Guardians will access the school by the front door where the school secretary will deal with their request and contact the teacher if necessary. No visitor is allowed access to the general school building without a visitors' badge or garda vetting.
- Each child who arrives after 9am must sign the 'late' book.

- Any child being collected or returned to school must be signed in or out by an adult.
- The back gate of the school is locked daily from 10.15-12.45 for child safety.
- The back gate shall be locked again at 3pm.
- Parents/guardians are not permitted to park in the school grounds at any time.
- Any parent/guardian who usually collects the child but who wishes the child to walk home unattended on certain occasions must give permission in writing for the attention of the class teacher.
- In the case of any child who has written permission to leave the school unattended, the Board of Management of St. Kevin's G.N.S. is not responsible for their safety.
- Parents/guardians/authorised adults are reminded never to drive into the school car park to collect children.
- If pupils need to leave school early (for example, for a dental appointment), the parents or guardians must notify the school in advance. If a person other than a parent or guardian is collecting the child, the parent/guardian must give written permission to the class teacher (unless it is an emergency situation, in which case the school office may be contacted by telephone).
- Parents/guardians are reminded that they are responsible for their children once collected from the class teacher or before 8.50am.
- No child is allowed leave the school grounds once they have arrived unless they are accompanied by their parent/guardian/carer.
- 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.
- Every effort will be made to keep entrances and corridors free from obstruction.
- Fire exits will be kept free from obstruction.

Health and Wellbeing

General Health and Hygiene

- Parents/guardians 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/guardians 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 principal for a second opinion. The parent/guardian 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.
- A note is required should your child need to remain indoors at break/lunchtime.
- Parents/guardians are required to inform the school of any on-going health problems that the child may have, and the medications being used.
- Parents/guardians are asked to give details of any immediate health problem that a pupil 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.
- If pupils have a medical condition which may affect their work at school, parents should tell their teacher. This is particularly important with any physical, hearing or eyesight problems.

Hygiene and Tidiness at School

The Board of Management makes every effort to ensure that the school is hygienically clean and tidy. Children have their part to play too!

- 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, throughout the school and in the yard.
- All lunch litter must be taken home for disposal.

- Students should feel responsible for their school-home; they should take care of it and keep it as clean and neat as possible. Concern for the environment is part of the formation of ecological awareness.

Personal Hygiene

- All children enrolled in our school must be fully toilet trained. In a case where a child cannot self-toilet due to a condition or special education need, a doctor's certificate or report is required.
- "Coughs and sneeze, elbows please".
- All children must wash their hands after using the toilet.
- When a child used a tissue to blow his or her nose, the used tissue must be immediately placed in the correct bin.
- Hand-soap, towels and toilet roll are in regular supply around the school.
- Pupils in Fifth and Sixth class are informed of where to find a store of female sanitary products should they need them and how to dispose of these correctly.
- All members of staff reserve the right to inform the Principal if supplies of personal hygiene products are not sufficient at any time.
- Food items must never be brought into the toilet areas.
- Children are not allowed to swop or share water bottles, milk cartons, cups or any other such items.

Long-term Health Conditions

- So that our school can provide the best level of care for all children, parents/guardians must inform the school if the child has any long-term health conditions.
- Examples of such long-term health conditions include but are not limited to asthma, epilepsy, diabetes, etc.
- This information is requested via the enrolment form.
- If such a long-term health condition is diagnosed after a child has been enrolled, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to inform the school of any such diagnosis immediately.

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 child is suspected of having a relatively minor infectious illness (stomach bug, etc.), parents/guardians should keep the child away from school until deemed well to return. Upon return, a written note must be provided to the class teacher to explain the child's absence from school.
- If a parent/guardian 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/guardians must do the following:
 - inform the school at the first opportunity of the nature of the illness so that any possible immediate cases in other children in any class may be identified quickly
 - follow medical advice to determine the date for safe return to school
 - understand that in the case of some illnesses, the school may require a medical fitness cert to determine that the child is well and does not pose an infectious threat to other children, staff or other members of the school community.

Head Lice

To prevent the possibility and spread of head lice, parents/guardians are reminded to tie back their child's hair every school day.

- A normal part of growing up, head lice are highly contagious.
- The school will regularly remind all parents/guardians to check for head lice.
- Parents/guardians must inform the class teacher if their child has head lice so that the rest of the school can be notified. All such information received will be treated anonymously when informing the rest of the school community.

Clothing

- Children must wear our school uniform and tracksuit on the relevant days along with appropriate footwear.

- In times of cold weather, children must come to school with appropriate coats or jackets. Other cold weather gear, such as hats, scarves, gloves, etc., are at the discretion of parents/guardians.
- All items of personal clothing must be **labelled with the child's name**.
- Children are not allowed to wear makeup or false nails.

Medical Information

- All parents/guardians must ensure that teachers are aware in writing of any on-going medical condition that their child may have.
- Parents/guardians must complete the medical section of the application form and are reminded that they are responsible for any and all updates as necessary.

Medicines

- Parents/guardians must inform the class teacher if their child is on any form of medication, either short term or long term.
- Examples of short-term medications include but are limited to antibiotics, medicines containing paracetamol, antihistamines, etc.
- Examples of long-term medications include but are not limited to inhalers, Ritalin, etc.
- Non-prescriptive medicines will neither be stored nor administered to pupils in school.
- Prescribed medicines will not be administered in school without the written consent of parents and the specific authorisation of the Board of Management.
- The medicine should not be kept by the pupil. It should be held by the authorised teacher and out of reach of pupils.
- Children with acute illness (i.e. colds, temperatures, etc.) are not allowed to bring any medicines to school, either prescription or non-prescription.
- Any teacher who is authorised to administer any medication does so on a voluntary basis and reserves the right to refuse.
- In cases where class teachers have been authorised to administer medication, it is the parents'/guardians' duty to ensure that the class teacher is present on any given school day.

- In any case where the class teacher is not present to administer a prescribed medication, the Principal will administer the medication instead. If the Principal is not available, the Deputy Principal fills this role.
- Where possible, parents/guardians should ask the prescribing doctor to prescribe the administration of prescribed medicines outside of school hours.
- Changes in prescribed medication (or dosage) should be notified immediately to the school with clear written instructions of the procedure to be followed in storing and administering the new medication. Please ensure that medicine is always kept within date.
- The HSE will carry out vaccinations or school medical inspections (including but not limited to hearing, sight and dental) according to their policy during the school year.
- Consent forms will be issued and no child will be submitted to any vaccination or medical inspection without the direct and signed permission of parents/guardians.
- In the case of food allergies, parents and guardians are reminded that they have an important role in helping their child know and understand what she can and cannot eat.
- The Board want to ensure that all staff, permanent or temporary, can correctly identify children with diagnosed and specific on-going medical conditions, food allergies and/or board-approved administration of medication.
- Therefore, each such child will have their photograph displayed in the staff room, along with their name, class and diagnosed and specific on-going medical conditions, food allergies and/or board-approved administration of medication.

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.
- The Board of Management and all parents/guardians recognise that members of staff are not medical professionals but rather act *in loco parentis*.
- Minor accidents are treated at school, such as slight cuts and abrasions etc. The supervising staff or other designated staff members at the school will deal with

these by washing the affected area with cold water. Parents/guardians are expected to check injuries when the child returns home from school.

- Hypo-allergenic plasters will only be used at the discretion of the supervising teacher.
- If the injury requires more attention than a wash with cold water or the use of an ice pack, then the parents/guardian will be notified.
- A member of staff will never administer medication due to an accident.
- When a child receives a blow to the head, no matter how minor it may be deemed by the supervising teacher, parents/guardians will also be notified.
- When an accident occurs during the school day that the supervising teacher deems more serious than a minor accident, an entry into the Yard Incident book must be made..
- All parents/guardians must inform the school of any changes to mobile, work or home phone numbers as they may occur.
- All parents/guardians must provide the school with the details of an emergency contact in case the parents/guardians cannot be reached.
- In the event of an accident, every possible effort will be made to contact the child's parents/guardians or the persons delegated to take responsibility for the child.

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 kept free from obstruction at all times.
- Each corridor has a designated colour for their fire drill procedure.
- School evacuation will be practised as part of regular fire drills.

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.

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 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.

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.
- If class teachers are unexpectedly absent for any reason, for example, an illness or family emergency, a member of the Special Education team will be appointed to the class.
- Depending on the age profile of the class, the children may be divided up between the other classes for the school day.
- In cases of longer term absences, substitute teachers may be engaged.
- In the case of a substitute teacher who is hired to cover for a class teacher, the children are supervised for collection by parents/guardians/authorised adults by a designated member of staff.
- Any children who attend our After Schools Child Care facility are escorted there by a designated member of staff.
- 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.
- At an age-appropriate stage, sometimes children may be allowed to leave their classrooms for limited periods of time to undertake specific errands or appropriate responsibilities. Another child should always accompany them.

Yard Supervision

- During yard time, our school operates a termly yard timetable of supervising staff.
- The teacher rostered for yard duty 'A' is the person responsible for the health and safety of all children on yard at that time. This teacher should not leave the yard without ensuring that another teacher (teacher designated as 'B') takes up this role. Teacher 'C' remains indoors on 'nurse' duty.

- The Special Needs Assistants are allocated specific areas for support and they follow the direction of the supervising teacher responsible.
- Teachers rostered for yard duty are reminded that Special Needs Assistants are not responsible for yard supervision should the teacher leave the yard for any reason.
- The teacher rostered for yard duty on any given day is responsible for deciding whether or not the weather is suitable for going to yard. If unsure the teacher must check with the Principal for a second opinion.

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.
- 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, with the exception of assistance dogs.

- Any organisation/individual who brings any animals onto school grounds must have the permission of the Board of Management.

This policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis. Health and Safety risk assessments will take place at least annually, and sooner if circumstances require this.

This policy was reviewed in consultation with the staff and it was ratified by the Board of Management on 28/06/2022

Signed:

(chairperson)



(principal)



Date:28/06/2022