



HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

Introduction

This document sets out our approach to Safety, Health and Welfare matters in Greystones Educate Together National School which is firmly committed to safeguarding the Safety, Health and Welfare at work of all our staff, our pupils and visitors to the school. Success will depend on your cooperation. It is therefore important that you read this document carefully and understand the role you can play in ensuring Health & Safety at work.

Board of Management Philosophy

The BOM recognises and accepts not only its statutory responsibilities, but also its obligations as an employer to direct, manage and achieve the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work of every employee, contractor, student and guest alike. The BOM further recognises the statutory rights of staff representatives as set out in section 13 of the Act (www.irishstatutebook.ie/1989_7.ie) and is committed to co-operating with such safety reps. The BOM believes that each employee accepts his/her responsibilities for improving and maintaining Safety, Health and Welfare in the workplace and for behaviour which does not jeopardise the individual's personal Safety, Health and Welfare or that of others. Educate Together National School is committed to meeting its obligations under Section 13 of the Safety, Health and Welfare Act 1989. Staff will be consulted regarding Safety, Health and Welfare policy through the established Representative structure. The principal will meet with staff representatives as often as is needed, and not less than once a term to discuss and review the health & safety aspects of the school's operations. In addition, individual staff members are encouraged to put forward suggestions, which will contribute to the achievement of the Board's policy on safety, health and welfare at work. Such suggestions should be made to the principal or to the staff representative.

All staff will be issued with a copy of the Safety Statement and the Health and Safety Policy.

Responsibility for Health and Safety

The staff of GETNS is responsible for ensuring a safe and healthy work environment within their own areas.

Principal

In addition, the Principal, has executive responsibility for the day to day management & co-ordination of all occupational health & safety matters throughout GETNS and in particular for:

- Liaising with the board of management on policy issues and any problems in implementing the health and safety policy
- Fire/Emergency procedures and training
- Ensuring action is taken to put necessary controls in place when identified
- Identifying staff training needs
- Routine maintenance of a safe physical environment through the Caretaker, Mr. Cahill, and through the Safety Representative Ms. Edel Bermingham.

The Principal may delegate all of the above functions except his/her role in respect of the Board of Management.

Employees

It is the duty for all employees while at work to:

- Take reasonable care for the safety, health and welfare of themselves and others
- Co-operate with the board and with any other person to comply with any of the relevant safety statutory provisions
- Use any items or means for securing their safety, health & welfare while at work, in manner intended
- Report to the principal or the health & safety representative any defects of which they become aware which might endanger safety, health & safety.

Safety Rep

Ms Edel Bermingham is the Health & Safety Representative for the Board of Management.

Edel will

1. Ensure that all staff have a copy of fire procedures.
2. Ensure that all staff will be aware of where the fire points and fire exits are in the building.
3. Check with the caretaker that an annual inventory has been done of all fire equipment.
4. Train other staff members on how to turn off the fire alarm.
5. Display instructions for same near the fire alarm panel.
6. Check with the Principal that the log book is being recorded in correctly.
7. Or in the case of a staff member having a Post of Responsibility for these issues, she/he will liaise with that staff member.

General Safety Rules

- Reception procedures: All visitors to our school are required to report to the secretary in the reception office
- Arrangements will be made by the school secretary to have visitors on business met by the appropriate member of staff
- Outside normal working hours access to school premises can be done to staff with prior clearance from the principal
- Care of property: The care and safekeeping of personal property is the owner's responsibility. GETNS cannot accept liability for loss of or damage to any item of personal property.
- Bags and parcels should not be left on the ground or in any area where they might cause an injury. In particular they must not be left unattended in toilets, classrooms, the staffroom or any of the offices. Appropriate storage above ground has been provided for students.
- Full details of any lost or found property should be reported to the school secretary.
- Signs will be clearly visible to ensure visitors are aware of exit doors.
- All cleaning substances and chemicals will be stored safely.
- Floors will be washed after school hours to ensure, in as far as possible, that slippage doesn't occur.

Fire Emergency Plans/Evacuation Procedures

In case of a fire, the total evacuation of our premises is our first priority. Evacuation drills will take place once per term or more often if required.

Procedures have been developed for orderly evacuations, which are designed to protect staff, students and visitors in the event of a fire or other emergency happening on the premises. Staff members are reminded to familiarise themselves with procedures so a fast and effective evacuation of the premises can be completed in the event of an emergency. Fire drill procedure is posted in every classroom.

1. An alert to evacuate the building will be given by the sounding of the alarm bell.
2. All staff and students are required to evacuate the building every time the alarm sounds

Procedure for Fire Drill/Role of teaching staff

- Instructions for exiting the school are available in every classroom and teachers should make themselves aware of these (especially those who do not have a base classroom).
- Included in these instructions is notification of your exit door and a map indicating your exit route.
- Class group to be escorted to the assembly point and line up in class line.

Procedure for fire drill of Special Needs Assistants

- To ensure the children assigned to them are accompanied to join their class.
- To assist class teacher in helping children exit.
- To remain with assigned children at the fire assembly point.

Principal/Deputy Principal

After rolls have been called the Deputy .Principal or Principal will consult with each class teacher to ascertain if anyone is unaccounted for. She then grants permission to re-enter building. The Deputy Principal will advise the Principal if someone is missing. The Deputy Principal will carry out the responsibilities of the Principal in her absence. Prevent anyone from re-entering the building. Contact the emergency services, if necessary.

Secretary

- The secretary will immediately open both main doors upon hearing the fire alarm.
- She will assist in helping infants descend the stairs.
- She will have the number for the local fire brigade on hand.
- Secretary will check all rooms in the building before exiting
- Secretary will have in their possession the Fire Register on exiting.

Caretaker(if present)

- Locate area fire alarm triggered.
- Ascertain Damage limitation.
- Check fire equipment regularly.

Assembly Point

- Outdoor Car park located at front of school.

Procedure when alarm sounds

- Children follow instructions of staff member in charge
- Walk through designated fire exit (each room is assigned a particular exit which is posted in each classroom).
- Do not stop to collect personal items & do not return to your classroom.
- All staff, students and guests to assemble at the large tarmac area to the front of the school . Each teacher will line their class up quietly in order of their arrival and carry out a roll call.

Fire Prevention

- Fire extinguishers are provided and correctly sited to meet statutory and insurance requirements.
- All fire fighting equipment is regularly tested and serviced by specialized contractors.
- All fire and emergency exits are marked using the standard symbols.
- Fire safety inspections and analysis of potential fire hazards are regularly carried out.
- Liaison with relevant authorities takes place as is necessary.
- Training regarding the operation of fire extinguishers to be provided to all staff by the caretaker -once a year.

Fire extinguishers are mounted throughout the building. Instructions are printed on the metal casing. Because not all fires can be dealt with by the same extinguisher, a number of types are provided. The metal casing is red in all cases, with colour-coded strips on the nonwater extinguishers. All extinguishers carry clear instructions stickers indicating what fires they may be used on:

- Extinguishers with a black strip contain CO₂ gas and are for use against electrical fires and on burning liquids
- Extinguishers with a yellow strip contain foam and used against timber.
- Fire alarm bells are located on each corridor and in each social area. If you discover a fire, activate the nearest alarm bell by breaking the glass as indicated.

Fire fighting equipment is provided for the safety of staff and students and must not be removed, obstructed or interfered with in any way. If an extinguisher is damaged or discharged for any reason, details must immediately be reported to the principal or the safety rep.

All fires, however insignificant must be reported to the principal.

Identification of Hazards

GETNS is committed to meeting its obligations under Section 13 of the Safety, Health and Welfare Act 1989 Staff will be consulted regarding Safety, Health and Welfare policy through the established Representative structure. The safety representative will carry out regular yearly Hazard Audits along with the caretaker and BOM maintenance representative.

GETNS is committed to make use of the advice available through the National Authority for Safety Health and Welfare at work. Where necessary, the Board of Management will employ competent consultants and bodies with special skills and services to augment the internal Hazard Audits. The Safety Officer will advise the Principal if, in his opinion, there is a need for outside assistance in the area of hazard identification or risk assessment.

Computer Screens

In as far as possible, no person should operate a computer unit for more than one hour continuously without a break. Sturdy desks are provided to ensure that office equipment can be operated comfortably and safely. No food/drink in computer area.

Elimination of Hazards

The Board of Management will commit themselves to dealing, where practicable, with the hazards identified. This approach will take into account the norms accepted and the expert advice available. The person responsible for this area of safety will examine the options available for dealing with the problems that have been identified, taking account of the extent of the problem. If the problem can only be overcome with significant expenditure, the person responsible will present a report on the options available. To augment this policy, the person responsible for maintenance in the particular areas will have the responsibility of carrying out full preventative maintenance programmes, paying special attention to safety as an aspect of the buildings, plant and equipment.

Pupil behaviour - Hazards identified

- Running along corridors can be the cause of accidents.
- Pupils are instructed that running inside the building is not allowed. In as far as possible, staff will enforce this rule.
- Paper darts and other missiles can cause injury.
- Paper darts and other missiles should never be thrown. In particular, paper darts can ricochet off windows and cause damage to eyes.
- Long hair can get caught in equipment, causing injury.
- Pupils are instructed that long hair must be tied back, particularly during Science and any technology based class.

Vehicle Traffic outside school

Pupils entering or leaving the school must be aware of traffic, with particular attention being paid to school buses.

- School and P.E bags, left in corridors cause an obstruction and can result in falls. Pupils should keep corridors clear of bags, coats and other belongings at all times. All bags should be put on racks/cages provided. Bags left on corridors may be removed by staff members
- **Congestion in Corridors.** Pupils are instructed if at all possible to walk on the right hand side of the corridors throughout the school building.

Building – Hazards Identified

Litter on floors can be the cause of falls and injury. All staff and pupils should ensure that litter throughout the school is kept to a minimum.

Desks and chairs out of line in classrooms, blocking exit route.

Classroom layout should be kept in order at all times.

Drawers and cupboard doors not closed, thus becoming an obstacle to movement.

Doors should be closed when not in use.

Mats are placed at the main entrance to assist in prevention of slippage.

School furniture should be safe.

Adequate lighting is provided both inside and outside the building.

Proper ventilation exists and windows are open when the heating is on.

Rubbish is not allowed to accumulate.

Children are not allowed to play in the yard when it is flooded or when there is ice on the ground.

Dampness and draughts are minimized.

The school is properly maintained.

Toilet paper, soap and clean towels are provided in each toilet.

CCTV System

A Digital CCTV system has been installed in the school. It is hoped this investment greatly improves the overall security and safety of both the school building and the immediate surrounding areas.

Sporting Activities / Extra Curricular

Sporting activities create a special category in relation to risk of injuries that are inherent in any sport. The School recognises this inherent risk and is committed to implementing the latest advice on safety measures, equipment use, sporting rules and practice. In sporting activities, the teacher in charge is responsible, in consultation where necessary with the Safety Rep, for identifying appropriate protective equipment and the safest practice and guidelines available at the time. Proper sports shoes are worn during Physical Education.

Identification of Hazards

Continuous safety reviews will cover areas of possible hazard, including:

- Access and egress problems including floors, steps, ladders.
- Machinery safety including both utility and educational.
- Electrical safety standards including wiring and fuse-boards.
- Lighting and ventilation both natural and artificial.
- Manual handling operations.
- Posture at place of work.
- Handling and storage of chemical substances.
- Use of protective equipment.
- Noise and vibration.
- Systems of work.
- Systems governing the use of VDU screens.
- Maintenance operations.
- First Aid.
- Heat and humidity.
- Substances or atmospheres hazardous to health.
- Fire safety.

First Aid

- Comprehensive first aid boxes are available in key locations such as classrooms to deal with minor injuries.
- First aid supplies are available in the staff room.
- Any enquiries regarding first aid supplies should be made to the health and safety representative.

Accident/Incident Reporting

All staff members must fill out an accident report form when dealing with any accident/incident of a serious nature e.g. one that requires a dressing or hospitalisation or a head wound. Completed forms should be kept in the accident book.

Safety Training

In service courses relevant to the safety training of all employees will be organised on an ongoing basis by the Board of Management.

General Safety The aim of the Board of Management is to provide a healthy and safe working environment. This can be achieved with the help and assistance of all employees and pupils by:

1. Observing the general rules of safety.
2. Using all plant, machinery and equipment in a safe and proper manner.
3. Employing the proper procedures when carrying out tasks and ensuring that no practices are used which may act as a source of danger to themselves and/or others.
4. Keeping work areas clean and tidy at all times.
5. Making sure all corridors and passageways, particularly those leading to escape routes, are kept free of obstructions at all times.
6. Taking care that fire points are not blocked or covered up in any way and that they are ready for use if the need arises.
7. Ensuring the children re-entering the building at break times to use the toilet are accompanied by an adult.

Administration of Medicines

Greystones Educate Together N.S. has formulated a separate policy for this. The Board recognizes that it has a duty to protect the Health and Safety of pupils when they are engaged in authorized school activities. This, however, does not imply a duty on teachers to personally undertake the administration of medicines. See Policy.

Ratified by Chairperson Greystones Educate Together N.S.....

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