



# Health and Safety Policy

## Summary

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 aims to make all work places, in this case, River Valley Community National School, safe and healthy. The Act covers all persons at the school and it requires, in so far as is reasonably practicable, that the Board of Management will protect the safety, health and welfare of everyone who works at the school. The Board will provide and maintain, in so far as is reasonably practicable, a safe place of work and safe systems, and will provide the staff and ancillary employees with information and training to ensure their health and safety. Specifically, the Board has produced a written Safety Statement (below) which specifies the manner in which the safety and health of staff, children and ancillary staff will be secured. Of particular importance are the requirements on health and safety issues.

THE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT RECOGNISES THAT ITS STATUTORY OBLIGATIONS UNDER LEGISLATION EXTEND TO EMPLOYEES, STUDENTS, AND ANY PERSON LEGITIMATELY CONDUCTING SCHOOL BUSINESS AND THE PUBLIC.

## 1 RESPONSIBILITIES

### 1.1 OF BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

The Board of Management has overall responsibility for ensuring healthy and safe places and systems of work for staff, as well as a duty of care to others who come into and/or use that part of the building/campus designated for use by River Valley Community Together National School, whether they use the building/school grounds during the school day or outside of school times. The Board of Management will ensure that an up-to-date Safety Statement is in place and available for reading. It will undertake a risk assessment at least once per year and will ensure that identified hazards are eliminated or minimised as far as is reasonably practical. The Board of Management will devote sufficient resources to ensuring health and safety in the school and will ensure that there is adequate insurance in place to cover the activities of the school. The Board of Management will appoint at least one competent person to be the school Health and Safety Officer in order to assure health and safety compliance. This may be an external expert or a Board of Management member, but not the Principal or Teachers' Representative on the Board of Management.

The responsibilities include:

- carrying out an annual Health & Safety audit in consultation with the Staff Safety representative
- preparing a Health & Safety Statement in consultation with the Staff Safety representative
- identifying risks to Health & Safety and planning for the management of those risks

## 1.2 OF EMPLOYEES and VOLUNTEERS (INCLUDING TRAINEE TEACHERS)

It is the duty of every employee while at work to

- Comply with Safety and Health legislation, both in the 2005 Act and elsewhere.
- Take reasonable care to protect his or her own safety, health and welfare and that of any other person who may be affected by his or her acts or omissions at work.
- Not to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs or a combination of alcohol and drugs to the extent that he or she is likely to endanger his or her own safety, health or welfare at work or that of any other person.
- Co-operate with his or her employer or any other person, as necessary, to assist that person in complying with safety and health legislation as appropriate.
- Not engage in improper conduct or other behaviour such as violence, bullying or horseplay, which could endanger another person at work or his or her safety, health and welfare.
- Where safety and health training related to a particular task is required by the employer or by safety and health legislation, attend and undergo, as appropriate any reasonable assessment required by his or her employer or as may be prescribed in Regulations.
- Taking account of the Training and Instructions given by the employer, correct use of any article or substance and protective clothing and equipment provided for use at work or for his or her protection.
- To report to the School Management without reasonable delay, any defects in plant, equipment, place off work, or systems of work which might endanger safety, health or welfare of which he/she becomes aware.

No person will intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse any appliance, protective clothing, convenience, equipment or anything provided in pursuance of any of the relevant statutory provisions or otherwise, for securing safety, health or welfare of persons arising out of work activities.

Employees will, by using available facilities and equipment provided, ensure that work practices are performed in the safest manner possible.

## 1.3 OF CLASS TEACHERS

Once a pupil enters the school building at 8.15 a.m., the teachers are in loco parentis and thus primarily responsible for the child's health, safety and welfare. Teachers will be present in the classroom a minimum of ten minutes before the children arrive to facilitate the safe transfer of the children from their parents to the class. Children are supervised throughout the school day by their class teachers and/or colleagues. If class teachers are absent, a substitute teacher may be called in as per DES regulations in relation to sick leave or other leave; and/or children may be divided up between the other classes for the school day. In cases of longer absences, substitute or temporary teachers may be engaged. On occasion, a teacher may have to leave the classroom for a short period of time. If so, he or she will ensure that a colleague will provide temporary supervision cover. Sometimes children may be allowed to leave their classrooms for limited periods of time, normally in pairs, to undertake specific errands. During break times, a class teacher will ordinarily supervise the school yard. Minor cuts and bruises will be dealt with as per the section on First Aid below. Incidents or accidents will be recorded on the school Aladdin system, and reported to parents and/or Principal if necessary. If the weather is inclement, children will remain in their classrooms for quiet activities. Class teachers are responsible for taking particular care and anticipating potential causes of injury

during activities that are more likely to pose hazards such as physical education, SESE (Social, Environmental, and Scientific Education) and arts and crafts.

Junior Infants leave school at 1.10 p.m. It is the responsibility of the class teacher to safely hand over each child to the parent(s) or to the person who has been designated by the parents and is listed on the school form, a copy of which will be in the possession of each class teacher (see section 3.4 below).

#### **1.4 OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

Parents and guardians are requested to cooperate with the Board of Management and others to ensure that 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. Children can enter the school at 8.15 a.m. Parents and guardians must take specific responsibility for other children, especially young children, accompanying them in the school and its environs. Parents and guardians who are directly or indirectly involved with any meetings, events, extracurricular activities etc. are required to adhere to any health and safety regulations set out for these activities. Parents and guardians are requested to report any health and safety concerns to the Principal and/or the Chairperson of the Board of Management. Parents and guardians are also entitled to receive information on, and be consulted on, this document.

#### **1.5 OF PUPILS**

Pupils will be advised of any relevant health and safety procedures in an age-appropriate way, will be given opportunities to learn and practice these procedures, will be encouraged to be vigilant in safeguarding their own and others health and safety, and will be required to comply with the staff and Board of Management in implementing these.

### **2. CONSULTATION AND INFORMATION**

It is the policy of the Board of Management of River Valley C.N.S.

- To consult with Staff in the preparation and completion of the Health and Safety Statement
- To issue a copy of the Safety Statement to all present and future staff, all members of the Board of Management (and any subsequent revised copies)
- That any additional information or instructions regarding Health, Safety and Welfare at work, not contained in the document will be conveyed to all Staff as it become available.
- Health, Safety and Welfare will form an integral part of any future staff training and development plans.

### **3 EMERGENCIES**

#### **3.1 Emergency routes and exits:**

The route is depicted on a notice which is inside the classroom door.

### 3.2 Fire protection

A fire drill will be held at least once each term. The procedure in the event of a fire is for each class teacher to take the class list, get the children to the designated safety point and call the Roll to make sure all the children have safely exited. A fire register will be maintained by the Staff Safety Representative that includes records of termly checks of means of escape routes, fire extinguishers and all fire drills. Any contractor completing hot work (including welding, soldering, use of blow lamps, blow torches and cutting equipment) must be qualified to do so, must have a hot works permit, must carry a fully charged fire extinguisher and must make a full check one hour after completion of the work.

### 3.3 Emergency contact details

Emergency contact details of the parents and guardians of all children in the school, as well as the next of kin of all staff, will be kept on Aladdin. These will be updated regularly.

### 3.4 First aid

The school recognises the importance of taking the appropriate measures in cases of accidents and injury, including, where necessary, securing the site and immediately telephoning the emergency services. The school accepts that it needs a minimum of one occupational first aider, whose certification is renewed every two years. Certification details will be kept in the school office. The school also accepts that ideally, the number of occupational first aiders within the school community should be higher. If available, occupational first aiders will administer any first aid in the first instance. However, in the absence of such a person, another member of staff will make every effort to attend to an injured person. There is one first aid boxes in the school. Office and First Aid bag in the junior infant classroom. Medication is not and may never be stored in first aid boxes but will be kept in a locked cupboard by the teacher's desk.

### 3.5 Getting help

In the case of an urgent situation, the member of staff sends two children with a red card to another member of staff. If the situation is not urgent, but a member of staff would like another member staff to come when they are able, they send children with a green card.

### 3.6 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 Board of Management 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 Board of Management. 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 (text-a-parent, 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.

## 4. SAFETY

### 4.1 Safe access and egress routes

Every effort will be made to ensure that all building users can safely access, egress and move around the school grounds and building. Entrances and corridors will be kept free from obstruction. Mobility aids are always permitted.

### 4.2 Children leaving school

Children in Junior and must be collected from their designated area at 1.10 p.m. (or earlier in the case of early closure). Parent/Guardians will be informed of the designated areas at the beginning of each school year. The school will keep a record of other people, e.g. relatives or after-school employees, who have permission from parents/guardians to pick up the children after school (See appendix 1). If pupils need to leave school early (for example, for a dental appointment), the parents or guardians must make every effort to notify the school in advance. If a person other than a parent or guardian is collecting the child, that person must be on the list already on file in the school; otherwise, 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). All pupils must be signed out by a member of staff if they are leaving school early.

### 4.3 Supervision of children during the school day

To ensure children remain inside the school premises during the school day, measures will be taken to ensure children cannot exit by themselves. The school gate will be closed every day at 8.45am.

### 4.4 School excursions

Safety is taken very seriously during all excursions away from the school grounds, whether local or further afield. Wherever possible, a small number of parents and guardians will be asked to accompany school groups on excursions. They may not bring younger children with them. Where transport is required, the school will hire buses that are adequate for the size of the group from a reputable company that provides safe vehicles and drivers. Only buses that have seat belts for all participants of the school excursion will be used and all passengers will be required to make use of these.

Pupils are paired up for each excursion and must follow their teacher's orders at all times. A teacher or other responsible adult always leads the way and the group is required to stay together, using waiting points where necessary. Children are counted when leaving school and at various points during the excursion. Specifically, in the case of swimming, teachers will inspect the changing rooms on arrival and children will be required to get ready for the pool quickly. They may not run and must not enter the pool until the instructor gives the go ahead. No shampoos, soaps, deodorants, body sprays or similar may be used.

#### 4.5 The children

As part of the SPHE programme, the children are taught about safety in the home; safety regarding medicines; safety when crossing the road and safety in relation to strangers.

#### 4.6 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. Equipment and substances for maintenance, cleaning, catering and similar is stored securely away from children. Cleaning and maintenance will normally be done outside of school hours; at present, cleaning is done before 8am and after 2 p.m. - Monday to Friday with additional work being completed at the weekend. Appropriate training will be provided in the safe handling and use of equipment and in the unlikely event of there being a need for hazardous substances in the school. 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 step-ladder and ladder practice must be observed and ordinary school furniture must never be used to undertake work at height. Teachers are requested to comply with these safety procedures in their classrooms and throughout the school.

### 5. HEALTH

#### 5.1 Facilities

The building and grounds currently occupied by River Valley CNS will be maintained on an on-going basis as best as is reasonably possible during this interim time before we move to our temporary site in Swords. Good levels of hygiene will be observed, including regular cleaning and collection of litter. Any spills and the like will be dealt with immediately. Cold water, soap and towels are available at every sink. Anti-bacterial hand-wash is in the classroom, adult toilet and staff room. Appropriate attention will be given to the design and use of work stations and audio-visual displays including computer screens and interactive whiteboards. Smoking will not be allowed anywhere in the school and its grounds.

#### 5.2 Illness

Parents and guardians are required, when they are enrolling their child in the school in the first instance, to indicate on the school Registration Form whether their child suffers from any allergies, medical conditions or physical needs, and, if so, to thereafter complete a form listing any long-term allergies/illnesses from which their children suffer (this includes any plaster allergies or similar). This will also include information about what can and cannot be done in an emergency situation. Copies of these forms (See Administration of Medicine Policy) will be kept

in the files of the relevant class teachers, Principal and in the school office. A medical information display will also be maintained in the staff room. All staff are also requested to provide this information. Appropriate provisions will be made for any person who takes ill in school, including taking the individual to the doctor or hospital if deemed necessary.

### 5.3 Administration of medicines

Any medication belonging to a child is kept in a secure and clearly visible location in the child's classroom. Asthma inhalers for children from second to sixth class will be kept in their own bags. No teacher will be required to administer medicines or to supervise children taking medicines. If teachers are willing to do so, specific authorisation will be given in writing by the Board of Management. Parents and guardians of children requiring medication will need to fill in a form. They will also be required to complete an indemnity form in respect of any liability that may arise from the administration of medication. They will inform the teacher(s) how the medication should be administered.) Parents and guardians will have responsibility to check each morning that the authorised teacher(s) is/are in school, that the teacher(s) has/have the medication on trip/swimming days, and that the medication is available and in date. If at all possible, any medication should be self-administered, under the supervision of an authorised adult. A written record of the date and time of administration will be filled out by the teacher and put in the child's class medical file on the same day (with the exception of asthma inhalers). The child's parent/guardian will be informed on the same day that medication has been administered. (See Administration of Medicine Policy)

### 5.4 Communicable disease

In the case of any infectious disease, parents and guardians will be informed as soon as possible, and appropriate action will be taken by the Principal and Board of Management to limit the associated risks.

### 5.5 Health promotion

The school will promote safe and healthy living, both through the curriculum and in other ways. For example, walking and cycling to school will be encouraged and guidelines will be issued to parents and guardians about the content of healthy lunch boxes. The school's Healthy Eating Policy is available on the website.

## 6. OTHER WELFARE ISSUES

### 6.1 Animals

No animals may be brought into the school grounds at any time, with the exception of therapy and assistance dogs. An exception may be a short visit by a pet as part of a specific learning project.

## 6.2 Other policies

A range of other, related issues, including critical incidents, positive behaviour, child protection, equality of access and participation, anti-bullying, teachers' professional conduct etc. are dealt with in separate school policies.

## 7. ACCIDENT/INCIDENT REPORTS

All potential serious accidents, or instances of ill health, that result from compromised health and safety circumstances, whether involving employees, pupils or members of the public must be reported immediately to the Principal, investigated and subsequently recorded on the school's Aladdin system. An accident/incident report must be completed in Aladdin by the staff member who was in attendance. This report is then printed and retained in child's file for any accident that occurs in school. Parents/guardians are informed immediately or at home time depending on the nature of the accident/incident. Furthermore, the Principal will send a copy of the report to DDLETB Corporate Services Dept.

Should accidents to children in school be reported to the Health and Safety Authority? The following types of accidents to school pupils must be reported to the Health and Safety Authority, by the school either online at [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie) or on the Incident Report Form (IR1).

- A death or injury that requires treatment by a registered medical practitioner, which does not occur while a person is at work, but is related to either a work activity or their place of work. This applies to pupils in certain circumstances.
- If the pupil is injured as a result of work-related activity and requires medical treatment by a registered practitioner, this is reportable to the Health & Safety Authority.
- Example 1: If a pupil is seriously injured when using materials during class, and requires treatment by a registered medical practitioner, this is reportable. However, if a pupil trips in the school yard this is not reportable.
- Example 2: If a student trips during PE class and requires treatment by a registered medical practitioner, this is reportable. Where students are taken on school trips, they are considered to be a normal part of the work activities. Therefore, if a pupil is injured during the school trip and requires medical treatment this too is reportable. The school must keep records of all accidents which occur for a period of 10 years.

## 8. REVIEW

This policy will be monitored on an on-going basis. Health and safety risk assessments will take place at least annually and sooner if circumstances require this. If necessary, this policy and these procedures will be amended as a result of these audits, and shall in any case undergo full review in October 2020.

## CONCLUSION

This Safety Statement sets out the Health and Safety Policy of the Board of Management of River Valley Community National School and sets out the means to achieve that policy.

- The Board of Management is committed to ensuring the Health and Safety and Welfare of the employees, pupils and all others involved in the running of the school. It recognises that the importance of the legislation enacted in the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005. The policy requires the co-operation of all the employees of the school.
- The Board of management will undertake to carry out a safety audit annually and report findings to the staff and Board of Management. This inspection/safety audit will be carried out more frequently if requested by either staff or the Board of Management. All records of accidents or ill health will be monitored in order to ensure that any safety measures required can be put in place, wherever possible, to minimise the recurrence of such accidents and ill health.
- The Board of Management, as the staff grows in number, will organise such courses and training, for example in first-aid, manual handling, fire procedures and operation of fire equipment, as are deemed essential in enhancing the safety, health and welfare of children, staff and other adults who work in the school.
- It is our intention to undertake regular reviews of the statement in the light of experience, changes in legal requirements and the changing nature of the school.



## Appendix 1: School Collection Form

Name of Pupil: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list below the people who are permitted to collect your child from River Valley CNS.

Please note we will only release the above named child to those listed below.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
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- \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/guardian



Appendix 2:  
Accident Report Forms

Details	<b>Accident/Incident/Misbehaviour</b> Give a brief description: 1. What happened? 2. Who is involved (child's name and class teacher's name)? 3. Presenting difficulty?	<b>Action taken</b>	
<b>Date:</b> _____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Child received First Aid	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Informed class teacher</b>
<b>Time:</b> _____ _____	_____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Maintained teacher observation in yard  <input type="checkbox"/> Sought advice from designated First Aid Teacher	Please tick above to indicate you have informed the child's class teacher of <b>any</b> accidents, incidents and misbehaviour involving a child/children in his/her class.
<b>Location:</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> Yard <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom <input type="checkbox"/> Corridor	_____ _____ _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Verbal warning  <input type="checkbox"/> Yellow card/Time Out (4/5mins)  <input type="checkbox"/> Informed Principal or Deputy P  <input type="checkbox"/> Phoned parents  <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	
Duty teacher signature  _____  Class teacher Signature  _____			

