

# Health, Safety & Welfare Policy





This document is intended to provide details of the main policies of Walterstown National School. It is intended to help the school community to understand the environment and approach of the school. This document is regularly reviewed. All feedback is encouraged and welcome.

Version	Description	Authors
October 2025	Updated version of policy	Board of Management
March 2021	Updated version of policy	Board of Management
March 2020	First version of policy	Board of Management

#### **School Contact Details**

**Principal:** Mr. Rory O' Sullivan

**Board of Management Chairperson:** Mr. Damian Ahern

**School Roll No:** 12281D

**School Phone Number:** 021-4812625

**School Email Address:** [office@walterstownns.ie](mailto:office@walterstownns.ie)

**Address:** Walterstown N.S., Walterstown, Cobh, Co. Cork.



## Introductory Statement

In accordance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, it is the policy of the Board of Management to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of all staff and to protect students, visitors, contractors and other persons at the school from injury and ill health arising from any work activity. The successful implementation of this policy requires the full support and active cooperation of all staff, students, contractors and visitors to the school.

It is recognised that hazard identification, risk assessment and control measures are legislative requirements which must be carried out by the employer to ensure the safety, health and welfare of all staff.

The Board of Management, as employer, undertakes in so far as is reasonably practicable to:

promote standards of safety, health and welfare that comply with the provisions and requirements of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and other relevant legislation, standards and codes of practice;

- provide information, training, instruction and supervision where necessary, to enable staff to perform their work safely and effectively;
- maintain a constant and continuing interest in safety, health and welfare matters pertinent to the activities of the school;
- continually improve the system in place for the management of occupational safety, health and welfare and review it periodically to ensure it remains relevant, appropriate and effective;
- consult with staff on matters related to safety, health and welfare at work; provide the necessary resources to ensure the safety, health and welfare of all those to whom it owes a duty of care, including staff, students, contractors and visitors.

The Board of Management is committed to playing an active role in the implementation of this occupational safety, health and welfare policy and undertakes to review and revise it in light of changes in legislation, experience and other relevant developments.

## Rationale

The policy represents the Board of Management's commitment to safety and health, and specifies the manner, the organisation and the resources necessary for maintaining and reviewing safety and health standards.

The Board of Management is required to document the school's health and safety policy and make it available to all employees, outside services providers and Inspectors of the Health and Safety Authority. The Board of Management also considers its duty-of-care in the school and this must be an integral part of any Health and Safety Policy.

## Aims

With this policy, the school ideally hopes:

- to create a safe and healthy school environment by identifying, preventing and tackling hazards and their accompanying risks
- to ensure understanding of the school's duty of care towards pupils
- to protect the school community from workplace accidents and ill health at work
- to outline procedures and practices in place to ensure safe systems of work to comply with all relevant health and safety legislation (so far as is reasonably practicable) to include the following areas:
  - Provision of a safe workplace for all employees – teachers, SNAs, secretary, caretaker, etc.



- Ensuring competent employees, who will carry out safe work practices
- Ensuring safe access and escape routes
- Ensuring safe handling and use of hazardous substances and equipment
- Provision of safe equipment including maintenance and use of appropriate guards
- Provision of appropriate personal protective equipment.

## Guidelines

An integral part of a school's Safety, Health & Welfare Policy is the preparation and display of a Safety Statement

- **Responsibilities of employer - Board of Management**

- Provide and maintain a workplace that is safe and do likewise for all machinery and equipment etc.
- Manage work activities to ensure the safety, health and welfare of employees
- Ensure that risks are assessed and hazards are eliminated or minimized as far as is reasonably practicable
- Prepare a safety statement and regularly update it, particularly when there have been significant changes or when the risk assessment is no longer valid
- Provide and maintain decent welfare facilities for employees, including the provision of a safe place of work in which the risk of assault to staff is prevented or minimised
- Prepare and update procedures to deal with an emergency situation and communicate these procedures to employees
- Appoint a competent person to oversee the functions of the Board in relation to Health & Safety
- Provide training and information to workers in a format and language that is appropriate, including training on the commencement of employment
- Report serious accidents to the Health and Safety Authority
- Consult annually with employees and provide them with information in relation to safety, health and welfare
- Require employers from whom services are contracted to have an up to date safety statement (*e.g. painters, contract cleaners, bus companies...*)

- **Responsibilities of employees**

Health and safety is everyone's responsibility. As a worker you have legal duties designed to protect you and those you work with. Responsibilities include:

- Not to be under the influence of an intoxicant to the extent that they endanger your own or other persons' safety.
- To submit to tests for intoxicants as and when regulations specifying testing procedures are adopted
- To co-operate with an employer or other people to ensure that the Health and Safety law is implemented
- Not to engage in improper conduct that will endanger you or anyone else
- To attend Health and Safety training and correctly use any equipment at work To use protective clothes and equipment provided
- To report any dangerous practices or situations that you are aware of to an appropriate person
- Not to interfere or misuse any safety equipment at your workplace
- To tell your employer, if you are suffering from an illness that adds to risk

- **Entitlements of safety representative of the Board of Management** (*Section 25 Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act, 2005*)



The safety representative has the right to:

- Represent the employees at the place of work in consultation with the employer on matters in relation to health and safety
- Inspect the place of work on a schedule agreed with the employer or immediately in the event of an accident, dangerous occurrence or imminent danger or risk to the safety, health and welfare of any person
- Receive appropriate training
- Investigate accidents and dangerous occurrences
- Investigate complaints made by employees
- Accompany an inspector carrying out an inspection at the workplace
- Make representations to the employer on matters relating to safety, health and welfare
- Make representations to and receive information from, an inspector
- Consult and liaise with other safety representatives in the same undertaking.

## Carrying Out of a Risk Assessment

Each year, the Board of Management should carry out a risk assessment, identifying hazards, assessing the risks and specifying the actions required to eliminate or minimize them. They will enlist the help of the teachers, safety officer, safety representative, caretaker, secretary and other relevant parties to carry this out. Hazards may include physical, health, biological, chemical and human hazards. Using the HSA format from their publication '*Guidelines on Managing Safety, Health and Welfare in Primary Schools*' available on [http://www.hsa.ie/eng/Education/Guidelines\\_on\\_Managing\\_Safety\\_Health\\_and\\_Welfare\\_in\\_Primary\\_Schools.pdf](http://www.hsa.ie/eng/Education/Guidelines_on_Managing_Safety_Health_and_Welfare_in_Primary_Schools.pdf) will assist the recording of the whole process. Please refer to *Part 2, Pages 18-110*.

As part of the general approach to safety, other policies & practices which have a bearing on safety, health and welfare have been put in place and communicated to employees, pupils, parents and others using the premises. These include Acceptable Usage (AUP), Anti-bullying, Child Protection, Code of Behaviour, Critical Incident Management Plan, Parental Involvement, Relationship & Sexuality Education (R.S.E.), Special Educational Needs, Substance Use Policy and Vetting (Garda Clearance). This is not an exhaustive list. These policies are monitored and updated regularly. Also, a school environment audit is carried out annually in January/February also using the HSA format from their publication '*Guidelines on Managing Safety, Health and Welfare in Primary Schools*' available on [http://www.hsa.ie/eng/Education/Guidelines\\_on\\_Managing\\_Safety\\_Health\\_and\\_Welfare\\_in\\_Primary\\_Schools.pdf](http://www.hsa.ie/eng/Education/Guidelines_on_Managing_Safety_Health_and_Welfare_in_Primary_Schools.pdf) - refer to *Part 2, Pages 5-8*.

Health and safety are considered when any policy/plan is being drawn up e.g. PE, Visual Arts, etc. The duty of care is also considered in all areas and aspects of school life.

## Procedures to deal with emergencies

- Emergency contact procedures
  - Contact details are updated annually by the school's secretary. The contact details are kept on Aladdin and class teachers retain a hard copy of their own class. A copy of staff emergency contact details are also kept in the Critical Incident Management Plan.
  - The Principal, Deputy Principal and secretary have access to all records on Aladdin. Each individual class teacher has access to their own class' information on Aladdin
  - The secretary usually contacts parents/guardians in case of an emergency, though depending on the severity of the emergency, the Principal or a teacher may contact them
- Fire-drill and school evacuation procedures (See p. 45-49 A Guide to Insurance, Safety and Security in the School, Church and General)
  - Fire-drills held on a regular basis
  - Teachers and pupils are aware of the designated assembly points following evacuation of the building. Assembly points are clearly marked on the senior yard



- Procedures for evacuation displayed near the door of each room
- The school revises these procedures after each drill
- New staff are notified of these procedures by the Deputy Principal at the first staff meeting each year. Staff taking up positions during the school year are informed by the Principal.
- Pupils are notified of these procedures by the class teachers at the start of the year and they are regularly reminded throughout the year
- A Serious Accident Procedure & Accident Report Form is available in the CPSMA Management Board Members' Handbook p. 285. A report of this kind must be made to the HSA in respect of the following types of incident:
  - An accident causing loss of life to any employed or self-employed person if sustained in the course of their employment
  - An accident sustained in the course of their employment which prevents any employed or self-employed person from performing the normal duties of their employment for more than 3 calendar days not including the date of the accident
  - An accident to any person not at work caused by a work activity which causes loss of life or requires medical treatment.
- A Critical Incident Management Plan is in place in the school. Please refer to the plan. A copy of this and relevant accompanying information is available in the Critical Incident Management Plan folder located in the office
- Exceptional closures
  - In the event of an exceptional closure, parents receive a text to their mobile device

## Health issues

### Registration Form

- There is a section allowing parents to identify any allergies/illnesses of a new child

### Managing specific health issues

- Staff are made aware of the health issues in relation to certain pupils by the Principal and/or previous class teacher at staff meetings and/or on a one-to-one basis

### Administration of Medication – refer to the Administration of Medicine Policy

- Forms are completed by parents and signed on behalf of the Board of Management by the Chairperson or Principal
- A copy is maintained for each child and all administration is documented and witnessed

### Sickness or Injury

- If children are sick or injured, the secretary usually contacts parents/guardians, though depending on the severity, the Principal or a teacher may contact them

### Illnesses and contagious infections such as rubella, chicken pox etc.

- See 'Infectious diseases' in the Primary School: Health Service executive (H.S.E.)
- Head-lice
  - Parents are notified by text, email or note. They are reminded to check their child's hair regularly and of ways in which to treat them if they're present
- School hygiene
  - Children are encouraged to wash their hands. The use of wash facilities, including hot water and soap, are available in each classroom
- General cleanliness of school environment
  - The school employs contract cleaners to ensure a consistent standard of cleanliness throughout the school, including refuse, toilets, classrooms, floors etc.
- First Aid
  - Several members of staff have a qualification in First Aid
- Healthy eating – refer to the Healthy Eating Policy.
- Water
  - There is an adequate supply of drinking water in the school for staff and pupils
  - Children are encouraged to bring an adequate supply of drinking water, to drink it regularly during the day and to refill if necessary





- Clothing/protection
  - Parents/pupils are made aware of the need for proper clothing and protection

## **Safety and Welfare Issues - Pupils**

### **Assembly:**

- Children can enter the school property from 8:45am. Children should walk to their classroom and sit in their assigned seat. Supervision of all classes is in operation from 8:44-9:00. At 9:00 teachers enter their classrooms & teaching instruction begins.
- Pupils who arrive after 9.00a.m. must be signed into the school office by an adult. This is a safety measure to ensure the safe arrival of all children.

### **Dismissal:**

- Junior Infants and Senior Infants are collected from the front of the school at 1.40p.m. by a parent/guardian/designated person. The teacher calls individual children as their parent/guardian/designated person arrives and they are escorted off the premises by this person.
- 1st- 6th class are brought to the front of the school at 2.40p.m. On seeing a parent/guardian/designated person, the child walks independently to that person. They are escorted off the premises by the parent/guardian/designated person. If the child does not see their parent/guardian/designated person, they notify the teacher and wait with him/her.
- In the event of a child not being collected, they are brought to the office, where the secretary/teacher calls home

### **Ensuring pupil safety on the grounds**

- Traffic flow - There is traffic flow system whereby parents can turn safely prior to setting down
- Parking - There are designated 'Set-down' areas and a 'Staff Parking' area.
- There are also clearly-marked designated spaces for those with disabilities. Parents are asked to set-down rather than park where possible.
- Footpaths – There are footpaths, ramped footpaths & curb ramps to ensure safe access for all.

### **Pupils leaving the school premises during the school day e.g. dentist or doctor appointment**

- The parent notifies the teacher by note in advance of the departure
- On arriving to collect the child, the parent speaks to the secretary
- Parent/guardian will sign out the child being collected
- Depending on the situation, the secretary will phone the classroom of the child or will call in person to the classroom to tell the teacher. This varies dependent on the age and individual needs of the child

### **Supervision of Pupils**

- See Guidelines from Allianz website, [www.allscoil.ie](http://www.allscoil.ie)
- In the event of a teacher being absent, children are supervised by the principal/ a special education teacher until the arrival of the substitute teacher.
- The supervision roster for playground duty is clearly displayed in the staff room
- This roster is kept by the Principal for the school-year as part of the school records

### **Incident / accident book**

- Yard book – Records of incidents at yard time are kept in each individual yard's book. Minor accidents are written in the book.
- In-class – individual records are kept by the teachers.
- Serious Incident/Accident – Records are written in the Incident Report Book kept in a filing cabinet in the secretary's office. These records are written by the principle staff member involved. The Principal reads this and retains a separate copy if deemed necessary



## Code of Behaviour and Anti Bullying Policy

- Refer to the school's policy for dealing with behaviour which causes a risk to others.

## Allegations or Suspicions of Child Abuse

- Refer to Child Protection Policy and Child Protection Guidelines. Also refer to CPSMA Management Board Members' Handbook  
<https://www.cpsma.ie/bom/boards-of-management-2019-2023/governance-manual-for-primary-schools-2019-2023/>
- The school's Child Protection Policy, in line with Child Protection Guidelines, is followed in the case of an allegation or suspicion of child abuse.

## School tours / outings

- Upon starting in the school, parents sign permission for their children to attend incidental outings.
- Prior to the tour/trip, teachers contact the site of the tour and discuss any safety concerns.
- Teachers brief the children on safety aspects of the trip in the days prior to the trip.
- A note outlining the itinerary, cost, appropriate clothing and any other safety concerns is sent to parents prior to going on tour. Permission slips are also attached. These must be returned to the class teacher prior to the trip
- Teachers bring an emergency contact list, first aid box and phone with them on tour. Teachers regularly carry out headcounts e.g. getting on/off the bus, changing locations, before the bus departs, after lunch and toilet breaks
- Teachers ensure all children are wearing their seatbelts prior to the bus departing each location

## Safety and Welfare Issues - Staff

### Garda clearance

- The school ensures that all successful staff at interview have recently been vetted by the gardaí.
- The school endeavours to maintain a high standard in its 'duty of care' to all staff by encouraging a positive and safe environment and taking precautions to ensure that this exists e.g. clear signs, planned evacuation procedures etc.

### Positive Staff Relations: *Refer to 'Working Together. Procedures and Policies for Positive Staff Relations. INTO 2000 and the CPSMA Management Board Members' Handbook*

- Practices to support positive staff relations in the school include
  - Staff room notice boards, staff room slide show, staff meetings, circulation of minutes, school emails & Aladdin.
  - Process of decision-making – insofar as is possible, staff are called upon to make decisions on the basis of consultation and consensus within the school community e.g. adoption of school plans, subject plans, SSE etc.
  - Effective school policies and procedures – all teachers are aware and have access to school plans, policies, practices and procedures.
  - Mutual respect
  - A sense of fairness
  - Informal meetings and communication e.g. social outings, updates etc.
- Staff are made aware of the procedures to address cases of adult bullying/ harassment or to initiate a grievance procedure at staff meetings, informal meetings, emails from Principal, through access to policies and reminders to read policies. These procedures are as follows:
  - Stage 1 – Decide to address the problem
  - Stage 2 – Informally address the problem
  - Stage 3 – Involvement of the Principal and/or Chairperson of the Board of Management
  - Stage 4 - Referring the matter to Board of Management for further investigation
- Assaults on Teachers/School Employees: See CPSMA Management Board Members' Handbook Practices that create and maintain a culture where acts of violence are not tolerated include





- Good practice for the conduct of communication between home and school ▪ Admitting parents/visitors to the school e.g. dropping children in the morning, collecting early, 'appointment-only' meetings
- Arrangement and facilitating parent-teacher meeting
- A detailed Code of Behaviour which is available online for all to view
- Clear complaints procedure in place
- Parents should always go to the class teacher first. In most cases, things can be resolved at this level. The teacher will inform the principal of any serious complaints
- At this stage, if a parent feels that the issue has not been resolved, they are welcome to make an appointment with the principal to discuss the matter.
- If they still feel unhappy with the outcome, you can then bring your concerns to the Board of Management of the school. In order to do this, the concerns must be put in writing and addressed to the Chairperson of the Board of Management.
- In the event of an incident occurring, the procedures outlined below should be followed
  - The incident should be immediately reported to the Principal. All staff are encouraged to then debrief with a trusted colleague of their choice. The details of the incident are recorded by the teacher in their own notes and the Principal in their notes
  - Where necessary, immediate medical assistance should be sought
  - The matter should be reported to the Gardaí, where appropriate. The report would normally be made by the teacher who was assaulted. However, the Principal may also report it
  - The Board of Management should be notified of the incident and where necessary, an emergency meeting of the Board should take place. The Board should notify its legal advisers of the assault. The Board's insurance company should also be notified
  - Where the assault is by a pupil the matter should be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour and as provided for in Rule 130(5) of the Rules for National Schools
  - Repeatedly aggressive pupils should be referred to, with the consent of the parents, for psychological assessment in order to assess the pupil's social and emotional needs and to determine how these can be best met
  - Where the assault is committed by a parent/guardian, the parent/guardian should be immediately instructed in writing not to make direct contact with the teacher/school pending full consideration of the matter by the Board. Subsequently, the Board should correspond with the parent/guardian stating:
    - That the Board considers the matter unacceptable
    - What action the Board intends to take
    - Outlining what pre-conditions before access to the school is restored
- Applications for leave of absence, in relation to a member who has been assaulted, should be forwarded to Primary Payments Section of the Department of Education & Skills
- Where an employee's personal property is damaged in the course of an assault, compensation for its replacement value may be paid by the Board of Management under their Insurance Policy
- Employees work in a reasonably comfortable and safe environment that is well heated and ventilated, appropriately lit, suitable chairs etc.
- There are safeguards in place for pregnant staff members e.g. they are notified immediately in the event of an infectious diseases and encouraged to seek immediate medical advice on how to proceed
- Training is currently not given for lifting heavy equipment. This is something that the Board of Management will look into in the coming year. Due to the increase in staff numbers and new location, the Board of Management will look into providing further training in the near future. The caretaker is provided with appropriate safety gear on request.



- Procedures followed by cleaners include
  - Vacuum cleaner leads not trailing on the floor
  - Safety signs clearly visible – wet floors.
  - Clean all classrooms & toilets thoroughly.
- Equipment and materials
  - Lawnmowers, ladders and any other equipment associated with school maintenance stored in a safe area i.e. the locked outside store room and is not accessible to children. Designated teaching staff, board members, parent association members, cleaners and the caretaker have access to this
  - Solvents, chemicals, cleaning agents are stored in the Cleaners' Store Rooms. These storage areas are kept locked. The key holders with an internal master key have access to this
  - Computers, laptops and other technologies are stored safely – Refer to the Teaching Laptop & iPad Policy

## **Success criteria of Safety, Health & Welfare Policy**

- Created of a safe and healthy school environment by identifying, preventing and tackling hazards and their accompanying risks
- Ensured understanding of the school's duty of care towards pupils
- Protected the school community from workplace accidents and ill health at work
- Outlined procedures and practices in place to ensure safe systems of work
- Complied with all relevant health and safety legislation (so far as is reasonably practicable) to include the following areas
  - Provision of a safe workplace for all employees – teachers, SNAs, Secretary, Caretaker, etc.
  - Ensuring competent employees, who will carry out safe work practices
  - Ensuring safe access and escape routes
  - Ensuring safe handling and use of hazardous substances and equipment
  - Provision of safe equipment including maintenance and use of appropriate guards
  - Provision of appropriate personal protective equipment.

## **Roles and Responsibility**

The people who have particular responsibilities for aspects of the policy and how they fulfil their role include the

- Board of Management
- Safety Officer
- Safety Representative
- Each member of staff

## **Implementation Date**

This policy will be implemented immediately.

## **Timetable for Review**

The Health and Safety Policy will be reviewed biennially or as the need arises. The next review for this policy will take place during school year 2025/26

The HSA recommended that a review should be conducted when any changes have been made to work practices, personnel, where a practice is no longer valid or under the direction from the HSA inspector. It is recommended by the HSA that the statement be reviewed at least annually.

## **Ratification & Communication**

This revised plan was ratified at a Board of Management meeting in term one of the school year



2025/26.

Date of ratification: 24/11/2025

Signed: *Damien Ahern* CHAIRPERSON OF BOM

Date: 24/11/2025

Signed: *Rory O'Sullivan* PRINCIPAL

Date: 24/11/2025

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### Reference Section

- \* Guidelines on Managing Safety, Health and Welfare in Primary Schools, HSA [http://www.hsa.ie/eng/Education/Guidelines\\_on\\_Managing\\_Safety\\_Health\\_and\\_Welfare\\_in\\_Primary\\_Schools.pdf](http://www.hsa.ie/eng/Education/Guidelines_on_Managing_Safety_Health_and_Welfare_in_Primary_Schools.pdf)
- \* Guidelines on Preparing your Safety Statement, HSA
- \* A short guide to The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 (www.hsa.ie) \* Report of the Advisory Committee on Health & Safety Statement for Schools. HSA. This report contains a format for a Safety Statement.
- \* CPSMA Management Board Members' Handbook
- \* A Supplementary Handbook for Primary Schools under Protestant Management. Second Edition. p.22 - 27 Compiling a Safety Statement
- \* INTO Guidelines for compiling a Safety Statement
- \* A Guide to Insurance, Safety and Security in the School (2002), Church & General p. 24-32
- \* Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 (www.hsa.ie)
- \* Round Hall's Primary Education Management Manual CD – ROM
- \* Mahon O. (2002) The Principal's Legal Handbook IVEA. Ch.3 Safety, Health & Welfare in School
- \* Working Together. Procedures and Policies for Positive Staff Relations. INTO 2000
- \* Guidelines on First Aid (Index chart) from the regional Health Promotion Units
- \* "Infection in School". A manual for school personnel, available from regional Health promotion units on [www.healthpromotion.ie](http://www.healthpromotion.ie)
- \* Responding to Critical Incidents - Advice and Information Pack for Schools from The National Educational Psychological Service, Frederick Court, 24-27 North Frederick Street, Dublin 1
- \* Employee Assistance Service (EAS) for teachers, managed by VHI Corporate Solutions. DES [www.vhi.ie](http://www.vhi.ie)
- \* Solas (CPMSA) Nov./Dec. 2006. *Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005*, p3
- \* Solas (CPMSA). Spring 2007, p14. Employee Assistance Service for Teachers.
- \* InTouch, December 2006, p10. Employee Assistance Service for Teachers.
- \* Solas (CPMSA), Summer 2007 p19. Supervision of pupils outside official school opening hours- a dilemma.
- \* Leadership \*, IPPN April 2007. p16. Health & Safety for Senior Managers

### Websites:

DES [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)



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*(NOTE: By law, the Health & Safety Authority must be notified when an accident causes death or prevents an employed person from working for more than 3 days. This is explained in detail in the CPSMA Handbook and is accompanied by a standard reporting form. The school's insurance*

*company should also be notified about serious accidents that occur in the school or while on school related activities.)*



