



# Healthy & Safety Policy

*Of Firhouse Educate Together National School*

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## **Summary**

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 1989 aims to make all work places, in this case, Firhouse Educate Together 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. Policy Statement on Safety, Health and Welfare at Work of the Board of Management of Firhouse Educate Together National School

The Board of Management 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 who use it, namely staff, pupils, parents/guardians and relevant members of the public. Firhouse Educate Together National 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.

## **Procedures**

### **1 Responsibilities**

#### 1.1 Board of Management

The Board of Management 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 others who come into and/or use that part of the building/campus designated for use by Firhouse

Educate 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 on the school's website. 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 Representative 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 Board of Management will sanction relevant health and safety training for this person if necessary.

## 1.2 Principal

The Principal is the link between the Board of Management and the staff. The Principal will ensure that all staff, including temporary, part-time and substitute staff, receive induction, on-going training and regular information on health and safety matters and will consult with them, on behalf of the Board of Management, regularly on such matters. There will be one item at each staff meeting devoted to Health and Safety issues. 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. She 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.

## 1.3 Staff

All staff, including temporary, substitute, ancillary and part-time staff, and also cleaning staff (who will be given a copy of this policy) are required 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. 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.

The staff is required to attend any health and safety training that is deemed essential by the Board of Management, 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 will be maintained by the school.

A member of staff will be appointed by the Board to act as Safety Representative. This representative has certain statutory rights including the right to appropriate training, to make reports and to investigate accidents. The Safety Representative will have the right to represent all employees on Occupational Health and Safety matters.

Teachers, ISA's/SNA's and other members of staff also have responsibility to take care to avoid injury, to co-operate with the Principal and Board in matters of safety, to use any means provided for their protection and to report to the Principal and Board any dangerous work situation they may encounter.

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 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 that 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.

#### 1.4 Class teachers

Once a pupil enters the school building with Class Teacher at 8.25 a.m., the teachers are in loco parentis and thus primarily responsible for the child's health, safety and welfare.

Care is taken to ensure that children remain inside the school premises during the school day; a security buzzer is located inside the front door and it must be used to exit the building.

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, two class teachers will ordinarily supervise the school yard, assisted by the school's Special Needs Assistants (ISAs). Minor cuts and bruises will be dealt with as per the section on First Aid below. Incidents or accidents will be recorded in the school Accident Book, and reported to parents and/or Principal if necessary. The yard supervision rota will be displayed in the staff room. If the weather is inclement, children will remain in their classrooms for quiet activities.

Class teachers with the support of ISA's/SNA's 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 and Senior Infants leave school at 13.05. 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).

#### 1.5 Health and Safety Representative

The Health and Safety Representative appointed by the Board will have the right to:

- Represent staff 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 staff, members of the Board or parents
- Accompany a health and safety inspector carrying out an inspection

- Make representations to, and receive information from, an inspector
- Make representations to the Board of Management on health and safety matters
- Liaise with the Staff Safety Representative and the Principal in health and safety matters Receive appropriate training for this role.
- If desired by the staff when the school grows, the Principal will facilitate the establishment of a staff safety committee.

## 1.6 Parents and 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.

School starts at 8.25 a.m. Doors close at 8.40 a.m. Anyone arriving after this time will be required to use the buzzer at the front door to gain access to the school, to sign in and wear a Visitor's Badge while escorting their child/children to classroom(s). On leaving the parents are required to sign out. Parents and guardians must take specific responsibility for other children, especially young children, accompanying them in the school and its environs.

Parents and guardians are requested to ensure that their children attend school in clothing and footwear that is appropriate for all curricular subjects in particular physical education, SESE and art, and that they do not wear loose jewellery at any time.

Parents and guardians who are directly or indirectly involved with any meetings, events, extra-curricular 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. Additionally, or alternatively, they may raise any concerns with the Chairperson of the Parents' Guardians' Teachers' Association Committee. Parents and guardians are also entitled to receive information on, and be consulted on, this document.

## 1.7 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.

## 1.8 Members of the public

Members of the public who visit the school or hire 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.

## 2 Emergencies

## 2.1 Emergency routes and exits:

The school has eight exterior exits and five exits on to the internal courtyard. All of these exits display the statutory 'Green Man' Exit sign and are kept free from obstruction at all times. All rooms will have evacuation instructions on the inside of each door. School evacuation will be practised as part of regular fire drills both with and without the staff and students from Gaelscoil na Giúise who currently share our building.

## 2.2 Fire protection

The school, is currently set up in temporary accommodation.

A fire drill will be held at least once each term. A fire safety audit needs to be done as part of the school's general health and safety risk assessment, and to ensure that the school has, and will maintain, appropriate fire detection and fire fighting equipment which meets statutory obligations. At present, there is one fire extinguisher in the school. Staff will be trained in the use of fire fighting equipment. The procedure in the event of a fire is for each class teacher to take the Roll Book, 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.

## 2.3 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 in the school office. These will be updated regularly.

## 2.4 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 are two large first aid boxes in the school and one smaller first aid box for excursions etc. The first aid boxes are stocked in accordance with guidelines issued by the Health and Safety Authority. In the staffroom are tissues, latex gloves, two ice-packs and covers, and plasters.

Medication is not and may never be stored in first aid boxes but will be kept in a locked drawer by the teacher who is responsible for the child with medical needs.

## 2.5 Investigation, recording and reporting

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All instances of ill health, accident and 'near misses', that result from compromised health and safety circumstances, are investigated and subsequently recorded in the school's Accident Report Book. The Principal will report on these at the next meeting of the Board of Management (and sooner to the Chairperson of the Board of Management if the instance is deemed sufficiently

serious). Any incident involving a child will also be notified on the day itself to the relevant parent/guardian, ordinarily by the class teacher.

Furthermore, the Principal will make a report to the Health and Safety Authority in the case of dangerous occurrences, death or serious accidents (that is, an accident requiring absence from work/school for more than three days, not including the day of the accident itself, or requiring medical treatment by a registered medical practitioner or hospital). Additionally, the Principal will make a report to the school's insurance company.

## 2.6 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 (email, telephone calls, posting on school website, school face book page, 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.

## **3. Safety**

### 3.1 Traffic management

The Board recognises that, because the school is situated on a shared campus, large numbers of staff, pupils, parents, guardians, local residents and other members of the community and of the public travel within the direct vicinity of the two schools. They arrive and leave at different and concentrated times of the day using different modes of transport, which poses enormous safety concerns. The Board of Management wants traffic in and around the school to be managed as safely as possible, but this requires the full cooperation of all parties concerned. Staff, parents/guardians and children are informed on an on-going basis that extreme caution must be exercised by everyone, especially in areas where vehicles and pedestrians mix.

### 3.2 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. Bicycles and scooters are stored in bicycle shed near front entrance. The front entrance will ordinarily be used only by staff and visitors to the school.

### 3.3 Children leaving school

Parents or guardians of children in Junior and Senior Infants must collect them from the front door at 13.10 (or earlier in the case of early closure). The school will keep a record of other people, e.g. relatives or after-school employees, who have permission from parents to pick up the children after school.

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). If a child is to leave alone, the school's authorisation must be sought. Any child who leaves early must be signed out from their classroom/the yard prior to leaving the premises.

### 3.4 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, including the Junior Infants teachers taking the whole class to the toilets together at regular times during the day. The Senior

Infant children can go the toilet individually but measures such as giving a time limit, leaving the classroom door open and the teacher regularly walking outside the room briefly to check on the safety of the child who has left the classroom. Measures will be taken to ensure that uninvited persons do not enter the school: a visitor must use the buzzer to gain attention to be given access to the school; since all staff are in the classrooms, it will not be possible for unarranged visits during class time.

Staff members should not chase pupils who run away. They are to call the pupil back from a distance and the school will contact the parents/guardians. In dangerous situations it may be necessary to run after pupils to bring children back from danger e.g. traffic

### 3.5 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.

### 3.6 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. 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 is stored securely away from children. In our current temporary accommodation, this is in the locked sluice room. Cleaning and maintenance will normally be done outside of school hours.

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.

## 4 Health

#### 4.1 Facilities

The school building and grounds will be maintained on an on-going basis as best as is reasonably possible. The school has, at present, no control over and has to adhere to pre-existing conditions, as organised for us by the DES in relation to sharing our school building with FETSS.

Good levels of hygiene will be observed, including regular cleaning and collection of litter. Hot drinks will not be carried out of Staff Room. 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 toilets 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. Staff must switch off personal mobile phones and put them away during teaching hours and when on yard duty.

#### 4.2 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 or other medical condition, and, if so, to thereafter complete a form listing any long-term allergies and 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 Appendix 1) 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.

#### 4.3 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, however.

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. (See Appendix 2)

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.

#### 4.4 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.

#### 4.5 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.

## 5 Other welfare issues

### 5.1 Animals

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

### 5.2 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.

## 6 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 2013-2014.

## Conclusion

This Safety Statement sets out the Health and Safety Policy of the Board of Management of Firhouse Educate Together National School and sets out the means to achieve that policy. The Board recognises the importance of legislation in relation to safety, health and welfare at work, and endeavours to provide a safe and healthy work environment for staff and pupils, and to fulfil its duties to parents, other employees and members of the public who come into the school. This policy requires the co-operation of the whole school community. It is the Board's intention to undertake regular reviews of the Health and Safety Statement in light of experience, changes in legal requirements and operational changes.

The Board of Management will undertake to carry out a safety audit annually and report to staff. 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, over the coming years 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.

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year.

**This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2019.**

**Date of next review: January 2020**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Francis Fullen: Chairperson of Board of Management

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

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

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

Collette Dunne: Principal

**Appendix 1: School information regarding medical conditions / allergies**

Name of Pupil: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Does your child have any medical conditions or allergies? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

If "Yes", please complete the details below, in full.

*(If you would like some help filling out this form, please make an appointment to meet Principal)*

Medical condition:

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Allergy: \_\_\_\_\_

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Date or age of diagnosis by a doctor: \_\_\_\_\_

What are the symptoms of the medical condition or allergy?/What can happen to your child because of this condition/allergy, as explained by a doctor?

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Has a doctor told you that this is a serious medical condition or allergy that might require medical or hospital attention?

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Has your child ever required emergency or hospital attention for this condition or allergy in the past? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

Explain what happened:

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How does this condition or allergy affect your child? Please describe how your child looks/feels/acts when they become unwell:

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What words do you and your child use to explain how they are feeling? (For example, "My chest feels tight" or "I need my puffer" or "It feels very bad" etc...)

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\*\*\*At Firhouse Educate Together National School, we do not administer medications unless a prior agreement has been made between parents and the Board of Management. If you feel your child needs to use medication at school, please make an appointment to discuss this with the Principal.

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

**Appendix 2**

Administration of Medication to Pupils

Name of child: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Chairperson of the Board of Management,

My child, \_\_\_\_\_, suffers from the condition known as \_\_\_\_\_.

I/We, the parent(s)/guardian(s), hereby request that where the class teacher or any member of the staff of Firhouse Educate Together National School agrees to become involved in the administering of medication, the Board of Management would grant permission to the said persons to administer the appropriate medication following the instructions as outlined below.

1. Name of medication to be administered \_\_\_\_\_
2. Method of administering medication (orally, inhaler, injection etc.) \_\_\_\_\_
3. Amount of medication to be administered at any one time \_\_\_\_\_
4. Time of day medicine is administered (if relevant) \_\_\_\_\_
5. Regularity with which medication should be administered (once a day, once a week, whenever necessary) \_\_\_\_\_

Please find attached (if necessary) more detailed instructions regarding the administering of the medication, and procedures to be followed in an emergency situation with particular reference to what may be a risk to the child.

In consideration of the Board of Management entering into this agreement, I/we, the parent(s)/guardian(s), hereby agree to indemnify and keep indemnified the Board, its servants and agents including the pupils, class teacher and any other member of staff who may administer the said medication from and against all claims both present and future arising from the administration or failure to administer the said medication.

Yours sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent(s)/Guardian(s)