

# St Finian's Health and Safety Policy



**2023/24**

## **Rationale**

The Safety Statement approved by the Board of Management of St Finian's under the 'Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005' sets out the policy and organisation of safety, health, and welfare in the school. The school seeks to make every effort to preserve and promote the safety, health, and welfare of our school community.

The Board of Management of St Finian's is committed to securing high standards of health and safety in and around the school. It always strives to create a working and learning environment that is safe and healthy for all that use it, namely staff, pupils, parents/guardians, and relevant members of the public.

The school will apply the provisions of all applicable health, safety and welfare legislation and codes of practice to ensure that places and systems of work are safe and without risk to health. Continuous improvements in health and safety performance will be sought, but interventions will reflect the reality of identified risks.

The Board recognises that children attending our school, or who wish to enrol, may have chronic health conditions which need to be managed carefully. In this regard the Board uses the following four Guiding Statements, identified as A, B, C, & D, from the publication "**Managing Chronic Illness in Schools**" to set out our commitment to ensure the safety of our children with chronic health conditions.

**Statement A: This school ensures that the whole school environment is inclusive and favourable to pupils with a chronic condition.**

**Statement B: This school understands that certain chronic conditions can be potentially life threatening, particularly if ill-managed or misunderstood. Parents have a duty to inform the school of such a condition and provide necessary medical equipment to respond to emergencies.**

**Statement C: This school has clear guidance on the administration and storage of medications and necessary equipment at school.**

**Statement D: Staff understand the common chronic conditions that affect students at this school. Staff receive appropriate training on chronic conditions and what to do in an emergency.**

## **Aims**

The aim of the policy is to:

- Ensure that all reasonably practical steps are taken to ensure the health, safety, welfare, and wellbeing of all members of the school community while on the school grounds
- Ensure that all reasonably practical steps are taken to ensure the health and safety of staff, pupils and other supervising adults participating in off-site visits
- Establish and maintain safe working procedures amongst staff and pupils
- Decide for ensuring safety and absence of risks to health in connection with the use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances
- Develop safety awareness amongst staff, pupils, and other supervising adults.
- Formulate and implement effective procedures for use in the event of fire and other emergencies

## **Responsibilities**

### **Board of Management**

- The Board is the employer of the school's staff. As such, it has overall responsibility for ensuring healthy and safe places and systems of work for staff, as well as a duty of care to all other building users.
- The Board will ensure that an up-to-date Safety Statement is in place. It will undertake a regular risk assessment and will ensure that identified hazards are eliminated or minimised as far as is reasonably practical. The Board will devote sufficient resources to ensuring the health and safety of all members of the school community and will ensure that there is adequate insurance in place to cover the activities of the school.
- The Board will appoint at least one person to the role of Safety Officer to assure health and safety compliance. This may be an external expert or a BOM member, but not the Principal or Teachers' Representative on the BOM. The BOM will sanction relevant health and safety training for this person if necessary.

### **Principal and Deputy Principal**

- The Principal is the link between the BOM and the staff.
- The Principal will ensure that all staff, including temporary and part-time staff, receive induction, on-going training and regular information on health and safety matters and will consult with them, on behalf of the BOM, at least annually on such matters.
- The Principal will support and assist staff to enable them to reach correct decisions about health and safety and will check at intervals that safe working methods are being observed that are in accordance with school and statutory procedures.
- The Principal will also receive and deal initially with any health and safety concerns that she receives from staff, parents, guardians, and others.
- The Deputy Principal will take on the duties of the Principal in her absence.

### **Other Employees**

- All staff teachers, SNAs and childcare workers, including temporary and part-time staff, are required to cooperate with the Board and others to ensure health and safety law in general, and this policy is implemented.
- They have the responsibility to take reasonable care of their own safety, health, and welfare and that of any person who may be affected by their acts or omissions. This applies to any work they do on behalf of the school, both within the school premises and outside.
- Specifically, in terms of child welfare, teachers are *in loco parentis* and are expected to do what a reasonably careful parent would do in any situation involving risk.
- Being mindful of their role as being in loco parentis, if any member of staff suspects that a parent/guardian may be under the influence of any medication and/or intoxicant to the extent that it endangers their own or another person's safety, the Principal must be informed immediately.
- Staff are required to attend any health and safety training that is deemed essential by the BOM and are encouraged to undertake appropriate additional training. All training must be delivered by individuals/organisations competent to do so.
- Records of all health and safety training completed by staff will be maintained by the school. Staff must use available facilities and equipment and other forms of protection to ensure work practices are performed in the safest manner possible and must never intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse any such facilities, equipment, or protection.

- Staff should report without delay any health and safety issue to the Health and Safety officer or Principal. “If you spot it, sort it, if you can’t sort it, report it.”
- Staff may not be under the influence of any medication and/or intoxicant to the extent that it endangers their own or another person’s safety and must inform the Principal if they are suffering from any injury, disease or illness or are taking any medication that potentially adds to risks within the school.
- Any dangerous practices or situations that staff become aware of must be reported to the Principal and/or staff Safety Representative without unreasonable delay.

### **Staff Safety Representative**

This Health and Safety Policy names **Terry Martin** as the Staff Safety Representative and the duties associated with this position include but are not limited to:

- Represent employees on health and safety matters
- Inspect the place of work on health and safety grounds
- Investigate accidents and dangerous occurrences
- Investigate health and safety complaints made by employees
- Accompany a health and safety inspector carrying out an inspection when required
- Make representations to, and receive information from, an Inspector
- Make representations to the Board on health and safety matters
- Liaise with other relevant persons engaged in health and safety matters
- Receive appropriate training for this role.

### **Parents and Guardians**

- Parents and guardians are requested to cooperate with the Board and others to ensure health and safety law in general and this policy is implemented.
- They have the responsibility to take reasonable care of their own safety, health, and welfare and that of any person who may be affected by their acts or omissions. Parents are especially reminded that they must not allow their children to engage in dangerous play in and around the school.
- Once a pupil enters the school building, the teachers and specifically assigned Special Needs Assistants are *in loco parentis* and thus primarily responsible for the children’s health, safety, and welfare.
- Parents and guardians, however, must take specific responsibility for other children not enrolled in the school, especially young children, accompanying them in the school and its environs.
- Parents and guardians are requested to report any health and safety concerns to the Principal and/or the Chairperson of the Board. Additionally, or alternatively, they may raise any concerns with the Chairperson of the Parents’ Committee. High-risk concerns must be reported promptly to the Principal.
- Parents and guardians are also entitled to receive information on, and be consulted on, the school’s health and safety policy and procedures.

### **Pupils**

- Pupils will be advised of any relevant health and safety procedures and are required to comply with the staff and Board in implementing these.

### **Members of the Public**

- Members of the public who visit the school will be informed of any relevant health and safety regulations in place and will be required to abide by these.

- Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that any outside contractors used by the school are covered by adequate insurance and comply with health, safety, and welfare legislation.

### **Access to School**

- The front door nearest the yard is from the main entrance and the school gate is opened at 7:30am every school morning by the caretaker or other designated key holder.
- Children should not be in the yard until 8:40. There will be a supervising teacher to supervise their arrival. There is no supervising teacher prior to 8:40
- Children are admitted to the school at 8:40am. Children go straight to their classrooms via the maindoor on the senior side or the external doors on the junior side.
- The main entrance is at the front door of the new extension. The main door must always be kept securely closed and all members of staff, parents and visitors must make sure that this is done.
- Any child who arrives late in the morning should ring the bell at the door of the main building.
- Parents are not permitted to park in the school grounds at any time
- Visitors, contractors, etc., must park in the place designated to them.
- In as far as it is possible with the practical layout of the school premises, anyone entering the school premises shall be required to identify themselves to the secretary or a member of staff as relevant before gaining admittance to the school.
- Please note that reception times are as currently as follows:  
Monday – Friday  
10:00am to 2:00 pm

### **Collecting Children from School**

- All parents/guardians/authorised adults, in the interest of safety, must collect Junior Infants and Senior Infants from the external door of their classrooms. Both classes finish at 1:30pm sharp.
- All other children from 1<sup>st</sup> class to 6<sup>th</sup> class may be collected from their teachers by parents/guardians/authorised adults at the school gate. Classes are walked by their teacher to the gate
- Pupils going home by themselves should walk from the school gate in an orderly fashion.
- Any parent/guardian who wishes for their child to walk home regularly unattended must inform the teacher.
- Any parent/guardian who usually collects the child but who wishes the child to walk home unattended on certain occasions must give permission in writing for the attention of the class teacher.
- In the case of any child who has written permission to leave the school unattended, the Board of Management is not responsible for their safety.
- Parents/guardians/authorised adults are reminded to drive slowly when approaching the school gates to collect children. (See traffic management below)
- If parents arrange to collect their children at a place other than the school, the Board of Management is not responsible for their safety.
- If they are not collected on time, or pupils need to leave school early (for example, for a dental appointment), the parents or guardians must notify the school in advance. If a person other than a parent or guardian is collecting the child, the parent/guardian must give written permission to the class teacher (unless it is an emergency situation, in which case the school office may be contacted by telephone).
- Any child who leaves early must be signed out from their classroom with their class teacher's knowledge and permission prior to leaving the premises.

### **Traffic Management**

*The Board of Management recognises that large numbers of staff, pupils, parents/guardians, and visitors travel within the direct vicinity of the school. They ordinarily arrive and leave at concentrated times of the day using different modes of transport, which poses safety concerns. The Board wants traffic outside the school grounds to be managed as safely as possible, but this requires the full cooperation of all parties concerned. This is an ongoing situation that causes difficulties.*

- Parents/guardians are reminded that they are responsible for their children when they are collected from the class teacher and before the school gates open in the morning.
- Once leaving the front gate, parents/guardians are reminded that they are responsible for ensuring that their children are safe.
- Parents/guardians are reminded that there are no car parking facilities within the school grounds available at any time.
- Should a parent need to park in the yard due to a special need, they should consult with the school principal.
- For parents travelling by car, children should be dropped off as far back from the front gate. However, the Board would encourage children to walk or be walked to school.
- We would always remind our parents to be mindful of the residents of Glenties Park.

### **Safe Access and Leaving Routes**

- Every effort will be made to ensure that all building users can safely access, leave, and move around the school grounds and building where necessary.
- Entrances and corridors will be kept free from obstruction.
- Fire exits will be kept free from obstruction.

### **Health and Wellbeing**

#### *General Health and Hygiene*

- Parents/guardians should not send a child to school who is sick or who may have a contagious infection.
- While the Board of Management encourages full attendance, parents/guardians should use their best judgment in deciding if a child is sick and therefore should not be in school.
- Should a teacher, acting *in loco parentis*, determine that a child is sick and should not be in school, he/she will inform the principal for a second opinion. The parent/guardian will, if necessary, be contacted to collect the child during the school day. If the parents/guardians are not available, the emergency contact will be contacted to collect the child. If the emergency contact is not available, medical assistance may be sought by the school.
- A doctor's certificate is required should your child be required to remain indoors at break/lunchtime.
- Parents/guardians are required to inform the school of any on-going health problems that the child may have, and the medications being used.
- In case of a food allergy, either a doctor's certificate or a report from a qualified professional is required.
- If pupils have a medical condition which may affect their work at school, parents should tell their teacher. This is particularly important with any physical, hearing or eyesight problems.

### **Hygiene and Tidiness at School**

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

- The school is cleaned daily and thoroughly with attention paid to toilet areas.
- Toilets should be flushed after use.
- Any sanitary products must be placed in the provided units.
- Litter is to be put into the bins provided in the classrooms throughout the school.
- Bins are provided for used hand towels which should not be flushed.
- All lunch litter must be taken home for disposal.

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

### ***Toilets***

Our school does not have any in class toilets. (Room 9 and room 1A being an exception) Toilets are situated in four blocks on the corridor. This necessitates careful timetabling of toilet use. Each class teacher will have an established time and procedure for using the toilet. Naturally, children may have to use the toilet between these established times. This is permitted, but children should be reminded to use the facilities accordingly.

Any child with potential toileting issues should be identified to their class teacher at the beginning of the school year. Care and discretion should always be taken in this regard. **Children starting in our Early Start unit or Junior Infants should be toilet trained. Early Start children should be provided with a change of clothes in the event of an accident.** Before a child is changed the parent should be contacted to allow consent. **Two adult staff members must be present when helping to change a child.** Parents will be asked to come and change a soiled child.

We have two toilets to cater for children with reduced mobility. One in the junior corridor and one in our front extension.

Good toileting routines are established at Early Start and continued up through the school. Toilet steps and toilet insets are provided where necessary. Use of these should be normalised. They should be stored in the appropriate toilet blocks.

Those who use them should be encouraged to lift and place before use. Appropriate clothing, for example elasticated tracksuit bottoms, should be worn to allow for ease of pulling down and up. The use of rhymes and verbal pathways should be used to reinforce procedure. Performing toilet routines can be reinforced through our discipline for learning reward schemes.

Carefully established routines should enable all children to become independent when using our toilet facilities. Assistance, where required, will always be given.

Good handwashing techniques form an important component within our toilet routines.

***Parents with children who have intimate care needs should inform the school. Please refer to our Intimate Needs Care policy.***

### ***Personal Hygiene***

- All children enrolled in our school must be fully toilet trained, including our Early Start Unit. In a case where a child cannot self-toilet due to a condition or special education need, a doctor's certificate or report is required.
- "Coughs and sneezes, elbows please".
- All children must wash their hands after using the toilet.
- When a child uses a tissue to blow his or her nose, the used tissue must be immediately placed in the correct bin.
- Hand-soap, towels and toilet roll are in regular supply around the school while tissues and hand sanitiser are available in the classrooms and staff room.

- Female pupils in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class are informed of where to find a store of female sanitary products should they need them and how to dispose of these correctly.
- All members of staff reserve the right to inform the Principal if correct supplies of hygiene products are not sufficient at any time.
- Food items must never be brought into the toilet areas.
- Children are not allowed to swap or share previously opened food items or milk cartons
- Children are not allowed to swap or share water bottles, milk cartons, cups or any other such items.

### ***Long-term Health Conditions***

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

### ***Infectious Illness***

*The Board of Management encourage5 full attendance where possible but must be mindful of the health of other members of the school community, staff members and other parents included.*

- If a child is suspected of having a relatively minor infectious illness (stomach bug, etc.), parents/guardians should keep the child away from school until deemed well to return. Upon return, a written note must be provided to the class teacher to explain the child's absence from school.
- If a parent/guardian is unsure of the seriousness of any such possibly infectious illness, medical advice should be sought and followed. Examples of such illnesses include but are not limited to chicken pox, measles, impetigo, conjunctivitis, flu, etc.
- If a child has been diagnosed by a doctor as having an infectious illness, parents/guardians must do the following:
  - inform the school at the first opportunity of the nature of the illness so that any possible immediate cases in other children in any class may be identified quickly
  - follow medical advice to determine the date for safe return to school
  - understand that in the case of some illnesses, the school may require a medical fitness cert to determine that the child is well and does not pose an infectious threat to other children, staff or other members of the school community.

### ***Head Lice***

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

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



### ***Clothing***

- Children must wear our school uniform and tracksuit on the relevant days along with appropriate footwear.
- In times of cold weather, children must come to school with appropriate coats or jackets. Other cold weather gear, such as hats, scarves, gloves, etc., are at the discretion of parents/guardians.
- All items of personal clothing must be labelled with the child's name.
- Children are not allowed to wear makeup or nail varnish.
- Children are not allowed to wear jewellery, except for small stud earrings.
- Parents/guardians are required to check their child's hair regularly otherwise head lice can become a problem in school.

### ***Medical Information***

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

### ***Medicines***

- Parents/guardians must inform the class teacher if their child is on any form of medication, either short term or long term.
- Examples of short-term medications include but are limited to antibiotics, medicines containing paracetamol, antihistamines, etc.
- Examples of long-term medications include but are not limited to inhalers, Ritalin, etc.
- Non-prescriptive medicines will neither be stored nor administered to pupils in school.
- Prescribed medicines will not be administered in school without the written consent of parents and the specific authorisation of the Board of Management.
- The medicine should not be kept by the pupil held by the authorised teacher and out of reach of pupils.
- Certain medicines, such as inhalers used by asthmatic children, must be readily accessible always during the school day.
- Children with acute illness (i.e. colds, temperatures, etc.) are not allowed to bring any medicines to school, either prescription or non-prescription.
- If a child has a diagnosed chronic illness (such as asthma, diabetes, etc.) and may need to take medication, a parent/guardian must write to the Board of Management to request this. A doctor's certificate must accompany this request. The medicine should be self-administered if possible, under the supervision of an authorised adult.
- The above request to the Board must give the name of the child, name and dose of medication, must state whether the child should be responsible for his/her own medication, the circumstances in which medication is to be given by the teacher and consent for it to be given.
- If the child cannot self-administer the required medicine, the request to the Board must include the exact dosage and times for administration.
- A teacher should not administer medication without the specific authorisation of the Board.
- Any teacher who is authorised to administer any medication does so on a voluntary basis and reserves the right to refuse.
- In cases where class teachers have been authorised to administer medication, it is the parents'/guardians' duty to ensure that the class teacher is present on any given school day.
- In any case where the class teacher is not present to administer a prescribed medication as per the Board's permission, the Principal will administer the medication instead. If the Principal is not available, the Deputy Principal fills this role.
- Where possible, parents/guardians should ask the prescribing doctor to prescribe the administration of prescribed medicines outside of school hours.

- Parents are further required to indemnify the Board of Management and authorised members of staff in respect of any liability that may arise regarding the administration of prescribed medicines in school. The Board of Management will inform the school's insurers accordingly.
- Where permission has been given by the Board of Management for the administration of medicine the smallest possible dose should be brought to school, preferably by the parent, with clear written instructions for administration, giving the name of the pupil.
- Changes in prescribed medication (or dosage) should be notified immediately to the school with clear written instructions of the procedure to be followed in storing and administering the new medication. *Parents should ensure that these procedures are clearly understood before submitting any request to the Board of Management.*

### ***Personal Pupil Plan (PPP)***

A personal care plan is drawn up to accommodate any child who has specific needs. The PPP should note the specific need or needs and the appropriate interventions. Such needs may be as follows.

- Eating – because of difficulties with swallowing or mobility
- Taking necessary medicine – because the amount of assistance he/she requires would disrupt normal teaching time
- Toileting and general hygiene
- Mobility and orientation
- Managing frequent and prolonged epileptic seizures
- Move and lift a student
- Withdraw a student temporarily from a classroom when this is essential for safety, personal care, medical reasons or where the student is frequently distressed arising from their special educational needs.

(This list is not exhaustive)

The PPP should define roles and responsibilities. The PPP should be compiled between the parent/guardian, the principal and outside expert where appropriate. A member of the ISM and/or learning support team may be involved. The class teacher should be consulted and briefed on this plan. It is the duty of the teacher and SNA to carry out the required procedures. A log of actions should be maintained. All actions should be carried out with dignity and with discretion. The individual involved should be encouraged to behave as independently as possible, encouraged by simple steps and goals, reinforced visually where appropriately.

### ***Managing Behaviour***

The board is aware that managing behaviour is the key to maintaining a happy and content school community. Positive behaviour by all promotes the health and safety of all. The Board understands that the key elements of school-wide positive behaviour require support. The following areas are essential in supporting school-wide positive behaviour and achieving sustainable change:

- Setting and agreeing expectations.
- Stating clear rules and routines
- Developing systems for encouraging and reinforcing positive behaviour.
- Developing systems that are consistently used to respond to inappropriate behaviour, “with a simple recording system that allows the school to track, systematically and consistently any student’s behaviour that is of concern.” (NEWB, 2008, p.49).

- Developing structures and practices to ensure that all staff explicitly teach the school expectations and promoting systems around these expectations to maintain effectiveness and consistency.

Using these four areas below the board hopes to cultivate school-wide expectations that are specific, positively stated behaviours that are desired of **all** in the school community, can be applied across multiple settings and that **everyone** strives to demonstrate at all times.

Also, these four areas will underscore the rules and routines of our classrooms which should be observable and measurable. The Board aims to promote positive behaviour and learning throughout the school for all our pupils by focusing on developing:

- **Behaviour for Learning Skills**
- **Social and Emotional Literacy Skills**
- **Academic Literacy and Learning Skills**
- **Wellbeing Skills.**

The board recognises that our model of behaviour may need targeted support for some students and individualised support for a few students.

Targeted support for some students may take the following form:

- Rules, routines, and expectations
- Rewards and consequences
- Organisational skills
- Motivation
- Peer conflict
- Explicit teaching of social skills
- Development of specific reading skills
- Explicit teaching of learning and study skills
- Explicit teaching of comprehension and vocabulary strategies
- Social stories
- Development of writing skills
- Check and Connect Intervention
- Attendance and Punctuality
- Mentor Training
- Tutor Training
- Parental Support

A few pupils may present with a variety of challenging behaviours, including social skills deficits; low self-esteem; difficult relationships with adults/peers and poor concentration and attention difficulties in most subjects. The severity of their behaviour in classrooms not only hinders their own educational progress but may also impede that of their peers.

Should a child's behaviour present as a danger to their peers or staff a plan should be put in place. This plan should ensure the health and safety of all those who may be affected. Such behaviours may include:

- Throwing objects
- Lashing out
- Kicking
- Targetting a pupil or staff member with violence
- Spitting
- Abusive language
- Flight risk

Such a plan should take into account:

- How best to communicate with other staff members of such an event
- Seating arrangements in class
- Identifying trigger behaviours
- The use of movement breaks to pre-empt such behaviour
- Evacuation of other children
- Safe removal of child in question
- Reassuring other children
- Optimising the safety of staff members dealing with such incidents.
- Consequences: Restorative practices.
- Informing parents

The teacher works with identified students, individually or in small groups on Behaviour Plans that are designed to meet their social, emotional, wellbeing and behavioural and academic needs, so they can achieve and succeed in school. An individual Student Behaviour Plan and targets are developed for each student in receipt of this support. This plan is carried out by the teacher and SNA.

### ***School Medical Inspections/ Vaccinations***

- The HSE will carry out vaccinations or school medical inspections (including but not limited to hearing, sight and dental) according to their policy during the school year.
- Consent forms will be issued, and no child will be submitted to any vaccination or medical inspection without the direct and signed permission of parents/guardians. In the case of vaccinations in Junior Infant classes, parents/guardians must be in attendance on the day of these taking place. More information is available on [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie) (School Immunisation Programme)
- If a parent/guardian has a concern that the child has a specific food allergy, the Board insists that a medical diagnosis must be sought before the school is officially informed of any such possible allergy.
- Where children are suffering from certain and specific diagnosed on-going food allergy conditions (for example, nut allergy), parents should outline clearly in writing the nature of the allergy and provide this to the class teacher.
- This written report relating to the allergy must state what can and cannot be done in an emergency, with reference to what may be a risk to the child.
- Teachers must be made aware of any such diagnosed on-going conditions as they occur.
- Children who are identified as having diagnosed food allergies will not under any circumstances be offered any items of food that may contain ingredients that the class teacher knows are unsuitable.
- If a teacher is unsure on the exact ingredients of any food item that may be available to the class, he or she will act on the side of caution and not allow the child with a diagnosed food allergy to eat or drink it.
- Parents/guardians are reminded that if their child has a certain and specific diagnosed food allergy, they are responsible for informing the school of this as and when such a diagnosis may be provided.
- Parents and guardians are further reminded that they also have an important role in helping the child know and understand what he or she can and cannot eat.
- Bearing in mind the role of all teachers *in loco parentis*, parents are further required to indemnify the Board of Management of any liability that may arise regarding a child with a diagnosed and specific food allergy consuming any food product that he or she is allergic to.

### **Identification of Children with Diagnosed and Specific On-Going Medical Conditions, Food Allergies and/or Board-approved Administration of Medication**

- The Board wants to ensure that all staff, permanent or temporary, can correctly identify children with diagnosed and specific on-going medical conditions, food allergies and/or board-approved administration of medication.
- Therefore, each such child will have their photograph displayed in the staff room, along with their name, class and diagnosed and specific on-going medical conditions, food allergies and/or board-approved administration of medication.
- Passing on of class records from teacher to teacher must include information pertaining to medical conditions etc. as described above.

### **Accidents**

- Parents/guardians are reminded that although children will be supervised by designated teachers and other staff who are *in loco parentis* during breaks and at all other times, accidents can occur.
- The Board of Management and all parents/guardians recognise that members of staff are not medical professionals but rather act *in loco parentis*.
- Minor accidents are treated at school, such as slight cuts and abrasions etc. The supervising staff or other designated staff members at the school will deal with these by washing the affected area with cold water. Parents/guardians are expected to check injuries when the child returns home from school.
- Hypo-allergenic plasters will only be used at the discretion of the supervising teacher.
- It is the policy of St Finian's not to use disinfectant, salves or any such products on cuts or grazes in case a child is allergic to any of these products.
- If the injury requires more attention than a wash with cold water or the use of an ice pack, then the parents/guardian will be notified.
- A member of staff will never administer medication due to an accident.
- When a child receives a blow to the head, no matter how minor it may be deemed by the supervising teacher, parents/guardians will also be notified.
- When an accident occurs during the school day that the supervising teacher deems more serious than a minor accident, an incident report must be made and signed by the supervising teacher and by any other members of staff who witnessed or attended the accident as a true and accurate reflection of what occurred.
- All parents/guardians must inform the school of any changes to mobile, work or home phone numbers as they may occur. It is the parents'/guardian's responsibility to inform the school of any change of details.
- All parents/guardians must provide the school with the details of an emergency contact in case the parents/guardians cannot be reached.
- In the event of an accident, every possible effort will be made to contact the child's parents/guardians, or the persons delegated to take responsibility for the child.

### **First Aid**

- All school staff will receive and be certified in first aid training on a two-yearly basis.
- Certification of all first aiders details will be kept in reception
- The Board of Management accepts that it needs a minimum of three designated first aiders, whose certification is renewed every two years. The names of these designated first aiders will be
- The Board further accepts that while all staff will receive first aid training, the selection of the minimum of three designated first aiders must be from members of staff who are willing to be named as such.

- If available, the designated certified first aiders will administer any first aid in the first instance. However, in the absence of such a person, any competent adult will make every effort to attend to an injured person.
- There will be several first aid boxes in the school – a basic first aid box is in each classroom and one in the staffroom. The first aid box in the staffroom is stocked in accordance with guidelines issued by the Health and Safety Authority.
- Medication may never be stored in first aid boxes and will never be administered by first responders

### **Investigation, Recording and Reporting**

- All instances of serious and potentially serious accidents are recorded and investigated. To this end, the school maintains a logbook of all such instances, which is kept in the staffroom.
- The Principal will report on these at the next meeting of the BOM (and sooner to the Chairperson of the BOM if the instance is deemed sufficiently serious).
- Any accident deemed serious 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, if required, the Principal will make a report to the school's insurance company.

### **Emergencies**

#### **Emergency Routes and Exits**

- The school has, and will maintain, an adequate number of emergency routes and exits, which meet statutory regulations.
- These will always be clearly signed and kept free from obstruction.
- All rooms will have evacuation instructions on the inside of each door.
- School evacuation will be practised as part of regular fire drills.
- Special provisions will be made for evacuations that take place during extra-curricular activities.

#### **Fire Protection**

- The school has, and will maintain, appropriate fire detection and fire-fighting equipment, which meets statutory obligations.
- Fire drills will be held at least three times per school year (one per term) and a logbook will be maintained of all such drills.
- Staff should be trained in the use of fire-fighting equipment on a regular basis to ensure that at any given time that there are sufficient staff with such knowledge employed.
- Any contractor completing hot work (including welding, soldering, use of blow lamps, blow torches and cutting equipment) must be qualified and insured to do so, must carry a fully charged fire extinguisher and must make a full check one hour after completion of the work.
- No naked flames are permitted to remain unattended at any time. Examples include but are not limited to candles lit for Religious Education lessons.

#### **Emergency contact details**

- Emergency contact details of the parents and guardians of all children in the school as well the next of kin of all staff, will be kept in the school office online via Aladdin, our online records system.
- **The responsibility lies with parents/guardians to inform the school of any changes to the emergency contact details.**

### **Emergency closures**

- In the event of, for instance, heavy snowfall, high winds, thunderstorms, disconnection of services, death or critical incident, the Principal will consult as soon as feasible with the Chairperson of the BOM to decide whether it is in the interests of all parties to close the school.
- If it is decided that it would be unsafe to keep the school open, an exceptional closure will be deemed to have been granted by the BOM.
- Exceptional closures will be kept to an absolute minimum.
- Parents and guardians will be informed at the earliest opportunity of any such closure using a range of communication techniques (SMS, email, telephone calls, posting on school website, message on school voicemail, note at school gate, etc.).
- If school is open when an incident occurs, staff will remain on the premises until all children have been collected.

### **Heating**

*The Board will endeavour to ensure that the school is kept comfortably warm for all members of the school community. This is particularly important during winter.*

*Similarly, especially during warmer weather, all classrooms must be kept properly ventilated to ensure an appropriate level of comfort for everyone. The below procedure is taken from the Department of Education's Circular 21/79 which deals with school heating.*

- The lowest acceptable temperature in the classrooms is 16 degrees centigrade.
- If the temperature in the classrooms has not reached 16 degrees C within one hour of the opening time of the school, the Principal must take immediate action.
- Unless there is a definite chance that the minimum temperature will be reached very soon, the Principal must inform the Chairperson of the Board of Management to decide if the school will have to be closed. If the Chairperson cannot be contacted, then the Principal must use his or her judgement.
- If the school must be closed due to a lack of proper heating, the principal will decide for the pupils to be sent home, provided this can be done without risk to the children.
- Where it is not possible to send all children home, teachers continue to have a legal obligation to supervise the children for the remainder of the school day. Teachers should not, however, be expected to carry out their normal teaching programme in these circumstances.
- Where the principal fails to follow out the above procedure, any member of staff has the right to report the matter to the Chairperson.

### **Supervision of children during the school day**

#### *General Supervision*

- The children are supervised by the school from the time they enter the school until the time they are collected.

- If class teachers are unexpectedly absent for any reason, for example, an illness or family emergency, a member of the Special Education team will be appointed to the class, if a qualified substitute teacher is unavailable.
- Depending on the age profile of the class, the children may be divided up between the other classes for the school day.
- In cases of longer-term absences, substitute teachers may be engaged.
- Children who leave the class to use the toilet are reminded to go straight there and return immediately.
- On occasion, a teacher may have to leave the classroom for a short period of time. If so, s/he will ensure that a colleague will provide temporary supervision cover.
- At an age-appropriate stage, sometimes children may be allowed to leave their classrooms for limited periods of time to undertake specific errands or appropriate responsibilities. Another child should always accompany them.
- Unless it is deemed age-appropriate and related to a prepared-for responsibility, at no time will any child be left unsupervised in the school hall, the yard or in the garden.

### ***Yard Supervision***

- During yard time, our school operates a termly yard timetable of supervising staff – three rostered teachers will always be on duty and will be assisted by Special Needs Assistants deployed to help supervise. The appropriate yard supervision rota will be displayed in the staff room.
- The teachers rostered for yard duty are the person responsible for the health and safety of all children on the yard at that time. These teachers should not leave the yard for any reason.
- The Special Needs Assistants are allocated specific areas for support and they follow the direction of the supervising teachers responsible.
- Teachers rostered for yard duty are reminded that Special Needs Assistants are not responsible for yard supervision should the teacher leave the yard for any reason.
- The teacher rostered for yard duty on any given day is responsible for deciding whether the weather is suitable for going to the yard. If unsure the teacher must check with the Principal for a second opinion.

### **School Excursions**

- As either part of the enrolment form or otherwise, parents/guardians are asked to provide permission for the children to take part in age-appropriate, relevant, and educational excursions and field trips.
- Based on the age and profile of the Early Start class, parents/guardians are asked to accompany specific groups on excursions. They may not bring younger children with them.
- Where transport is required, the school will only engage buses that are adequate for the size of the group from a reputable company that provides safe vehicles and drivers. Every effort will be made to source buses that have seat belts and all passengers will be required to make use of these.
- Pupils are paired up for each excursion and must always follow their teacher's instructions.
- 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.
- Before booking a school trip, the organising teacher should make sure that any special needs can be catered for.
- Appropriate first aid supplies and medication must be taken and in the charge of the class teacher.
- Thought should be given to an appropriate pupil-adult ratio.

### **Swimming Lessons**

- Swimming is part of the Physical Education curriculum and as such, all children must take part in any organised swimming lessons organised by the school.



- Where and when practicable, a male and female member of staff (teacher and Special Needs Assistant) will be available to escort children to their swimming lessons.
- Teachers and/or Special Needs Assistants will inspect the changing rooms on arrival and children will be required to get ready independently for the pool quickly.
- Unless required due to a diagnosed need and with written permission from the parents/guardians to access the curriculum, no child will receive assistance in getting dressed and undressed.
- The children must follow the swimming instructors' directions while in the pool.

#### **Other**

- The school will provide safe equipment for both its staff and pupils, including where necessary, guards and appropriate personal protective equipment.
- Equipment will be appropriately certified, maintained to a high standard and disposed of if it poses a safety risk.
- Electrical equipment will only be used and maintained by staff qualified to do so. Wherever possible, fuses and power breakers shall be used, and all portable power equipment shall operate on 110V.
- Equipment and substances for maintenance, cleaning, catering and similar will be stored securely away from children. Cleaning and maintenance will normally be done outside of school hours.
- Appropriate training will be provided in the safe handling and use of equipment and hazardous substances.
- Work at height will be avoided wherever possible and must never take place without other people being on the premises. Safe ladder practice must be observed, and ordinary school furniture must never be used to undertake work at height.

#### **Animals**

- No animals may be brought into the school grounds at any time, except for assistance dogs.
- Any organisation/individual who brings any animals onto school grounds must have the permission of the Board of Management.

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

This policy will be reviewed annually in consultation with the children, parents and staff and is ratified by the Board of Management on an annual basis.

**NB This policy is under review at present as part of our school plan this school year**