



ST. CATHERINE'S  
SPECIAL SCHOOL

## **SAFETY STATEMENT**

**2018**

### **1. Health and Safety Policy**

The Board of Management has a commitment to work to ensure that the school is as safe as is reasonably practicable. The safety statement outlines the health and safety management system that the school has in place. This safety statement has been prepared following consultation with employees, both staff and management. The Board of Management are cognizant of their responsibilities under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 to provide a safe place of work; provide safe equipment; provide safe systems of work and appropriate staff to deliver educational services in a safe environment.

The Board of Management believes safety is priority in this school and expects all school staff, visitors and visiting support staff to work together to ensure the safety, health and welfare of school employees, students, visiting support staff, contractors and visitors.

This policy requires the cooperation of all employees. It shall be reviewed annually or more frequently if necessary, in the light of experience, changes in legal requirements and operational changes. The school shall carry out a safety audit annually and a report will be submitted to the Board of Management by the Health and Safety Representatives.

All records of accidents and injuries will be monitored and reviewed in the first instance by the Principal and School Leadership team, and then by the Board of Management in order to ensure that any safety measures required can be put in place to minimise the recurrence of such accidents and injuries.

### **2. Introduction and School Profile**

This safety statement outlines the health and safety management systems of St Catherine's Special School and in doing so aims to fulfil the requirements of legislation, in particular the:

- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005

- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations, 2007 and all other relevant codes of practice and regulations as applicable.

The Board of Management, under the patronage of St Catherine's Association is responsible for the governance of St Catherine's Special School. As such, St Catherine's Special School will adopt and follow the Department of Education and Skills policies and procedures and as appropriate those of the Patron Body.

St Catherine's Special School is a school that provides a service to students with moderate, severe or profound learning disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, complex needs and general mobility challenges. A number of students are non-ambulant and students who are ambulant may require significant supports when accessing the school and when out in the community.

The school is located on two sites, accessed through the gates of Newcastle Hospital (EDC) and the other accessed on Kilmullen Lane (school). The classes in the EDC are situated on the ground floor of a three storey building and Kilmullen Lane is a one storey building. There is one class in a portacabin on the EDC site and four classes in portacabins on the school site.

### **Key Data**

- Number of students enrolled is 94
- Seventeen classroom teachers and two specialist part time teachers
- Principal, teaching Deputy Principal and two Assistant Principal II
- Forty two Special Needs Assistants
- Two secretarial, one caretaker and two cleaning staff
- Thirteen bus escorts
- Visiting clinicians who support the staff team in the delivery of education services.

### **2.1 Resources for Health and Safety in the school**

St Catherine's Association Health and Safety Department can be approached to provide advice and support to the school in relation to health and safety matters. Additional health and safety resources that are required are requested through the Board of Management. These requests can frequently require funding approval by the Department of Education and Skills.

### **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

### 3.1 Board of Management:

- Complies with its legal obligations as employer under the 2005 Act
- Ensures that the school has written risk assessments and an up to date Safety Statement
- Reviews the implementation of the Safety Statement
- Sets health and safety objectives
- Receives regular reports on health and safety matters and matters arising from same are discussed
- Reviews the safety statement at least annually and when changes are made that might affect workers' health and safety occur
- Reviews the school's health and safety performance
- Allocates adequate resources to deal with health and safety issues
- Appoints competent persons as necessary, to advise and assist the Board of Management on health and safety at the school.

### 3.2 St Catherine's Association – Patron Body

- To support the Board of Management in fulfilling its duties under health and safety legislation
- Provide advice around health and safety issues and concerns as requested

### 3.3 Designated persons for health and safety acting on behalf of the Board, e.g. Health and Safety representatives

- Reports to the Board of Management on health and safety performance
- Monitors safety management systems in the school on a day-to-day basis
- Communicates regularly with all members of the school community on health and safety matters
- Oversees the implementation of school risk assessments and ensures that protective measures are put in place
- Organises fire drills, training and other allied safety activities.

### 3.4 Health and Safety Representatives

In accordance with Section 25 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, St Catherine's Special School recognises the right of all employees to elect a Safety Representative in each building and also recognises the duties and rights attached with such a position.

The role and statutory rights of the Safety Representative are summarised as follows:

- A safety representative has the right to information as is necessary to ensure the health and safety of employees at the place of work
- The Safety Representative shall be informed when an inspector from the H.S.A. enters the place of work, and shall

accompany the inspector on an inspection tour, if requested

- The Safety Representative has the right to make representation to the Board of Management on any aspects of health and safety
- The Safety Representative may investigate accidents and dangerous occurrences provided he or she shall not interfere or obstruct the performance of statutory provisions
- The Safety Representative has the right to make oral or written representation to inspectors on any health and safety issue
- Receive advice and information from H.S.A. inspectors
- Attend interviews with employees after an accident / dangerous occurrence
- Carry out safety inspections with prior consent and agreement
- Investigate potential hazards and complaints made by other teachers or employees
- Accompany an inspector on the investigation of an accident by prior request to do so
- Receive, without loss of remuneration, time off from his/her regular duties for the purpose of acquiring knowledge to discharge his/her functions, and time off to discharge this function
- The Safety Representative shall not be placed at any disadvantage in relation to his employment for discharging his/her function.

### 3.5 All staff:

- Comply with all statutory obligations placed on employees as designated under the 2005 Act
- Cooperate with school management in the implementation of the safety statement
- Formally check classroom/immediate work environment to ensure it is safe and free from fault or defect
- Notify the Health and Safety representative of any defects or difficulties
- Check that equipment is safe before use
- Attend training provided and implement the practice as advised
- Consistently follow safe systems of work
- Select and appoint safety representative(s)
- Report accidents, near misses, and dangerous occurrences to relevant persons as outlined in the safety statement

### 3.6 School invitees / visitors / contractors / support staff:

School invitees / visitors / contractors / support staff, should comply with the school's visitors' protocol which clearly details instructions relating to health and safety whilst on the premises.

Visitors should sign in and out upon arrival and departure. Visitors are the responsibility of the staff members/ whom they

are visiting or of the school secretary. Visitors should remain with this staff member during an evacuation.

### 3.7 Contractors

Contractors must comply with statutory obligations as designated under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007 and any other relevant legislation such as the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2006.

St. Catherine's Special School will make available the relevant parts of the safety statement and safety file (where one exists) to any contractor working in the school on behalf of the school. Contractors will cooperate with Health and Safety arrangements for the school including fire drills, accident/incident reporting, safe systems of work and any other safety related requests by school management and staff.

Contractors must make available relevant parts of both their safety statement and risk assessments in relation to work being carried out. Noise should be avoided wherever possible during school hours and shall at all times be reduced to the minimum necessary. The contractor and employees shall not create any hazard, permanent or temporary, without informing the principal and shall mark any such hazard with warning signs or other suitable protection.

## 4. Risk Assessment

### Hazards

St. Catherine's Special School is committed to identifying hazards and to making suitable provisions for the elimination or reductions of hazards for all those using the school premises. To identify and make suitable provision for hazards the assistance of external safety advice may be required. These hazards shall be identified in a systematic manner through the use of ongoing/updating risk assessments.

School staff and visitors who may detect a hazard or hazardous operation are requested/obligated to report any hazards, without delay, to the Principal and or the Health and Safety representative. The hazards listed below are the primary identified risks to students, staff and visitors whilst in St. Catherine's Special School and risk assessments for these hazards can be found in Appendix 1.

#### 4.1 Challenging Behaviour

#### 4.2 Exposure to a blood borne infection

- 4.3 Slips, trips and falls
- 4.4 Manual handling activities
- 4.5 Use and storage of cleaning chemicals
- 4.6 Food Safety – reheating of students lunches
- 4.7 Administration of emergency medications
- 4.8 External School Trips
- 4.9 Unauthorised access
- 4.10 Fire in the school

Levels of risk identified in the risk assessments are based on the following decision making matrix. The level of risk is evaluated by considering the likelihood of the risk against the severity of the outcome.

#### Risk Assessment Decision Making Matrix

H – High risk M – Medium risk L - Low risk

Severe outcome (severe injury/death)	L	M	H
Serious outcome (serious injury/hospital stay)	L	M	M
Minor outcome (minor injury)	L	L	L
	Not likely (termly)	Likely (weekly)	Very likely (daily)

#### 5. Procedures and Guidelines

Procedures and guidelines can be found in Appendix 2

#### 6. Related Documents/Policies

- Code of Behaviour
- Child Protection Policy
- Administering Medication Policy

## **7. Ratification of Policy**

It is recognised that this policy may need to be revised/modified in light of ongoing evaluation.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 18th January 2018

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

(Chairperson)





#### 4.2 Exposure to a blood borne infection

Hazard	To whom and what is the risk?	Risk Rating H – High M – Medium L – Low	Controls (When all controls are in place the risk will be reduced)	Is this control in place?	Action to be taken
Bites	To all staff and students - biting with enough force to break the skin	M	Staff follow MAPA practice in place for biting incidents  Appropriate staff ratios to prevent students being bitten	Yes	
Cuts, gashes and grazes	To all staff and students - any accident that causes a cut, gash or a graze  Injury/Illness: exposure to infectious disease	L	All staff to wear disposable gloves when treating cuts, gashes or grazes	Yes	

#### 4.3 Slips, trips and falls

Hazard	To whom and what is the risk?	Risk Rating H – High M – Medium L – Low	Controls (When all controls are in place the risk will be reduced)	Is this control in place?	Action to be taken
Slips, trips and falls	To all staff, students and visitors  Injury/Illness: Slips, trips and/or Fall with potential for various injuries	L	<p>Cleaning operations are undertaken when pupils are not in the building</p> <p>Any spillages are cleaned up immediately and area cordoned off with wet floor sign used</p> <p>Damage to floors and floor coverings shall be reported immediately to the relevant Health and Safety representative</p> <p>Bags are stored tidily and pupil belongings are kept on hooks or placed in lockers</p> <p>All access routes and corridors and passageways are kept free from obstruction</p> <p>Suitable footwear is worn by staff</p> <p>All cables are kept tied via cable ties and do not protrude into walkways</p> <p>All equipment stored away after use</p> <p>Stepladder available to access items at a height</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	

#### 4.4 Manual handling activities

Hazard	To whom and what is the risk?	Risk Rating H – High M – Medium L – Low	Controls (When all controls are in place the risk will be reduced)	Is this control in place?	Action to be taken
Manual Handling of inanimate objects and/or safe moving of students	To all staff  Injury/Illness: Abdominal hernias. Musculoskeletal Injuries	L	All staff to undertake Manual Handling training offered by the Board of Management  Transport holds, sitting or standing holds are not permitted unless identified in Behaviour Support Plan  Mobile and overhead hoists, slings and changing tables available and used as needed to assist in changing students  Staff to wear suitable clothing and footwear.  Staff are alerted to any bad practices carried out  Good storage practices in place – heavy items stored at waist height. Lighter less frequently accessed items at shoulder height. Staff use stepladder to access items at a height	Yes  Yes  Yes  Yes  Yes	





#### 4.7 Administration of emergency medications

Hazard	To whom and what is the risk?	Risk Rating H – High M – Medium L – Low	Controls (When all controls are in place the risk will be reduced)	Is this control in place?	Action to be taken
Storage and administration of medications	To all students	L	All medication is kept in a double locked press with keys separate and out of view of students  Staff are trained in administering emergency medication	Yes  Yes	

#### 4.8 External School Trips

Hazard	To whom and what is the risk?	Risk Rating H – High M – Medium L – Low	Controls (When all controls are in place the risk will be reduced)	Is this control in place?	Action to be taken
Students leaving the school building	To all students  Injury/illness: Any injury to a student	M  L – Low	School adheres to local guidance in relation to school trips  Written approval is sought from each student's parent/guardian to participate in school trips for the year  Appropriate teacher/SNA;pupil ratios  Principal and staff team have drawn up list of approved places to visit based on previous experience  Individual risk assessments to be carried out for named students	Yes  Yes  No  Yes	

#### 4.9 Unauthorised access

Hazard	To whom and what is the risk?	Risk Rating H – High M – Medium L – Low	Controls (When all controls are in place the risk will be reduced)	Is this control in place?	Action to be taken
Access to the school	To all staff and students  Illness/ Injury: Persons intentionally or accidentally intruding on the site. Theft Arson (See Fire) Abduction Sexual Misconduct	L	The entrance to the building has a buzzer system for access (school).  The corridors to classrooms in the EDC have a keypad system for entry  This is linked to the fire alarm system  School secretary is first port of call when entering the building.  The school barrier is locked when the school is not in use.  A burglar alarm has been fitted.	Yes  Yes  Yes  Yes  Yes  No	       Not in EDC
			All employees will monitor the school grounds to ensure that any persons entering will be politely challenged as to their authorization		

4.10 Fire in the school

Hazard	To whom and what is the risk?	Risk Rating H – High M – Medium L – Low	Controls (When all controls are in place the risk will be reduced)	Is this control in place?	Action to be taken
Fire occurring in the school	To all staff and students  Injury/Illness: Burns, smoke inhalation structural damage, property damage	L	<p>Emergency evacuation plans are located in prominent areas</p> <p>All staff have received fire safety training</p> <p>Designated staff have received fire marshall training</p> <p>All assembly point markings are clearly visible and maintained.</p> <p>Emergency evacuation drills are carried out each term.</p> <p>Fire drills are less than 6 minutes each</p> <p>All defects are reported immediately.</p> <p>Means of escape are kept clear at all times</p> <p>Maintenance contracts in place for emergency lighting, fire alarm system and fire extinguishers serviced annually and records kept</p> <p>All appliances should be switched off at night time</p> <p>All exits must be kept clear and unobstructed at all times.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>No</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>Training to be organised</p> <p>Contract being sought</p>



## **FIRE EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

### Sequence

- Alarm
- Call the fire brigade
- Evacuation
- Assembly
- Roll Call
- Tackle the fire

### Aim

To prevent panic and ensure the safe, orderly and efficient evacuation of all the occupants of the school using all the exit facilities available and to train the mind to react rationally when confronted with a fire or other emergency at school or elsewhere.

### Alarm

Anyone discovering an outbreak of fire will raise the alarm at once by sounding the fire alarm. When the fire alarm has been sounded by breaking the glass on a wall panel, the security company will automatically contact the Fire Brigade if they have not been informed of a fire drill.

### Call the Fire Brigade

All outbreaks of fire however small, or any suspected fire will be reported immediately to the Fire Brigade by the emergency phone number. The security company will also contact the Fire Brigade.

### **Evacuation**

On hearing the alarm, staff and students will exit the school following a safe route. Staff and students will then proceed to the fire assembly point where a roll call will be taken. The Principal and/or designated fire safety officer will, if safe to do so, 'sweep' the building to ensure no pupils remain in toilet or other areas.

### Assembly

The place of assembly in Kilmullen lane is the start of the walkway through the trees. The place of assembly in the EDC is the roundabout outside the building. If this area becomes unsafe, supervised evacuation from the school grounds will be at the bus parking bay on the grounds of Newcastle Hospital.

### Roll Call

Immediately after students and staff have assembled at the designated areas a roll call will be taken. . If anyone is missing an immediate search by the staff will be made. As far as is practicable, no place to which pupils have access being

overlooked.

The officer in charge of the Fire Brigade will be met on arrival and immediately informed whether or not all persons have been safely evacuated.

### Attacking Fire

Circumstances will dictate whether fire-fighting operations will be attempted. Fire fighting will always be secondary to life safety. While small fires may be dealt with summarily, in the case of a sizeable fire, safe evacuation will be the primary concern.

### Fire Drills and Testing Alarms

A Test fire drill will be held once per term. It will be carried out according to the above procedure with the exception of 'Calling the Fire Brigade' and 'Tackling the Fire'. A record of all fire drills will be kept. It will include details of drills including date, time, weather conditions, time taken for evacuation and any other relevant information. Fire Alarms will be tested once a term outside of school hours.

## **MANUAL HANDLING - GUIDELINES FOR SAFE LIFTING**

If you decide it is safe to handle the load assess the load and carry out the following lifting technique:

- Get as close as possible to the load, this brings the lines of gravity of both the load and the body as close together as possible.
- Position your feet approximately the width of your hips apart with one foot slightly in front of the other. This provides good balance during the lift.
- Bend your knees, lower your hands and drop down beside the load, inclining your head and keeping your back straight.
- Grasp the object with a firm grip, test the weight to ensure it is not excessive and keep your arms as close as possible to the body.
- Raise your head and look forward, this locks the cervical vertebrae and helps to keep the spine straight.
- Keep the load as close as possible to the body with the elbows in and the lift with strong leg muscles in a controlled movement, keeping the spine straight.
- Move forward and about at a comfortable pace and never rush.
- When lifting always ensure that the heavy side is close to the body, avoid jerking movements

## **PREGNANT EMPLOYEE GUIDELINES**

St Catherine's Special School provides specific risk assessment for their pregnant employees. The risk assessment is reviewed as regularly as needed and is discussed with the staff member on an ongoing basis.

## **WELFARE FACILITIES**

St Catherine's Special School provides suitable welfare facilities in accordance with applicable statutory provisions. We recognise that this provision is an essential element in securing safety, health and welfare for all.

- Suitable washing and sanitary facilities - To include water flush toilets with washing facility which is subject to daily cleaning.
- Canteen - There is a staff room available for staff, separate from the work area to make tea/coffee and heat/prepare their own lunches. Staff must cooperate in maintaining a high standard of hygiene in this area.
- Drinking Water - Drinking water of suitable quality is provided

## **FIRST AID AND MEDICAL ATTENTION**

St Catherine's Special School acknowledges the importance of having a number of staff trained in occupational and basic first aid. First aid training will be offered to designated staff. All First-Aiders have been trained by an approved first-aid instructor. First-Aiders are requested to attend refresher courses every two years. The First-Aid box is provided and stationed in the medication cabinet. . There is an additional one for use when on school outings. These boxes are fully equipped as per H.S.A. guidelines. Keys for first - aid box is available in the key box. A defibrillator is located in each building and named staff are trained in the use of the defibrillator. A questionnaire is sent to parents each year to ascertain pupils with allergies and / or sickness and specific illnesses such as diabetes etc.

In case of a medical emergency, an injured person should be brought to the nearest hospital. It is important that First Aiders keep records of any treatment given. It is also the schools policy that in case of an accident or injury to a pupil, the pupils' parents or guardian is contacted and invited to the school to take the pupil to the doctor depending on severity of injury. Failure to contact parents/guardian in the event of an emergency means that the pupil is taken to the doctor or the doctor or medical emergency services may be called to the school. If necessary the insurance company may be informed.

## **ILLNESS AND REDUCTION OF CROSS INFECTION GUIDELINES**

It is recommended that students must not come into school if they are presenting with the following

- a temperature of 37.7 or higher
- diarrhoea, defined as runny or watery stools
- vomiting two or more times in a 24 hour period
- an undiagnosed body rash
- sore throat with temperature and swollen glands
- eye discharge, defined as thick mucus or pus draining from the eye, matted eyes after sleep and eye pain

- mouth sores with drooling
- severe coughing, where a student gets red or blue in the face or makes a high pitched whooping sound after coughing
- abdominal pain that continues for more than two hours or intermittent pain associated with fever
- signs or symptoms of possible illness such as lethargy, irritability, persistent crying or any unusual signs

## **ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT RECORDING GUIDELINES**

The importance of recording all accidents and dangerous incidents is recognized by the school to identify possible hazards and to reduce further risks. Any accident or dangerous occurrence must be recorded on an incident recording form (IRF). The Principal will review all IRFs.

All accident incident forms will be submitted to [irf@stcatherinesspecialschool.ie](mailto:irf@stcatherinesspecialschool.ie) and into a google drive that will allow reports to be generated to monitor accidents and challenging behaviour incidents.

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007 requires the School to notify the HSA if the following applies

- The incident is included in the dangerous occurrences outlined in the 12th Schedule of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007
- If any person is prevented from performing his/her normal work for more than three consecutive days after the incident (not including the day of the incident but including non working days)
- In the case of death. If an accident is fatal the scene of the accident must be left undisturbed for 3 days after notice has been given, other than for rescue purposes.
- A pupil that is injured as a result of a work related activity and requires medical treatment by a registered medical practitioner Notification to the HSA must be given. This is completed online through the HSA website.

## **TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION**

St Catherine's Special School will endeavour to provide instruction, information and training for each employee in relation to their safety, health and welfare. It is our wish to have a workforce and students that are pro-active and aware of health and safety. We will provide adequate finances to obtain this objective. There are a number of training requirements that have been identified for staff that are working in St Catherine's Special School.

- MAPA
- Manual Handling
- Child Protection

- Fire Safety

The Principal or nominated post holder monitors the training needs for the staff in the school.

## **CONSULTATION**

The safety statement will be brought to the attention of all staff upon commencement of employment as per Section 20(3) of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005. All staff are required to read and sign off as having read the safety statement. The safety statement will be reviewed on an annual basis. Changes will be made as and when necessary to reflect changes within legislation, work processes or introduction of work equipment that affects the contents of the safety statement. Any changes will be communicated to the staff team as required.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY REPRESENTATIVE**

St Catherine's Special School recognises that employee involvement in health and safety is an integral part of the operations of the school, and sees health and safety as being of value within these operations. Thus the Board of Management encourages employees to elect from their ranks two Safety Representatives, one for each building. The Safety Representative will consult with the Board of Management through procedures on any relevant health and safety issue. The Board will at all times consider and act, if appropriate, on any issue brought to their attention by the Safety Representatives. We will provide any necessary training and information to the Safety Representatives in accordance to Section 25 Part 4 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, to enable the Safety Representatives to fulfil his/her duty.

## **MEASURING PERFORMANCE**

The Board of Management will measure, monitor and evaluate its safety and health management system to make sure it is robust. This will be measured against agreed standards such as

- Legislative requirements
- The school Health and Safety Statement and the written risk assessments contained in the safety statement
- Health and Safety objectives, as part of the school plan

The Board of Management meetings will contain Health and Safety on the agenda regularly. An annual Health and Safety audit will take place and be reported to the Board of Management..