



Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY 2024/2025

Mercy Secondary Inchicore is a co-educational Catholic school in the heart of Inchicore, Dublin 8. Just as our founder Catherine McAuley imagined and created a world, in which education empowered and provided opportunities for all; we continue that vision of realising all that our students and our learning community can become.

At the heart of our mission is the belief that each and every member of our community is a valued and treasured child of God. We are committed to creating opportunities for our students. We hold the belief that we have a duty to dream big for each and every person within our learning community.

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Health and Safety Policy Statement

This Safety Statement, in accordance with Section 20, *Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005*, outlines the policy of Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore which has been developed in consultation with the Board of Management and school staff. It will be revised on a yearly basis or as required by changes in legislation and communicated to all staff through regular staff meetings and training programs. Teachers shall communicate health and safety rules and procedures to their students as part of the students' classroom studies in each subject.

We are committed to managing and conducting work activities in such a way as to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of their employees and others who may be affected by our activities. This will be achieved by the following (so far as is reasonably practicable):

1. The provision of a safe place of work, including safe access and egress;
2. The provision of safe plant and equipment, articles and substances;
3. The provision of safe systems of work;
4. The provision of welfare facilities;
5. The provision of appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision;
6. Determining and implementing appropriate preventative and protective measures;
7. Having regard to the general principles of prevention;
8. The provision of emergency plans and procedures;
9. Reporting prescribed accidents and dangerous occurrences to the Health & Safety Authority;
10. Obtaining, where necessary, the services of a competent person to advise on health and safety;

The detailed arrangements for achieving these objectives are set out in the main body of the Safety Statement. The Principal together with the Board of Management has overall responsibility for health and safety at the school. Day to day management of health and safety is the responsibility of management and staff. Employees share a responsibility with management in ensuring their own safety while at work. This Safety Statement requires the co-operation of all staff, visitors, contractors and others to enable Mercy Secondary School to discharge its responsibilities under the law.

Mercy Secondary School is committed to upholding the standards outlined in this Safety Statement. Sufficient authority and resources, both financial and otherwise, will be made available to enable staff to carry out their responsibilities in a reasonable and efficient manner. All employees will be made aware of and have access to this Safety Statement. The Safety Statement will also be available to third parties where appropriate. The Safety Statement will be reviewed annually in light of experience and future developments within the organisation.

Signed: _____
Chairperson

Signed: _____
Principal

Date: _____

Date: _____

Introduction

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

School Profile

Mercy Secondary School is a co-educational secondary school located on Thomas Davis Street West, Inchicore, Dublin 8 with an enrolment of 330 students as of September 2024. It is under the trusteeship of CEIST (Catholic Education an Irish Schools Trust) and is run by a Board of Management. The school opened as a secondary school in 1942. The current school building was built in 1984 and sits on 4 acres of land. We currently have 15 classrooms with specialised rooms which consist of a Science laboratory, a Home Economics room, an Art Room, a Technical Graphics room, an SEN room and a P.E Hall. We have a Lunch room which our 1st years use for dining, the two social areas facilitate the rest of our students. We have two toilet blocks situated on either side of the social areas and one wheelchair accessible toilet beside our reception area.

The car park is situated at the front of the building and has a capacity of 15 cars. The building is wheelchair accessible. We have one designated disabled car parking space at the reception entrance.

The school building is alarmed. The building runs on oil and gas heating. Extensive repairs to the roof of the building have been carried out in recent years. A total refurbishment of the Home Economics kitchen was completed in 2021

Maintenance area

Roles and Responsibilities for Health, Safety and Welfare

The Board of Management

The Board of Management recognises and accepts not only its statutory responsibility, but also as far as is reasonably practicable its obligation as an employer to direct, manage and achieve the safety, health and welfare at work of every employee, pupil, contractor and visitor alike.

The Board may delegate duties to the Principal, Deputy Principal and other staff members for the management of day-to-day safety, health and welfare in the school. In compliance with its statutory obligations under *Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005*, the Board of Management of Mercy Secondary School will:

- Oversee the implementation of a health and welfare management system in the school;
- Ensure that the school has an up-to-date safety which will include written risk assessments;
- Identify safety and health objectives;
- Allocate adequate resources to deal with safety and health issues;
- Appoint competent persons as necessary, to advise and assist the BOM on safety and health in school;
- Review the implementation of the safety statement and the school's safety and health performance.

The Principal

Overall responsibility for safety and health rests with the Board of Management. The Principal of Mercy Secondary School acting on behalf of the BOM, has responsibility for the co-ordination, planning, implementation and management of safety and health in the school.

The Principal will:

- Manage safety and health in the school on a day-to-day basis;
- Communicate regularly with all members of the school community on safety and health matters;
- Ensure that all accidents and incidents are investigated and all relevant reports completed;
- Carry out safety audits and report to the Board of Management on safety and health performance;
- In compliance with Section 8 of the *Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005*, ensure that the school has a formal procedure in place to deal with emergency situations and that this is clearly communicated to staff and pupils;

- In accordance with Section 47 (1) of the Public Health (Tobacco) Act, 2002 as amended by Section 16 of the Public Health (Tobacco) (Amendment) Act, 2004, implement a strict no-smoking policy in school;
- Delegate certain functions to individual members of staff as appropriate to their respective roles within the school;

The Deputy Principal

The Deputy Principal has an important leadership role in the day-to-day management of safety and health in the school. The Deputy Principal will:

- collaborate with the Principal in the planning and implementation of safety and health policy and procedure;
- work with the Safety Officer to ensure the effective implementation of the school's safety and health management system;
- deputise for the Principal when necessary.

Safety Officer

The Teaching Staff have elected a Safety Officer, James Hanrahan. The Safety Officer works closely with the Principal to support the implementation, review and maintenance of the school's health, safety and welfare management system. Although the ultimate responsibility for safety, health and welfare rests with the Board of Management, working in conjunction with the Principal, the Safety Officer will:

- ensure that required protocols for fire-drills, accident reporting etc. are fulfilled;
- ensure that precautionary notices in respect of safety matters are displayed as appropriate;
- ensure that the first aid kit is accessible and fully stocked;
- respond to safety and health reports, events and issues;
- assist in the co-ordination and review of risk assessments;
- liaise with all visiting safety inspectors. This committee will be composed as follows:

Teaching and non-teaching staff

'The school is a unique work environment but it is not generally high risk. Those on the ground, carrying out the day-to-day work of managing and co-ordinating school activities know this environment best.' - Guidelines on managing safety and health in Post Primary schools. (DES, State Claims Agency, SDPI and HSE,) 2010.

Everybody in the school has a role to play and a responsibility to ensure that the school is a safe and healthy environment, both in terms of the physical infrastructure and the way in which people operate and interact within it.

All members of the staff of Mercy Secondary School are expected to cooperate fully with the management of the school so that appropriate safety and health policies are established, implemented and followed.

Each member of staff has a responsibility to take reasonable care to protect his or her safety, health and welfare and the safety, health and welfare of any other person on whom his or her work impinges.

Teachers are required to:

- ensure that their own subject specific safety procedures are included in their subject department plan and updated as necessary;
- inform pupils of the safety procedures associated with their particular subject e.g. Science, Physical Education (PE), Home Economics, Art, ICT;
- ensure that pupils follow safe procedures and comply with regulations;
- conduct risk assessments of their immediate work environment.

All members of staff are required to:

- report any fault or defect which presents an immediate danger to the Principal/Office Staff;
- record in the hazard book, which is located at Reception, any fault or defect in their classroom or work area;
- record in the hazard book, any defect in equipment which might pose a threat to safety or health;
- report to relevant persons (as outlined in the safety statement) accidents, near misses or dangerous occurrences;
- complete accident report forms as necessary (see appendices 283);
- use the safety equipment provided.

Students

Students have a vital role to play in maintaining safety within the school environment.

All students are expected to:

- take reasonable care to protect their own safety and the safety and welfare of others in the school community;
- comply fully with the Code of Behaviour of St Paul's Secondary School;
- respect and co-operate fully with the school's Anti-bullying Policy;
- follow teachers' instructions with regard to safety procedures in all classrooms and especially in the science laboratories, home economics rooms, PE, art, drama and ICT classes;
- behave in a safe and responsible manner on the stairs and corridors and enter and leave the building as directed;
- refrain from engaging in dangerous pranks or hazardous activities;
- adhere fully to all instructions in relation to fire drills and general fire safety;
- take a positive and supportive approach to all health and safety measures which are in place in the school.

Other school users

All visitors to the school should comply with school regulations and instructions relating to health and safety. This includes:

- observing and adhering to signage in the school car parks;
- entering and exiting through the main door only;
- reporting to Reception on arrival to the school;
- groups using school premises at night, weekends or during school holidays must be authorised by the Board of Management.

Contractors

Contractors will not be allowed on the premises to carry out work until the School Principal or designated representative has checked and is satisfied with their insurance. The provisions of the *Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations, 2006*, must be adhered to in the case of all major contracts. The contractor must liaise with a School-appointed official and discuss and agree the safety precautions deemed necessary by either party. Contractors must take all due care of their own safety, the safety of their employees and all others affected by their work. Contractors must not use any equipment or the service of personnel belonging to or engaged by the Board of Management, without the prior approval of the School-appointed official. Every contractor working on School premises must comply with all applicable statutory requirements, best industry practice and any special safety rules or conditions imposed by the school. In this regard, it is the responsibility of the contractor to:

- provide all necessary instruction, training and information on health and safety matters to their employees;
- provide competent and adequate supervision of their employees and activities;
- provide all necessary safety equipment and clothing for their employees;
- ensure that all plant and equipment brought onto the School site is safe and in good working order and that all necessary certificates are available for checking;
- ensure that all accidents and dangerous occurrences are reported to the Principal;
- ensure that all school safety notices and alarms are followed at all times;
- ensure that hazardous substances are not brought on to the premises without prior notice and permission;
- ensure that 'approved' hazardous substances are stored and used safely whilst on the premises;
- ensure that all hazardous substances are removed from the premises;
- monitor and assess the safety performance of their employees.

The degree of risk assessment that must be carried out before work begins will depend on the nature and extent of activities associated with each individual contract.

All contractors and self-employed persons shall provide their safety statement when requested to do so and shall:

- conform generally with the duties and responsibilities as for employees;
- provide evidence when requested, showing that appropriate employer's liability and public liability insurances are in place;
- bring to the attention of the Principal, designated liaison person and anyone else who may be affected by any process or use of materials, which may endanger health and safety while at work;
- comply with the requirements of this Safety Statement, and co-operate with the Board of Management in providing a safe place of work and a safe system of operation;
- ensure all their employees and others under their care are provided with and wear protective clothing and equipment appropriate to the task;
- report any defect in the plant and equipment, place of work, or system of work without unreasonable delay;
- employ only competent and suitable persons on site;
- obtain the consent of the Principal or designated liaison person before engaging persons other than their direct employees on site;
- ensure that their managers, supervisors and employees are aware of the obligations placed upon them with regard to health and safety.

Resources for safety and health in the school

The Board of Management of Mercy Secondary School is committed to ensuring in so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of all employees, pupils, contractors and visitors to the school. In doing so the Board is cognisant of the need to allocate resources which will support safe systems of work as well as safe plant and equipment. Resources therefore may be considered under two headings: systemic and structural.

Systemic supports

Measures to support safety and health in the school will include the following:

- Safety Statement
- Health and Safety Policy
- Staff elected Safety Officer
- written assessments which are reviewed regularly
- a whole school approach to safety
- reporting procedures for accidents and dangerous occurrences;
- formal procedures to deal with emergency situations;
- mechanisms for auditing and reviewing the safety management system (SMS);
- other relevant Mercy Secondary School policies as outlined in appendix I

Structural Supports

While the Board of Management is responsible ultimately for the allocation of resources in the school, it will be the task of the Principal and Safety Officer to review the safety needs of the school and identify priorities.

Resources currently available in the school include the following:

- a wheelchair accessible toilet;
- one designated disabled parking spaces;
- fire emergency exit door located between the Art and Home Economics Kitchen
- fire extinguishers strategically located throughout the school;
- standard safety equipment in the science laboratory and Home Economics Kitchen
- first-aid kits in the reception area
- lock up storage facilities for cleaning equipment and utensils.
- mobile first-aid kit in the PE department
- mobile kit for school tours;

This list is not exhaustive.

Risk Assessment

The Board of Management, in accordance with its obligations under Section 19 of the *Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005*, will ensure that risk assessments are carried out and that any control measures considered necessary as a result of such assessments will be implemented. Putting in place control measures means that the Board will do all that is reasonably practicable to ensure that the hazard identified does not cause actual harm or is less likely to cause harm. Risk assessments will be carried out at least on an annual basis and should ideally become a routine part of the overall safety management system in the school. When written risk assessments are carried out they will form an important part of this safety statement.

What is Risk Assessment?

Risk Assessment is central to the successful management of safety and health in the school. It is a three step process:

1. Identify the hazard
2. Assess the risk in proportion to the hazard
3. Put in place appropriate measures to eliminate or reduce the risk

Who will carry out risk assessment?

The task of completing risk assessments will be delegated as appropriate e.g. a science teacher is the most appropriate person to carry out a risk assessment in the science laboratory, a PE teacher is best qualified to carry out a risk assessment in the area of PE etc.

The Principal, in conjunction with the safety officer, will prioritise the areas where formal risk assessments are needed and delegate the task accordingly. To facilitate this work, a risk assessment template will be made available and staff will be consulted on the procedures and timescale involved. All actions that cannot be closed off by the person(s) carrying out the risk assessment should be brought to the attention of the appropriate person(s) e.g. the Principal, Deputy Principal, Safety Officer, Caretaker etc.

In identifying hazards and assessing risks, the Board takes into account the school context; it cannot eliminate every minor hazard or risk that would ordinarily be accepted as a normal part of life.

Emergency Procedures

In accordance with its obligations under Section 8 of the *Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005*, the Board of Management of Mercy Secondary School will outline procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency.

The Board will ensure that the school has a Critical Incident Management Plan to assist in dealing with a major crisis or incident which could arise and that this plan is regularly reviewed, clearly communicated and accessible to all staff. In this context a '*critical incident*' can be defined as '*any incident, or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of the school and disrupts the normal running of the school*' Guidelines on managing safety and health in Post Primary schools. (DES, State Claims Agency, SDPI and HSE,) 2010.

Emergency Contact Services

An up-to-date list of emergency telephone numbers is kept in the general office (see Appendix 4) and a copy will be distributed to the relevant personnel in the school.

Fire Safety

Fire safety is of paramount importance. Fire drills are held as often as is deemed necessary by the safety officer and at least twice yearly. The Board of Management will ensure that the school is equipped with appropriate fire fighting and detecting equipment, that escape routes are kept clear and that emergency exits are unlocked. The electrical system is checked periodically and any defects in the fire alarm system will be prioritised for repair or replacement.

The school has an emergency evacuation plan and all members of staff are briefed on this. Evacuation routes and assembly points have been identified for all areas. It is the responsibility of all to familiarise themselves with these. Evacuation drills take place at least twice yearly. The school layout and fire exits are displayed in each classroom in the school and fire exits are kept clear at all times. The evacuation plan outlines procedures for those with disabilities or other special needs. After every fire drill, the efficacy of the plan is reviewed. In the event of a fire emergency the following evacuation procedure will be followed:

- the teacher will instruct pupils to leave belongings behind, to leave the room in an orderly fashion and proceed to the nearest exit;
- the teacher will count pupils as they leave the room;
- the teacher will then leave the room and close the door;
- pupils arrive at the designated fire assembly point and line up in alphabetical order in their tutor groups;
- VS Ware Roll (Including LATE Register & SIGN OUT Register) are brought to the assembly areas by a member of the office staff; tutors call the register;
- numbers in attendance and any absences are reported to the Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal
- staff members who are not in class when the alarm sounds should check offices, toilet ensure that no-one is left in the building;

If the alarm sounds outside of class time:

- Staff should guide students out of the building through the nearest exit;
- Students will assemble in their tutor groups and the tutor will call the roll.

Students

- students must follow teachers' instructions;
- stand up quietly;
- walk in single file from the classroom to the assembly point;
- at the assembly point line up in tutor group and in alphabetical order;
- remain silent while the teacher calls the roll;
- students must not return to the building for any reason until instructed to do so by a teacher.

If the alarm sounds outside of class time:

- students will assemble in their form group;
- the tutor teacher will call the roll.

Persons who are wheelchair bound/mobility issues

Students who are wheelchair bound or have mobility issues will leave the room accompanied by the special needs assistant or a delegated responsible person.

The safety committee will liaise with support agencies such as Enable Ireland, with a view to reviewing and improving safety systems for students with disabilities and other special needs. The committee will, as a priority, research emergency evacuation policies pertaining to students with disabilities, and consider how best to implement appropriate recommendations in Mercy Secondary School. The Safety Statement will outline the agreed procedures that emerge from the work of the committee.

Instructions and training

The Board of Management, in compliance with Sections 8 & 10 of the *Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005*, is committed to facilitating staff training in safety and health matters. A training needs analysis will form an essential part of the school's safety and health management plan. When training needs have been identified, a training plan will be drawn up outlining the type of training to be provided and a schedule. This will be implemented within the constraints of resources and time.

Safety and health training applicable to the school environment may include the following:

- an overview of the safety and health management system (SMS) presented to the whole staff; induction training for all new staff;

- first-aid training;
- training for the Safety Officer;
- fire safety training for all staff;
- stress management.

The list is not exhaustive.

A record of training, information and briefing sessions will be kept.

Staff trained in Cardiac First Response:

- Donal Byrne
- Eleanor Larkin

Communication and Consultation

In accordance with Sections 20(3) of the Safety, Health and Welfare Act 2005, the Board of Management will ensure that the safety statement is brought to the attention of all staff and that pupils, parents/guardians and visitors to the school will have access to it.

Staff will receive regular briefings on safety policies and procedures, risk assessments, outcomes of safety committee meetings, audits and reviews. All staff are encouraged to bring their concerns regarding health and safety to the attention of the relevant staff member e.g. Principal, Deputy Principal, Safety Officer, Safety Representative, Caretaker etc.

Review

The Principal in collaboration with the safety committee will establish monitoring structures and procedures to ensure that the planned actions have actually taken place or where they have not, that they have been scheduled.

The Board of Management will formally evaluate the plan on an annual basis, taking into account feedback from the school community, significant incidents, dangerous occurrences and new regulatory or legislative developments.

The Safety & Health policy together with the Safety Statement will be reviewed periodically and revised as necessary.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on:

This policy will be reviewed and revised by the Board of Management on:

Signed: _____
Chairperson: Board of Management

Signed: _____
Secretary: Board of Management

Date: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 1

Other relevant school policies

The following school policies have a direct link to Safety and Health. While most of these policies are in place, some are in the process of development:

- Child Protection Guidelines
- Enrolment
- Code of and Behaviour
- Anti Bullying
- Dignity in the Workplace
- Attendance
- Information & Communication Technology (ICT) and Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)
- School Tours Policy
- Critical Incident Policy
- Guidance Plan
- Substance Use
- Relationship & Sexuality (RSE)
- Subject Department Plans

Appendix 2



ACCIDENT REPORT

Name of Injured Person: _____

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Room</u>	<u>Teacher</u>

Others involved: _____

Witnesses(s): _____

Brief description of accident:

1. How the accident occurred:

2. Nature of injuries sustained:

3. Was the student under supervision at the time of the accident? (*give details*)

4. Suggestions (*if any*) to prevent a reoccurrence:

Description of First Aid administered: (*if any*)

Emergency services contacted: (*if any*)

Was the Principal Informed? _____ Time/Date: _____

Any additional relevant information:

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 3

Emergency telephone numbers

Service	Number
Ambulance	999/112
Fire	999/112
Crumlin Children's Hospital	01 4096100
Medical Centre Inchicore	01 473 4030
Gardai Kilmainham	01 6669700
Community Garda (Mark Duffy)	01 6669720
Electrician Terry Wall/WW Electricals	086 2557852 01 4567877
JDE Property Maintenance	01 6120635 087 0911603
Dublin Plumbers Patrick Skelly	086 3579495 01 8232324
Initial Hygiene Alan Tierney	087 3463314
Repairs/Painting/Maintenance Philip Kelly	087 6848108
Mac Alarms/ac Golmer	043 441479
North City Oil	01 6283000
Allianz (Accident Reporting)	01 6133762
NEPS Psychologist	
NEPS (HEad Office)	01 8892700
Pieta House	01 601000 0879368633
Console	1800 2011890
Samaritans	1850 609090 Txt 087 2609090
Rape Crisis Centre	1800 778888

National Office for suicide prevention (HSE)	01 6352139 01 6352179
Sólás (Bereavement Counselling for Children- Barnardo's)	01 4530355
Aware	1800 303302
Narcotics Anonymous (Helpline)	086 8629308
Nar-Anon (for Relatives & Friends)	01 8748431