



Stepping Stones

Special School for Children
with Autism & Complex Needs

Health & Safety Policy



Health and Safety policy

Safety Statement November 2001

Contents

- Declaration of Intent
- General Policy
- Organisation and Responsibilities
- Resources
- Co-operation Required from Employees
- Consultation & Information
- Training
- Revision
- Security
- Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment
- Fire
- Pregnant Employees
- Electrical Equipment
- Driving on School Business
- Housekeeping
- Furniture & Fittings
- Manual Handling
- Smoking
- First Aid
- Accident Reporting

DECLARATION OF INTENT

The safety statement has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Safety Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005. The basic intent of the document is to formally declare the means by which the management of Stepping Stones Special School, within the Board of Management ensures, and in so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of staff, pupils and others such visitors, and contractors who may be affected by our activities.

The Safety Statement contains details of Stepping Stones Special School, Safety Management Programme and of the general arrangements for occupational safety, health, and welfare within the service.

Safety is everybody's business and the success of our safety policy will depend on staff cooperation. It is important that staff are familiar with the arrangements for Health and Safety in the service and incorporate these as an integral part of the tasks performed while at work.

Members of staff and others are invited to contribute to the improvement of safety in the service by making suggestions for the improvement of safety in the School, and by making suggestions for the improvement of this Statement through their Safety Representative.

Signed:

Please print and sign or add a digital signature

Alan Doyle,
Chairperson, Board of Management
Stepping Stones Special School for Children with Autism and Complex Needs.

General Policy

Stepping Stones Special School for Children with Autism and Complex Needs recognises its responsibility to ensure, in so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of its employees, students and of members of the public who may be affected by its operations.

The School fully recognises its obligations are to provide:

- a safe place to work.
- safe equipment, fittings and furniture.
- safe systems of work.
- appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision for the prevention of risk to health from any activity or substance.
- welfare and hygiene facilities as appropriate.
- a competent resource in the form of independent experts external to the school where the requisite expertise is not available in house, to advise and assist in securing the safety, health and welfare of employees and students.

It is the policy of the school to comply with legal safety, health and welfare requirements as a minimum standard, and with relevant codes of practice and guidelines where appropriate.

The Chairperson, together with the principal and teachers are required to take care of the safety, health and welfare of employees. The management of the school is also required to be conscious of the health and safety of the employees and students within their areas of responsibility and to take all reasonable steps to ensure that working conditions are safe and that proper safe work practices are adhered to. Each Teacher is expected to exercise their duty of care and is required to account for and report on accidents or dangerous occurrences within their areas of responsibility.

Each Teacher and Special Needs Assistant is required to be fully aware of the school's policies. It is the Principal's responsibility to ensure that Safety Policy Statements are reviewed regularly and revised as necessary to take account of changes in work practices. Any such revisions will be brought to the notice of all employees.

Organisation and Responsibilities

Board of Management, Stepping Stones Special School.

The Board of Management is responsible for the establishment and maintenance of an effective policy for Safety, Health and Welfare at work by:

- taking a direct interest in the policy and positively supporting any person whose function it is to carry it out.
- ensuring at all times that competent staff and appropriate materials are available to meet the requirements of all safety legislation.
- periodically appraising the effectiveness of the policy.
- periodically reviewing their own responsibility and that of all other persons concerned with the effectiveness of the policy.
- ensuring adequate financial resources are available to meet health and safety objectives.

Safety Officer, Stepping Stones Special School.

The Safety Officer is responsible for:

- carrying out an annual Health & Safety audit in consultation with the Staff Safety representative.
- preparing a Health & Safety Statement in consultation with the Staff Safety representative.
- identifying risks to Health & Safety and planning for the management of those risks.

The Safety Officer, Stepping Stones Special School for Children with Autism and Complex Needs is Maria Mc Garrell.

Staff Safety Representative, Stepping Stones Special School.

The Staff Safety Representative is responsible for ensuring that:

- appropriate and adequate training in Health and Safety is available to employees.
- induction training in Health and Safety is carried out and all new employees are fully briefed of their responsibilities.
- adequate procedures are in place for consultation about Health and Safety matters.

The Staff Safety Representative is also responsible for coordinating with employees and the Safety Team on all matters relating to Safety, Health and Welfare.

The Staff Safety Representative will ensure that:

- the content of the Safety Statement is communicated to all employees and that up to date copies of the Safety Statement are permanently available for all employees.
- all employees receive induction training and are aware of emergency procedures.
- good housekeeping standards are maintained and in particular that exit routes are kept clear and that fire points are not obstructed.
- thorough and prompt investigations are carried out on all reported accidents, to establish their cause and to avoid reoccurrence.
- all Safety Equipment is provided where required to employees and that all of the equipment is of a standard which will provide full protection to the user.
- effective monitoring procedures are in place to show that all Safety equipment is used as appropriate, that it retains its effectiveness against the hazard for which it is provided and that sufficient replacements are available when necessary.
- all contractors adopt a safe system of work and that the safety standards are not lowered by the work of contractors.

Safety Team.

Employees can make representation of Safety matters through the Safety Team established to allow direct representation to the School on Health and Safety issues. This team will comprise of the Staff Safety Representative, the School Principal, Class Teachers and the Director of Education.

The Safety Team members are as follows:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| – Staff Safety Representative | Dolores Cullinane |
| – School Principal | Maria Corredor |
| – Deputy Principal/Class Teacher | Dolores Cullinane |
| – Class Teacher | Kim Blount |
| – Class Teacher | Maria Fahy |
| – Class Teacher | James Russell |
| – Director of Education | Michelle Barry |

Resources

Stepping Stones Special School for Children with Autism and Complex Needs will:

- liaise with the National Health and Safety Authority and other statutory bodies on matters of accident control and occupational safety and health.
- liaise with advisory services on occupational safety, health and hygiene matters.
- provide measurement, evaluation and control service for environmental factors that may be injurious to health.
- provide and arrange for provision of fire and safety training.
- investigate all accidents that were reported.
- provide all documents including Codes of Practice, EC Directives, International Standards, Irish Standards, and British Standards etc. if these are required.
- deal with any safety issues as these arise from time to time.

Co-Operation Required from Employees

All employees have a duty to take reasonable care for their safety, the students in their care, that of their colleagues and anyone else that may be affected by their acts of omissions while at work.

They have a duty to abide by the safe systems of work and School Instructions and to discharge their work in a safe manner so as to avoid injury to themselves or others and to avoid damage to school equipment.

Employees are also required to co-operate with the school in a manner that will ensure that the school operates at all times within the law and to report any defects of which they become aware in plant, equipment, place of work or system of work which might endanger Safety, Health and Welfare at work.

To misuse or ill-treat equipment provided for Safety, Health and Welfare could lead to disciplinary action.

Consultation & Information

The principal mechanism for consultation with employees will be via the Safety Team.

The Safety Team will be afforded the opportunity to make Representation on any topic of concern to the Staff Safety Representative.

Members of the Safety Team will be given the opportunity to receive appropriate training and will be immediately informed when an Inspector of the National Authority

visits the school and will be facilitated in every possible way with the discharge of their functions as defined in the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 and the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Regulations, 1993.

Training

All employees will receive training to ensure that they fully understand the hazards associated with their working environment and are fully aware of the Safety precautions in the event of an emergency.

Training will be given, as appropriate, in First Aid, Personal Safety, Safe Manual Handling, Fire Fighting and Prevention.

Training will also be given, as necessary to all employees to ensure that they have the necessary skills and knowledge to organise work procedures safely and without risk to health.

Training shall be adapted to take account of new or changed risks and shall be provided on recruitment of employees or in the event of transfer of employees, a change of job, the introduction of new work equipment, a change in equipment or the introduction of new technology, and shall be repeated periodically where appropriate.

Revision

The Safety Statement will be reviewed at least once a year by the Safety Officer and Staff Safety Representative in consultation with the Safety Team and will be changed and updated as required.

The revised Safety Statement will be brought to the attention of all employees.

Security

The chairperson of the board of management, principal, class teachers and school cleaner have a key to open/lock the school as well as the code for the alarm system to set and unset it on entering and exiting the school.

All full time staff members working in Stepping Stones Special School for Children with Autism and Complex Needs have access to the school front door and door leading from the reception to the hall way via a fob key.

There are sign in books at reception used for:

1. all staff members to sign in and out on entering and leaving the school premises.
2. visitors to the school, this would include parents, SLT, OT, Physio, Keyboard teacher and yoga teacher.
3. substitute teacher, SNA's and bus escorts. All substitute staff are required to wear an identification badge which details their name and class that they are working in.
4. parents who are dropping off their children at a later time or collecting them earlier in the school day.

There are 2 security cameras in each classroom and OT room. There are also security cameras externally on the building.

Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment

It is the School's Policy to identify hazards in the place of work and to assess the risk to safety and health and to control risks as far as is practicable so that they are reduced to an acceptable level.

Risk assessment is based on the linking of the probability of occurrence with the severity of loss and/or injury. Risks are assessed in order to prioritise the employment of controls and the allocation of resources.

Characteristic

- Possibility of fatality or serious injury.
- Possibility of minor injury to a small number of people. Risk of some material loss.
- The possibility of fatality or serious injury or significant material loss is unlikely although conceivable.
- The possibility of injury or material loss is unlikely although conceivable.

A listing of hazards and control arrangements for the School follows:

Fire

In the event of a fire, death or injury is more likely to be caused by asphyxiation due to inhalation of smoke and hot gases than by direct burning. Out of necessity large quantities of paper are used on the premises, these can supply sufficient fuel for the development of a serious fire following ignition. The control of fuels of this nature should form part of the normal day-to-day management of school's buildings and a common sense approach to storage and use can effectively reduce or eliminate the risk of fire occurring.

All employees must ensure that:

- stocks of paper, files, drawings, etc. are stored in the filing cabinets in each classroom.
- paper or other combustible solids are not stored on floors, in corridors or escape routes.

- unwanted stocks of paper, obsolete or damaged furnishings are removed from the building and disposed of safely.
- fire doors are kept closed.
- regular cleaning of all areas within the building is carried out and that rubbish is removed for disposal.
- sockets are not overloaded.
- cleaning sprays or liquids labeled as “Highly Flammable” are kept to the minimum quantity necessary, and properly stored away.

The Staff Safety Representative will assume responsibility for implementing and monitoring fire policy within the building.

The Staff Safety Representative must ensure that:

- fire awareness training as a component of employee induction courses.
- the Company’s no-smoking policy shall be adhered to by all employees and visitors to the school.
- fire Marshals are appointed for each classroom (class teachers).
- fire Marshals are familiar with relevant information on fire safety.
- arrange for the organisation of periodic fire drills.
- employees are fully conversant with evacuation procedures and that they can be evacuated as quickly as possible in an emergency.
- a record is kept of all evacuations.
- arrange for the expeditious removal of all fire hazards.
- fire evacuation notices (including names and areas of responsibility of Fire Marshals) are up-to-date and posted prominently on notice-boards.

Fire Marshals

The School ensures that it has an adequate number of trained Fire Marshals at all times.

The Fire Marshals are:

Name	Classroom
Junior 1/ Yellow room	Classroom Teacher
Senior 1/ Blue room	Classroom Teacher
Senior 2/ Red room	Classroom Teacher
Senior 3/Green & Orange room	Classroom Teacher
Senior 4/ Purple room	Classroom Teacher
Reception and Library	School Principal
Staff Toilets and Kitchen	School Principal
OT Room and Computer Room	School Principal

In the event of a fire or an emergency evacuation, a Fire Marshal should:

1. ensure that the alarm is raised and that the School Principal has been notified (not in the event of a fire drill).
2. notify the School Principal of the nature of the emergency.
3. ensure that all employees and students are evacuated to the appropriate Assembly Area by way of the appropriate emergency exit.
4. check that all areas (including toilets) are vacated when the fire alarm is sounded.
5. ensure that all windows and doors are closed to minimise the danger of the fire spreading (this should normally be carried out by room occupants).
6. ensure that the fire doors are shut at all times to prevent smoke getting into the classrooms and hampering evacuation.
7. check that all employees and students of his/her classroom are present at the predetermined assembly area.
8. staff Safety Representative will call roll and staff attendance at Assembly Area.

FIRE DRILLS

Evacuation procedure will be as above.

It is the School's policy that:

- drills are held once every school term.
- an evacuation time of less than two minutes should be aimed for.
- every fire drill/evacuation should be followed up by a meeting of Fire Marshals to determine what deficiencies arose.

FIRE PROTECTION EQUIPMENT

Fire extinguishing/alarm equipment is provided in each of the designated areas.

The services and maintenance of:

- fire Extinguishing Equipment (Annually).
- fire Detection and Alarm Equipment (Quarterly).

is provided by appropriately qualified service engineers.

Discovery of a Fire

Employees should be familiar with the action they should take on discovery of a fire.

They are also responsible for taking full responsibility for the evacuation of the students in their care at the time of the evacuation:

If Fire Occurs

- Notify other staff members as quickly as possible.
- Call the fire emergency services.
- Notify the Fire Marshals.
- Attack fire if no risk - using appropriate fire extinguisher.

If Danger

- Don't take risks.
- Leave the building.

What do I do when the smoke alarm is activated?

When Fire Alarm Sounds

- Co-operate with fire marshals.
- Leave the building by the nearest escape route.
- Close all doors behind you.
- Don't stop for personal belongings.
- Don't take risks.
- Report to your designated assembly point.
- Don't return to the building until the all clear is given.

The aim is to have all employees and students evacuated from the building within 2 minutes.

Challenging Behaviour

From time to time there is a potential for challenging behaviour from the students during the school day. The consequences associated with such behaviour may result in physical injuries, stress and trauma to staff members. Staff members receive information in relation to those students most likely to present challenging behaviour and are instructed as to how best handle such situations in order to minimize the risk of injury either to themselves or the child.

All staff members should be familiar with the behaviour support plan for the children they are working with. If a staff member is in doubt as to how to handle an incident of challenging behaviour they should immediately request the assistance of the Director of Education. The Director of Education has full responsibility in relation to ensuring that all such instruction takes place and is reviewed as appropriate to ensure maximum effectiveness.

All staff members should be trained in the procedures and theory of Professional Crisis Management (PCM) under the guidelines provided by the Professional Crisis Management association (PCMA).

All incidences of challenging behaviour must be reported immediately to the Director of Education and the School Principal who will determine the appropriate action to be taken on a case by case basis. In the event of an injury to a staff member or a student (Appendix 1) an Incident/accident Report Form will be completed, a copy of the form sent home (in case of a student) and the incident will be logged in the Accident/Incident Report Book. The School Principal is responsible for determining the appropriate course of action to be taken in relation to medical visits, costs and time off.

Pregnant Employees

The Board of Management is committed to protecting both the pregnant employee and the unborn infant from injury during the course of work.

On receiving notification that a staff member is pregnant, the Principal assesses the specific risks to the staff member, and takes action to ensure that she is not exposed to anything which may damage either her health or the health of her developing child.

A risk assessment will be completed on pregnant employees and this will be carried out on an individual basis by the school principal and the staff safety representative.

There is a responsibility on a staff member to inform her employer.

Electrical Equipment

Electrical equipment that is improperly installed, maintained or used in an unsafe manner constitutes a health and safety hazard. The health and safety risks from electrical hazards are electric shock, fire, trips and falls from loose cables and explosion.

All electrical hazards must be reported immediately to your Staff Safety Representative.

These will include:

- loose connections.
- defective insulation.
- trailing leads.
- overloaded circuits.
- worn or damaged appliances.

- damaged cables.
- broken switches.
- 1. The wiring of all equipment will conform to the highest standards.
- 2. Those who purchase the school equipment will consider the safety features of the equipment.
- 3. If required, electrical adapters should be used to a minimum.
- 4. When vacating a classroom, all equipment not in use should be switched off.
- 5. Unqualified personnel should not tamper with electrical equipment.

Video Display Units (VDU)

The difficulties experienced by VDU workers include eye problems, headaches, upper limb dysfunction, and repetitive strain injury. These problems have their root cause not in the machine itself but in the position posture and modus operandi of the user. The requirement of employees in the school to use computers is low and will take place sporadically during the school day.

Employees working at VDU's will receive information on their use. The Safety and Health information will include elements relating to posture, eyesight, lighting, layout, rest pauses as follows:

Rest Pauses – Should you find that in any day you are required to use a VDU on a more regular basis you should ensure that you take such natural breaks or pauses as required to complete the work in a comfortable manner.

Work Chairs - The chairs provided allow the employee easy freedom of movement and seat height is adjustable. The back rest or lumber support is adjustable in height and tilt.

Keyboards - The Keyboard should be separate from the screen and it should be at an angle of 10-15 degrees to the worktop. The keyboard should be moveable by the operator to his/her most comfortable position. There should be sufficient space on the desk in front of the keyboard to provide support for the hands and forearms of the operator.

Viewing Distance - A viewing distance of 500-600mm is the preferred (optimal) viewing distance for most operators. Anyone experiencing difficulty in achieving comfortable viewing within this range should seek an eye test.

Reflections and Glare - In order to avoid reflections and glare, operators should position their VDU's at 90 degrees approximately from windows, facing slightly into the room.

Vision Checks – As required frequent VDU users will receive vision screening examinations as outlined by the EEC VDU Directive.

Purchasing of Equipment - Only VDU equipment complying with the relevant EC anti-glare and Safety features will be purchased.

Driving On School Business

All persons who drive on public roads are subject to the provision of the Road Traffic Act 1961. They must at all times drive in a manner that is safe both to themselves and other road users and at all times observe the basic "rules of the road". We expect all those who are requested to drive on school business not alone to fulfil their obligations under the 1961 Act but coupled with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 1989 to observe the following guidelines:

- wear a safety belt at all times.
- do not drink alcohol or take medication that could affect driving ability.
- check lights, tyres, oil, water, windscreen wipers and washer reservoir etc. at regular intervals.
- ensure vehicle is serviced regularly.
- report all accidents or damage, no matter how minor.
- ensure that you have permission from your board of management to use your car for school business.

All persons driving school buses must be Garda vetted to ensure the safety of each child in school. The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 states it is mandatory for persons working with children or vulnerable adults to be vetted by the Gardaí. This is information other than criminal convictions where such information leads to a bona-fide belief that a person poses a threat to children or vulnerable persons.

A class teacher must be present on the school bus for all school trips/community outings.

Housekeeping

Poor housekeeping can result in a variety of risks to employees and students. Accumulating waste can give rise to a serious fire risk and can block fire exits. Untidy and cluttered classrooms and office areas can present a risk of tripping, while pointed objects (tacks, scissors, blades, etc.) can inflict cuts.

The housekeeping standards of each classroom and office area are the responsibility of the respective employees occupying those areas.

- General housekeeping standards will be monitored by the Staff Safety Representative.
- Cleaning and polishing is carried out each night.
- All rubbish will be removed from work areas nightly around the building to a collection point and removed for disposal once per week.
- All items left unattended in corridors and at doorways will be removed and disposed of.
- All cleaning material and solvents must be stored in the “Cleaning cupboard”.
- Waste bins must be of non-combustible material.
- Water or other spillages that can be the cause of slipping or falling must be removed immediately.
- Fire points will be kept clear of all waste items.
- All exits and entrances will be kept clear at all times.
- Employees must assist by not leaving items of waste in hallways, corridors, etc.

Furniture And Fittings

Thoughtless positioning of furniture can cause collisions with sharp corners of desks, and cabinets falling over.

- All furniture should be placed so that walk-ways are unobstructed.
- Employees should not lean back on chairs because of the risk of overturning.
- Filing cabinet should be placed so that there is ample room when a drawer is open and should not open into walkways.
- If a filing cabinet is not fully loaded, the load should be spread over the drawers or preferably, more should be stored in the lower drawers.
- All drawers must be closed immediately after withdrawing or inserting files.

Manual Handling

Employees can be involved in lifting packs of paper or large boxes, if so they should get assistance from another member of staff. The main injuries associated with manual handling area:

- back strain, slipped disc.
- lacerations, damage to hands or fingers.
- various sprains, strains, etc.

If there is a requirement to lift heavy office furniture, PCs or other heavy equipment in the school building, these will be carried out by nominated persons who have received training in this area.

Lifting, swinging or carrying students/children is a safety risk.

Employees who are required to undertake frequent lifting will attend a suitable training course in lifting techniques.

Other employees are not to attempt to lift or move, on their own, articles or material which may result in an injury to them. - they should seek help from the staff safety representative.

Smoking

To comply with the Tobacco Smoking (Prohibition) Regulations 2003, smoking is not permitted in the School premises or surrounding grounds. Moreover smoking is not permitted in front of the students.

First Aid

All injuries must be reported as soon as possible to the Staff Safety Representative.

The following employees have up to date Occupational First Aid certification.

Name	Position Held
Dolores Cullinane	Staff Safety Representative/Class Teacher
Eimear Lyons	Special Needs assistance

First Aid kits are located in the following Locations:

- Kitchen
- Reception / office
- Junior 1
- Senior 1
- Senior 2
- Senior 3
- Senior 4

The contents of each kit will be as follows:

- Adhesive Plasters
- Sterile Eye Pads (No.16)
- Triangular Bandages
- Safety Pins
- Medium Dressings (No.8)
- Large Dressings (No.9)
- Extra Large Dressings (No.3)
- Antiseptic Wipes

- Pairs of Latex Gloves
- Isolaide Resuscitation Device
- Cold Pack
- Eye Irrigation Sachet
- Crepe Bandage 7.5cm
- Conforming Bandage 7.5cm
- Solvaline Dressings
- Zinc Oxide Tape 1.25cm
- Pack of Finger Bobs
- Disposable Foil Blanket

Accident Reporting

All dangerous occurrences and accidents (no matter how trivial) must be reported to the Staff Safety Representative immediately. An Incident/Accident Report Form (appendix 1) depending on persons involved, available from the School Administrator, should be completed by the staff member involved or student's Teacher.

The Staff Safety Representative will report the accident to the school principal, arrange for immediate investigation of the accident/dangerous occurrence with a view to preventing a reoccurrence and record it in the School's Accident Report Book.



Stepping Stones

Special School for Children
with Autism & Complex Needs

Stepping Stones School

Harristown

Kilcloon

Co. Meath

Tel: 01 5054398

Email: info@steppingstoneschool.ie