St. Coen's N.S.
Merrymeeting
Rathnew
Co. Wicklow

Roll no: 20208M
Registered No: 20205289

■ Title

Health & Safety Policy Statement

■ Introductory Statement

This policy statement was adapted to the current format in accordance with the guidelines of the Primary Professional Development Service. Our previous Safety Statement was reviewed and updated to consider the most recent legislation in regard to Health and Safety. It was disseminated to the wider school community through the school website.

■ Rationale

It is a legal requirement under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 for every employer, in conjunction with employees, to prepare a Health and Safety Statement. It represents the Board of Management (BOM)'s commitment to safety and health, and specifies the manner, the organisation and the resources necessary for maintaining and reviewing safety and health standards.
The BOM wishes to document their health and safety programme and make it available to all employees, outside services providers and Inspectors of the Health and Safety Authority.

■ Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

According to our Mission Statement St. Coen's NS strives to provide a well-ordered, caring, happy and safe environment for our pupils. In keeping with this philosophy our Health and Safety policy emphasises the importance of the health and safety of our pupils and that of all school employees. The Board of Management, St. Coen's NS recognises the importance of the Legislation enacted in the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005. This Safety Statement sets out the Safety Policy of the Board of Management, St. Coen's NS and sets out the means to achieve that policy. The Board of Management's objective is to endeavour to provide a safe and healthy work environment for all our employees and pupils and to meet our duties to members of the public with whom we come into contact. This policy requires the co-operation of all employees.

It is our intention to undertake regular reviews of the statement in light of experience, changes in legal requirements and operational changes. The Board of Management will undertake to carry out a safety audit annually and report to staff. This inspection / safety audit will be carried out more frequently if requested by either staff or the Board of Management. All records of accidents or ill-health will be monitored in order to ensure that any safety measures required can be put in place, wherever possible, to minimise the recurrence of such accidents and ill-health.

■ Aims

- to create a safe and healthy school environment by identifying, preventing and tackling hazards and their accompanying risks
- to ensure understanding of the school's duty of care towards pupils
- to protect the school community from workplace accidents and ill health at work
- to outline procedures and practices in place to ensure safe systems of work
- to comply with all relevant health and safety legislation (so far as is reasonably practicable) to include the following areas
  - *Provision of a safe workplace for all employees – teachers, SNAs, secretary, caretaker, etc.*
  - *To ensure competent employees, who will carry out safe work practices*
  - *Safe access and egress routes*
  - *Safe handling and use of hazardous substances and equipment*
  - *Safe equipment including maintenance and use of appropriate guards*
  - *Provision of appropriate personal protective equipment.*

■ Guidelines *(content of policy)*

POLICY STATEMENT ON SAFETY, HEALTH AND WELFARE AT WORK OF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT OF St. Coen's NS

1.1

The members of the Board of Management of St. Coen's NS are

Chairperson: Mary Murphy

Secretary: Lee Kavanagh

Treasurer: Audrey Power

Other Board Members:

Colm McAdam

Emma Collard

Anthony McElwaine

Monica Haughton

John Snell

1.2 The Board of Management will ensure that, in so far as is practicable, the highest standards of safety shall prevail and that, at a minimum, the provisions of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 are applied.

1.3 Specifically, the Board of Management wishes to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable:

- The design, provision and maintenance of all places in a condition that is safe and without risk to health.

- The design, provision and maintenance of safe means of access to and egress from places of work

- The provision of systems of work that are planned, organised, performed and maintained so as to be safe and without risk to health.

- The provision of instruction to staff on proper lifting techniques of pupils and dealing with pupils with challenging behaviour when such children are enrolled.

- The provision of such information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure the safety and health at work of its employees.

- The provision and maintenance of suitable protective clothing or equivalent as necessary to ensure the safety and health at works of its employees.

- The preparation and revision as necessary of adequate plans to be followed in emergencies. e.g. fire evacuation, injuries etc.

- The safety and prevention of risk to health at work in connection with use of any article or substance.

- The provision and maintenance of facilities and arrangements for the welfare of employees at work.

- Obtaining where necessary, the services of competent persons for the purpose of advising on the safety and health at work of the employees e.g. Advisors from the HSE, Fire Officers, ICT Advisors re: equipment, ergonomics etc.

- An annual review of this *Health & Safety Statement* and a log of issues raised and remediated.

- The provision of arrangements for consultation with employees on matters of Health and Safety

- The provision of arrangements for the selection from amongst its employees of a Health and Safety Representative.

1.4 The Board of Management recognises that its statutory obligations under legislation extend to employees, pupils, and any person legitimately conducting school business and the public.

1.5 The Board of Management of St. Coen's NS will ensure that the provisions of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 are adhered to.

1.6 The Board of Management will form the Safety Committee to monitor the implementation of the Safety and Health policies of St. Coen's NS and the requirement under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005.

1.7 The Board of Management will appoint a Safety Representative from the School Staff, normally the School Caretaker and a Safety Officer from the BOM.
(Declan Earls, is the Safety Representative and Board Member, Lee Kavanagh was appointed as Safety Officer)

CONSULTATION & INFORMATION

It is the policy of the Board of Management of St. Coen's NS:

- To consult with staff in the preparation and completion of the Health and Safety Statement.
- To make available the *Health & Safety Statement* to all present and future staff.
- That any additional information or instructions regarding safety, health and welfare at work not contained in the document will be conveyed to all staff as it becomes available.
- That Health, Safety and Welfare will form an integral part of any future staff training and development plans.

HAZARDS

All staff will complete Hazard Control Forms (Appendix 3) as hazards are identified. Some hazards can be rectified but others remain constant. The hazards have been divided into two categories.

Hazards that can be rectified or minimised will be dealt with as a matter of urgency. Hazard Control Forms will be posted on the Staffroom Noticeboard. When a Staff Member notices a hazard, he/she will use the form to notify the Safety Representative (Caretaker), who will rectify the issue and sign with date and time of when the issue was resolved. Those hazards that cannot be rectified will be clearly indicated and appropriate procedures listed beside them.

The Board of Management in consultation with the employees will review and make recommendations on the elimination of hazards.

SPECIFIC HAZARDS

1. Fire

It is the policy of the Board of Management of St. Coen's NS that
* There is an adequate supply of fire extinguishers, which will deal with any type of fire.
* All fire equipment is identified and regularly serviced.
* Regular fire drills take place at least once a term.
* Instruction is given in the use of fire extinguishers for specific materials/equipment.
* Signs will be clearly visible to ensure visitors are aware of exit doors.
* All electrical equipment be unplugged or turned off outside school hours and when classrooms are vacated for lengthy periods.
* An assembly area is designated (Basketball courts)
* Those leaving buildings/classrooms should let someone know.
* Exit signs are clearly marked.
* The teacher in each classroom will be responsible for fire evacuation and fire drills procedures.
* A fire officer has checked the school and equipment and all recommendations made by him/her have been implemented.
* The position of Principal has as one of its duties to act as Fire Marshall and oversee in conjunction with the Safety Officer and Representative the above aspects of the policy.

2. Other hazards

* The surface of some of the playing areas is uneven, rocky and potentially hazardous.
* Some classroom windows open out at head level.
* There are basketball poles on the school playground
* Pupils are not allowed to play in the school grounds during weather which would pose a danger to their safety e.g. frost snow, and ice.
* During particularly inclement weather the Board of Management reserves the right to keep the school closed if it is felt that a risk is posed to staff and pupils by travelling to or attending school.

CONSTANT HAZARDS

1. Electrical Appliances

It is the policy of the Board of Management of St. Coen's NS that only competent persons use Electrical Appliances. Such appliances and equipment will be subject to regular maintenance checks.

2. Chemicals

It is the policy of the Board of Management of St. Coen's NS that all chemicals, detergents etc., be stored in clearly identifiable containers bearing instructions and precautions for their use and kept in a locked area, and protection provided for use when handling them.

3. Drugs/Medications

It is the policy of the Board of Management of St. Coen's that no drugs or medication be administered to pupils by members of school staff due to the fact that staff are not qualified to do so and therefore could pose a threat to the welfare of the pupils. In exceptional circumstances where emergency medication is required to safeguard a seriously ill child's welfare, a teacher or SNA may be requested to administer such medication.

4. Wet Floors

It is the policy of the Board of Management of St. Coen's that the washing of floors is conducted after school hours to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, elimination of danger of slipping.

5. The Code of Behaviour

The Code of Behaviour in the school provides for a level of appropriate behaviour to minimise personal risk or stress to any employee. The Behaviours of Concern Policy details procedures to manage significant behavioural issues in order to minimise risk to staff and students.

6. Accidents and Injuries

However vigilant the school staff is in relation to pupil safety, accidents will happen and correct procedures in the event of accidents can prevent or minimise injuries.

7. Bullying

The St. Coen's NS Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour is a stand-alone policy, which provides a framework for dealing with instances of bullying among pupils. The procedures for dealing with

Adult Bullying are in accordance with the INTO publication **'Working Together – Ag Obair le Chéile (2024)'** and our **'Dignity at Work Statement'**.

8. Access to Employees is by Consent

When an employee feels at risk from or threatened by a particular person on school property, this must be drawn to the Board of Management's attention. The Board of Management will undertake to ensure that in such circumstances all appropriate measures will be taken to protect employees.

9. Trained First Aid Personnel

It is the policy of the Board of Management that: -
Employees will be trained to apply First Aid to pupils and other employees.
All required remedies and equipment are made available for first aid function.
There will be an adequate supply of properly equipped First Aid Boxes available at all times to staff.

OTHER PROCEDURES

1. Educational Visits

Educational visits will be booked with a reputable, properly insured coach service with fully seat-belted coaches. We will aim for a ratio of ten pupils per adult (teacher or parent) but not more than fifteen. Every effort will be made to ensure the safety of the pupils at events or activities they are participating in i.e. the theatre, swimming pool, playground, etc. will be properly equipped and manned by qualified staff.

2. Visitors to the School

Persons coming onto the school premises must identify themselves clearly to whoever answers the door before gaining admittance to the school premises. Any contractor should make direct contact with the Principal, or Vice Principal before initiating any work on the school premises. All outside facilitators, teachers, coaches etc. who are delivering workshops to pupils will do so under the supervision and direction of the class teacher. Any outside professionals working with children without such supervision must have appropriate qualifications and Garda vetting. Visitors to the school must abide by the Visitor Code of Conduct that is displayed at all entrances

3. Wet Days

On wet days, children will be supervised indoors. The pupils stay in their classroom, where they read, draw, play board games or chat.

4. Emergency Closures

On occasions where school is in progress and it becomes necessary to close the school for safety reasons, the school bus operators and parents who bring their children to school are contacted. Every effort is made to ensure that all parents are made aware of the situation through Text-a-Parent, local media, school website etc. Transport home is arranged and where there is nobody at home pupils can stay with neighbouring parents with their own parents' consent.

■ Success Criteria

Our success criteria will be based on the achievement of our aims to provide a safe environment for our employees, pupils and visitors. We will use staff observation and parental feedback in addition to Health Inspector's Reports and our safety record as our benchmark for success or otherwise of the policy.

Roles and Responsibility

DUTIES OF ALL EMPLOYEES

1. It is the duty of every employee while at work:

   (a) To take reasonable care for his/her own safety, health and welfare and that of any person who may be affected by his/her acts or omissions while at work.

   (b) To co-operate with his/her employer and any other person to such an extent as will enable his/her employer and the other person to comply with any of the relevant statutory obligations.

   (c) To use in such manner so as to provide the protection intended, any suitable appliance, protective clothing, convenience, equipment or anything provided (whether for his/her use alone or for use by him/her in common with others) for securing his/her safety, health and welfare while at work.

   (d) To report to the Board of Management without unreasonable delay, any defects in plant, equipment, place of work or system of work, which might endanger safety, health or welfare, of which he/she might become aware.

2. No person will intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse any appliance, protective clothing, convenience, equipment or anything provided in pursuance of any of the relevant statutory provisions or otherwise, for securing safety, health and welfare arising out of work activities.

3. Employees will, by using available facilities and equipment provided, ensure that work practices are performed in the safest manner possible.

DUTIES OF SAFETY REPRESENTATIVE

- Conduct an assessment to identify all hazards on the appropriate form.
- Assess the risks associated with these hazards.
- Detail arrangements made, resources supplied, and responsibility required to deal with the hazards and to keep them under review.

DUTIES OF SAFETY OFFICER

- To liaise with the Safety Rep on matters of Health and Safety.
- To make recommendations for the alleviation of potential hazards.
- To monitor progress in relation to dealing with hazards.
- Report on all of the above at appropriate BOM meetings.

■ Timeframe for Implementation

The revised policy will be implemented from May 2026.

■ Timeframe for Review

This policy is reviewed annually.

■ Responsibility for Review

The BOM will be responsible for reviewing the policy.

■ Ratification and Communication

The Board of Management reviewed this policy on 21/10/2026.

Signed: Mary Murphy

Mary Murphy
Chairperson, BOM

Signed: Lee Kavanagh

Lee Kavanagh
Principal

All St. Coen's NS policies are available for inspection in the school and are available on the school website www.stcoens.com.

APPENDIX 1

HAZARD CONTROL FORM			
Hazard	**Action Taken**	**Date Remedied**	**Person Responsible**

Phone: 0404 31200

Email: secretary@stcoens.com

APPENDIX 2

SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES' CHECKLIST

1 CIRCULATION AREAS

1.1 Stairways
Check that:
1.1.1. stairways are fitted with sound banisters or rails;
1.1.2 stairways are adequately lit;
1.1.3 steps are not worn or broken or slippery.

1.2 Passages
Check that:
1.2.1 floor surfaces are even and are not slippery;
1.2.2 passages are adequately lit;
1.2.3 litter or rubbish has not been allowed to accumulate;
1.2.4 mats, etc, are not positioned in such a way as to be tripping hazards;
1.2.5 there are no areas of loose, flaking or damaged paint, plaster or plasterboard.

1.3 Doors and Windows
Check that:
1.3.1 doors are unobstructed;
1.3.2 doors with glass windows have toughened or laminated glass;
1.3.3 doors with a fire resistance requirement have wire reinforced glass;
1.3.4 there are no doors with:
- loose or broken hinges;
- damaged or sticking catches;
- broken wood panels or glass panels;
- loose or stiff handles;

1.3.5 doors are not allowed to swing freely without restraint;
1.3.6 windows are not broken or cracked;
1.3.7 windows open easily without undue force being applied;
1.3.8 windows do not jut out dangerously when open;
1.3.9 windows are cleaned regularly;
1.3.10 windows do not have broken fastenings or cords;
1.3.11 where necessary, a window pole is available.

2 HEATING AND VENTILATION
Check that:
2.1 the heating system is regularly serviced and maintained in good order.
2.2 the heating system is adequate to comply with the requirements of circular 24/82;
2.3 where there are large areas of glass facing direct sunlight, there is provision for shading, e.g. Venetian blinds;
2.4 windows can be easily opened to allow for adequate ventilation.
Further advice on heating and ventilation is given in the next section.

3 FIRE SAFETY
Check that:
3.1 the fire exits and escape routes are clear from obstructions;
3.2 fire doors are kept unlocked and unobstructed whilst people are on the premises;
3.3 all designated fire exits are clearly marked;
3.4 evacuation procedures are clearly displayed;
3.5 staff and children are familiar with evacuation procedures;

3.6 staff are familiar with and have been adequately trained in the procedure to be followed when using firefighting equipment;
3.7 there have been practice evacuations/fire drills held at least once per term;
3.8 fire doors open outwards and are not held or wedged open;
3.9 fire extinguishers and fire blankets are checked and maintained in accordance with manufacturer's instructions;
3.10 the firefighting equipment available is that recommended by the local authority's fire officer and is located in accordance with the fire officers' recommendations;
3.11 the fire alarm system is tested at regular intervals whilst the school is in session to ensure that it works and is audible in all parts of the building;
3.12 flammable substances e.g. cleaning fluids, photocopying chemicals etc, are stored correctly, away from any sources of heat.
More detailed advice on fire safety is given in the next section.

4 ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT

4.1 General
All electrical equipment should be maintained and checked regularly by a competent person. Such maintenance should include checking that:
• equipment is correctly wired and earthed;
• plugs are correctly wired;
• use ratings that are correct for the type of equipment being used (fuse ratings should be marked on the equipment and the plug).
• the mains supply is still capable of meeting the maximum demand;
• the distribution system (i.e. sockets, bench supplies etc) is suitable for the type of work being carried out;
• the isolating switches are marked, well-sited, accessible and known to staff;
• residual current (earth leakage) circuit breakers are used where appropriate.

4.2 Lighting
Visually check that:
4.2.1 all the light fittings are working and are kept in a clean condition;
4.2.2 light switches are not broken and appear to be in a safe condition;
4.2.3 the lighting is adequate for the type of work being undertaken as specified in Circular 24/82.

4.3 Plugs/Sockets/Leads
Visually check that:
4.3.1 plugs are in good condition with no cracks or pieces missing;
4.3.2 sockets are in good condition with no cracks or pieces missing;
4.3.3 socket screws and mountings are secure;
4.3.4 sockets are situated in safe positions, convenient for the equipment to be used and not subject to damp;
4.3.5 indicator lights on sockets function correctly;
4.3.6 insulation on leads is not cracked or frayed;
4.3.7 leads are without knots or joins and are reasonably free of 'kinks';
4.3.8 Leads are the correct length for the equipment being used;
4.3.9 there are no trailing leads;
4.3.10 surge protection adaptors are being used and not overloaded;
4.3.11 leads and flexible cable are securely fixed at both equipment and plug ends.

4.4 Equipment
Check that:
4.4.1 fixed and portable electrical equipment is not damaged and, as far as you are aware, is operating correctly;
4.4.2 copies of manufacturers' instructions/operating manuals are easily accessible;
4.4.3 equipment is only being used for purposes for which it was intended;
4.4.4 where appropriate, all electrical equipment is switched off and, unplugged when not in use;
4.4.5 mains isolating switches are easily accessible and known to staff;
4.4.6 on/off indicator lights function correctly;
4.4.7 equipment incorporating heating has a thermal safety cut-out in addition to a thermostat;
4.4.8 equipment containing liquid has a leakage detector;

4.4.9 all items of electrical equipment are properly and regularly maintained and serviced.

6 FIRST AID

Check that:

6.1 notices are posted in prominent positions detailing:

- procedure for calling ambulances etc;
- telephone number of local doctors, gardai, hospital.
- procedure for dealing with individual pupils' emergencies due to known conditions/allergies etc

6.2 first aid boxes are readily available and adequately stocked

6.3 the accident book is readily available and kept up-to-date.

7 GENERAL PURPOSE CLASSROOMS and LIBRARY

7.1 look again at sections 1-4;

Check that:

7.2 hazards are not arising from overcrowded classrooms;

7.3 all cupboards, noticeboards, display units are stable;

7.4 classroom furniture is not damaged;

7.5 wherever possible, there are no sharp edges or corners on the furniture;

7.6 furniture is positioned safely;

7.7 all shelf mountings are secure.

9 Servery

Check that:

9.1 floors are in good condition and are non-slip;

9.2 working surfaces are in good condition and are impermeable;

9.3 refrigerators and freezers are operating within safety temperature ranges and are only used for the storage of foods;

9.4 there is a wash basin with hot water, soap and disposable towels for washing hands prior to handling foods;

9.5 all cleaning materials and other potentially dangerous substances are stored correctly, clearly labelled and the shelf life is known and kept in check.

10 HALLA

Check that:

10.1 floors are clean, even, non-slip and splinter proof;

10.2 all brackets securing ropes, wall bars etc are sound;

10.3 PE equipment is stacked securely and positioned so as not to cause a hazard;

10.5 there is a regular routine for inspecting furniture, floors, apparatus, equipment and fittings;

10.6 wooden beams, benches etc are free from splinters and generally sound;

10.7 vaulting horses, beams and benches are stable and do not wobble when in use;

10.8 where there is a stage:

- steps are not damaged;
- steps have an adequate handrail;
- stage lighting is properly wired and earthed, and stored correctly when not in use;
- curtains run freely.

11 NON-TEACHING AREAS

11.1 Offices

Check that:

11.1.1 substances for use with photocopying/duplicating machines are stored correctly, and that the room where photocopying/duplicating machines are operated is adequately ventilated;

11.2 Kitchen Areas

11.2.1 the kitchen/dining area is kept clean;

11.2.2 the kitchen floors are sound and non-slip, especially when wet;

11.2.3 first aid boxes are available in the kitchen area;
11.2.4 equipment is adequately guarded.

11.3 Boiler Rooms
11.3.1 there is no combustible waste stored in boiler rooms or elsewhere (e.g. oily rags);
11.3.2 all safety devices in the boiler room are in proper working order;
11.3.3 the boiler is regularly maintained by a competent person;
11.3.4 all cleaning materials, particularly those which might be hazardous, are securely stored;
11.3.5 in the case of solid fuel boilers, there are covered containers to enable ashes to be removed without delay to an area where pupils are not liable to come into contact with them.

11.4 Staff Facilities
11.4.1 the staffroom is clean, warm and well lit;
11.4.2 there are adequate cloakroom facilities and storage facilities for personal belongings, books etc;
11.4.3 the staffroom is large enough for the numbers to be accommodated and sufficient seating is proved, both with upright chairs and tables or desks for working and with comfortable seating;
11.4.4 there is provision for tea and coffee to be made;
11.4.5 staff sanitary facilities are suitable, sufficient and properly cleaned.

11.5 Hygiene
Check that the following are available:
11.5.1 soap
11.5.2 hand drying facilities
11.5.3 hot water
11.5.4 toilet paper
11.5.5 litter bin per classroom
11.5.6 provision for disposal of sanitary towels
11.5.7 safe, suitable, sufficient and properly cleaned sanitary facilities.

11.6 Outside Areas
11.6.1 there are no uneven/broken/cracked paving slabs;
11.6.2 outside steps are secure, with a firmly fixed handrail;
11.6.3 roofs, guttering, drain pipes etc are, as far as can be seen, sound and well maintained;
11.6.4 all play areas, are kept clean and free from glass;
11.6.5 outside play/PE appliances are securely anchored;
11.6.6 outside lighting works and is sufficient;
11.6.7 all parking facilities for cars and cycles are safe in regard to the presence of pedestrians;
11.6.8 all builders' materials, caretakers' maintenance equipment etc are kept securely.