



## **Health Safety and Welfare Statement Merlin Woods Primary School**

### **Introductory Statement**

Merlin Woods Primary School, Galway, regards the provision of a safe and healthy educational and working environment as a principal objective. This objective will be achieved through the cooperation of Merlin Woods Primary School, Board of Management, teachers, staff, pupils, BAM FM, subcontractors and others affected by the activities carried out within Merlin Woods Primary School.

It is the policy of Merlin Woods Primary School to comply with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007 and all other legislation relevant to the activities carried out within the school.

Merlin Woods Primary School will ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, the organisation, advice and resources required to meet this commitment.

### **Rationale**

This policy requires the co-operation of all employees and our partners in the caretaking, maintenance and upkeep of the school, BAM FM. It is prepared in line with The Safety Health and Welfare at Work Act (1989). The Board of Management of Merlin Woods Primary School recognises that its statutory obligations under legislation, extends to employees, students, parents, to any person legitimately conducting school business and to the public.

## Guidelines

A safety audit shall be carried out annually by the Board of Management, and a report made to staff. All records of accidents and ill-health will be monitored in order to ensure that any safety measures required can be put in place to minimise the recurrence of such accidents and ill-health.

BAM FM have responsibility for caretaking, upkeep, maintenance and traffic management within the school as part of the PPP model under which the school operates. BAM FM carry out regular safety checks on equipment and buildings throughout the year.

The Board of Management of Merlin Woods Primary School and BAM FM wish to ensure that as far as is reasonably practical:

- ◆ The design, provision and maintenance of all places in the school shall be safe and without risk to health.
- ◆ There shall be safe access to and from the school.
- ◆ Equipment may be operated safely insofar as is possible.
- ◆ Work systems shall be planned, organised, performed and maintained so as to be safe and without risk to health.
- ◆ Staff shall be instructed and supervised in so far as is reasonably possible so as to ensure health and safety at work
- ◆ Protective clothing or equivalent shall be provided as is necessary to ensure the safety and health at work of all employees.
- ◆ Plans for emergencies shall be complied with and revised as necessary.
- ◆ This statement will be continually revised by the Board of Management as necessity arises, and shall be re-examined by management on an ongoing basis.
- ◆ Employees shall be consulted on matters of health and safety.
- ◆ Provisions shall be made for the election by the employees of a safety representative on staff and also on the Board of Management.

## Resources for Health, Safety and Welfare in the School

The following resources are allocated to assist with the formation of a safe working environment in Merlin Woods Primary School in so far as reasonably practicable:

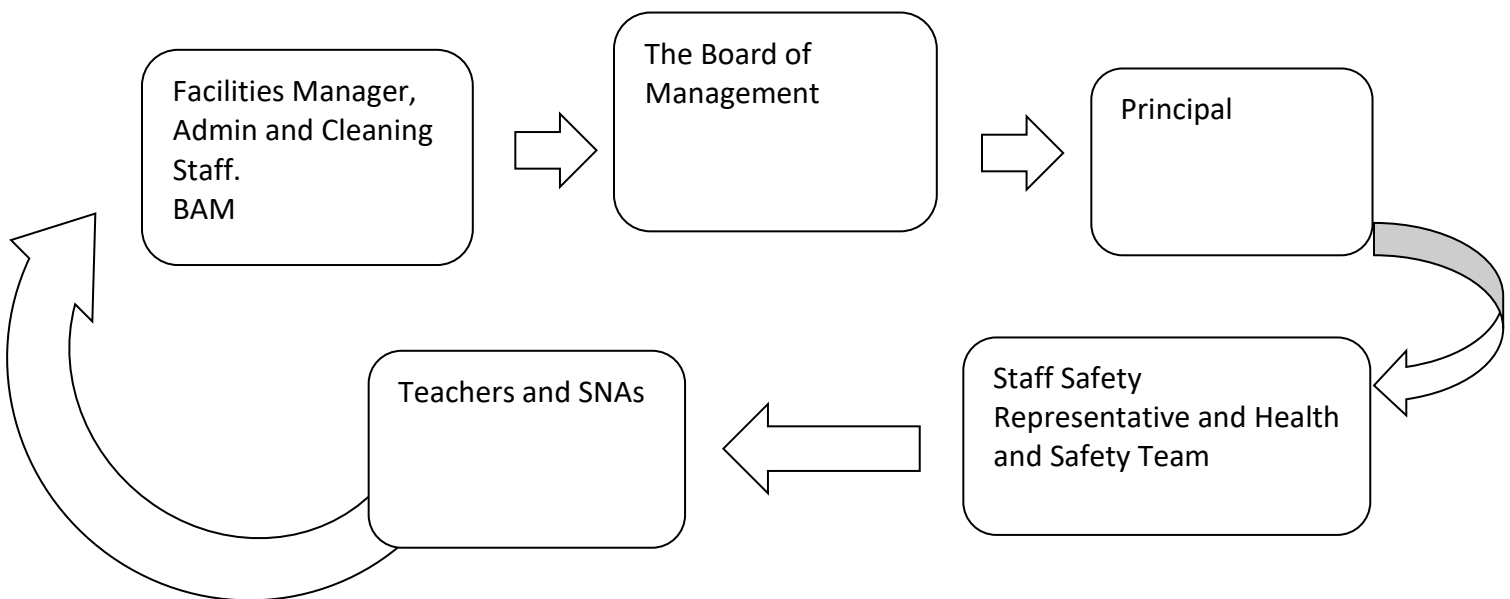
Human Resources (see chart below)

Financial support by means of budget allocations

Buildings, Furnishings and Equipment

Training via the Health and Safety Authority.

Policy development at National and Local levels in support of the Safety Management System



**Chairperson of BOM: Pat Burke**

**Principal: Paula O' Connor**

**Safety Officer: BOM of Merlin Woods Primary School**

**Health and Safety Staff Rep: Michelle Murphy**

**Health and Safety Staff Team: Paula O' Connor, Michelle Murphy, Sinead Downey and Aoife De Paor**

**Facilities Manager: BAM**

**All Staff**

The Board of Management of Merlin Woods Primary School undertakes to ensure that the provisions of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 1989 are adhered to:

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

We undertake to discharge our statutory duties by:

- Identifying hazards within the school activities, assessing the risks related to them and implementing appropriate preventative and protective measures
- Providing and maintaining safe plant and work equipment
- Establishing and enforcing safe systems at work
- Recruiting and appointing personnel who have the skills, abilities and competence commensurate with their role and level of responsibility including a competent person for safety
- Ensuring that technical competence is maintained through the provision of refresher training as appropriate
- Promoting awareness of health and safety and of good practice through the effective communication of relevant information
- Ensure the provision of emergency and evacuation procedures
- Ensure the facilitation of consultation and representation
- Monitoring our safety performance by regular site inspections
- Furnishing sufficient funds needed to meet these objectives

### **It is the duty of every employee while at work:**

- 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.
- To co-operate with his/her employer and any other person to such extent as will enable his/her employer or the other person to comply with any of the relevant statutory provisions.
- To report to the Board of Management, via the principal, without unreasonable delay, any defects in equipment, place or work, or system of work, which might endanger safety, health or welfare of which he/she becomes aware.
- To report any “near misses” for learning.

### **It is the responsibility of teaching staff to:**

- Ensure that code of behaviour is followed and pupils remain orderly in the classroom, corridors, hall and yard.
- **Promoting Health and Safety Awareness**
  - Educate students on health and safety practices, such as proper use of equipment and hygiene habits. - Encourage a culture of safety awareness among students and colleagues.
- **Understanding Health and Safety Policies-** Familiarise themselves with the school's health and safety policies, procedures, and risk assessments
- **Providing a Safe Learning Environment**
  - Take reasonable care to provide a safe and healthy environment for students, colleagues, and visitors.
- **Professional Development**
  - Attend health and safety training sessions and workshops to stay updated on best practices.
  - Continuously improve knowledge and skills related to health and safety in the educational setting.
- **Supporting Wellbeing and Inclusivity**
  - Support the emotional and mental wellbeing of students and colleagues.
  - Foster inclusivity and respect for diversity within the school community

### **Responsibility of Pupils**

The following are key responsibilities that are outlined and regularly communicated with pupils in Merlin Woods Primary School:

#### **1. Following Instructions**

- Listen to and follow instructions provided by teachers and staff regarding safety rules and procedures.

#### **2. Taking Care of Personal Hygiene**

- Wash hands regularly, especially before eating and after using the restroom, to prevent the spread of germs.
- Cover their mouths and noses with tissues or elbows when coughing or sneezing.

#### **3. Using Equipment and Facilities Safely**

- Use school equipment and facilities (e.g., playground equipment, computers) properly and as instructed by teachers.

- Report any damaged or broken equipment to teachers or staff.

#### **4. Being Aware of Hazards**

- Learn to recognize potential hazards in the school environment, such as wet floors, loose cords, or obstacles in walkways.

- Report any safety concerns or hazards to teachers or school staff.

#### **5. Respecting Personal Space and Boundaries**

- Respect the personal space and belongings of other students and staff.

- Avoid behaviours that could cause harm or discomfort to others.

#### **6. Participating in Emergency Drills**

- Participate in fire drills and other emergency procedures as instructed by teachers.

- Know the locations of emergency exits and assembly points.

#### **7. Promoting Inclusivity and Respect**

- Treat classmates and school staff with kindness, inclusivity, and respect regardless of differences.

- Stand up against bullying or unkind behaviour and report incidents to trusted adults.

#### **8. Eating Nutritious Foods**

- Make healthy food choices during meal times to support overall health and well-being.

- Be mindful of any food allergies or dietary restrictions and inform teachers or staff accordingly.

#### **9. Hot School Lunches**

- Pupils do not have access to the servery area where ovens and hot equipment are located.

- All ovens and associated equipment are operated by trained personnel/operatives only.

- Hot lunches are prepared and managed in line with the school's Health and Safety procedures.

- Any uneaten hot lunches are disposed of in the evening in accordance with food safety guidelines.

- Pupils are required to take any lunch leftovers home at the end of the school day.

#### **10. Staying Active and Safe During Play**

- Play safely and responsibly during yard and break times, following playground rules and guidelines.
- Look out for peers who may need assistance or support during play activities.

### **11. Reporting Accidents or Injuries**

- Immediately report any accidents, injuries, or incidents to teachers or school staff.
- Provide accurate information and cooperate with any necessary first aid procedures.

### **12. Respecting School Policies and Rules**

- Adhere to school policies and rules related to behaviour, dress code, and conduct.
- Understand the importance of following rules to ensure the safety and well-being of everyone in the school community.

By outlining these responsibilities, primary school children can develop a sense of accountability and contribute positively to maintaining a safe, healthy, and respectful learning environment. Regular reinforcement and education on these responsibilities can empower children to take an active role in promoting health and safety within our school community.

No person will intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse any equipment, or other means or thing provided in pursuance or any of the relevant statutory provisions or otherwise, for securing safety, health or welfare or persons arising out of work activities.

Employees using available facilities and equipment provided, should ensure that work practices are performed in the safest manner possible (see section 9 of Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 1989).

### **Consultation and Information**

It is the policy of the Board of Management of Merlin Woods Primary School to consult with staff and BAM FM in preparation and completion of safety audits, to give a copy of the safety statement to all present and future staff, and to convey any additional information or instructions regarding health, safety and welfare at work to all staff as it becomes available. Health, safety and welfare at work will be considered in any future staff training and development plans.

## **Hazards**

All hazards shall be eliminated insofar as resources and circumstances allow.

### **Fire (See Fire Drill & Evacuation Procedures as Appendix 1)**

It is the policy of the Board of Management of Merlin Woods Primary School that:

- (i) All Classrooms, staffroom and ancillary rooms within the school are fitted with smoke alarms.
- (ii) The principal and BAM FM will ensure that fire drills shall take place at least twice per year.
- (iii) Fire exits shall be clearly marked. Signs shall be clearly visible
- (iv) All doors, corridors, and entries shall be kept clear of obstruction and shall be able to be opened at all times from within the building.
- (v) Assembly points designated in the car park outside the school are marked with signage.
- (vi) Assembly areas are designated in the yard to each line where they line up daily
- (vii) All equipment shall be turned off when unattended for lengthy periods and when the building is empty. Teachers are responsible for their own classroom.
- (viii) Principal shall be responsible for fire drills and evacuation procedures.
- (ix) All recommendations made by a Fire Officer in addition to these provisions shall be implemented.
- (x) A folder containing risk assessments was compiled in April 2024 and these will be reviewed on an ongoing basis or annually as the need arises.

The following hazards (in so much as can be identified) are considered by the Board of Management to be a source of potential danger and are brought to the attention of all concerned.

1. Wet corridors
2. Trailing leads
3. Computers
4. Fuse Board
5. Electric kettles
6. Ladders
7. Protruding units and fittings
8. Icy surfaces on a cold day
9. Mats in corridor

10. Arts Press
11. Science Resources

To minimise these dangers the following safety/ protective measures must be adhered to (see duties of employee pages 1-2 of this document):

- (a) Access to and operation of plant/equipment is restricted to qualified members of the staff, whose job function is that of running, maintaining, cleaning and monitoring particular items of plant in the course of their normal duties. Copies of this Safety Statement will be sent to BAM FM who engage and/or employ all contractors for building/maintenance works in the school. Any other contractors entering the school must be shown a copy of the schools Safety Statement and shall adhere to its provisions.
- (b) In addition all such plant and machinery is to be used in strict accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and recommendations.
- (c) Where applicable, the Board of Management/BAM FM will ensure that members of the staff will have been instructed in the correct use of plant, machinery and equipment.
- (d) All machinery and electrical equipment are fitted with adequate safeguards.
- (e) Precautionary notices, in respect of safety matters are displayed at relevant points, if appropriate.
- (f) Ladders must be used with another person's assistance.
- (g) PE equipment must be stored securely positioned so as not to cause a hazard.
- (h) An annual routine for inspecting furniture, floors, apparatus, equipment and fittings is established by BAM FM as part of their regular inspections.
- (i) BAM FM check paving for cracks.
- (j) BAM FM check that manholes are safe.
- (k) BAM FM check that all play areas are kept clean and free from glass before use.
- (l) BAM FM check that outside lighting works and is sufficient.
- (m) BAM FM check that all builder's materials, caretakers' maintenance equipment, external stores etc are stored securely.

### Electrical Appliances

Arrangements will be made for all appliances to be checked on a regular basis by a competent person, ie maintenance person, the supplier or his agent. Before using any appliance the user should check that:

- ◆ All safety guards which are a normal part of the appliance are in working order
- ◆ Plugs are not left lying around or in the reach of pupils.
- ◆ Pupils are not permitted to plug any appliance into sockets.
- ◆ Sockets that are not in use are switched off at the wall.
- ◆ Power supply cables/leads are in good condition and free of cuts or abrasions.
- ◆ Unplug leads of appliances when not in use.
- ◆ Suitable undamaged fused plug tops are used and fitted with the correct fuse.
- ◆ Follow official guidelines issued by the Health and Safety Authority.

### **Photocopiers/laminators/IWBs**

Staff should be careful when using any of the above as injury may occur from moving parts and hot elements inside protective covers.

Laminators are not permitted in the classrooms at any point when there are pupils in the room.

### **Drugs And Medication**

It is the policy of the Board of Management of Merlin Woods Primary School that each class teacher is responsible for maintaining a first aid box in his/her own classroom.

The administration of medicines to children is dealt with in the administration of medicines policy. Pupils with individualised medical needs, eg diabetes, toileting needs, etc, will have an individualised plan drawn up between the teachers and parents.

### **Chemicals and Hazardous Substances**

The Staff should be careful and ensure adequate supervision of pupils when using any of the below list of materials found in the art press and the science resources shelving on the first floor.

*Poster Paints*

*Chalk Pastels*

*PVA Glue*

*Gloss*

*Vinegar*

*Bread soda*

*Food dye*

*Effervescent Tablets*

### **Welfare**

To ensure the continued welfare of the staff and children, a high standard of hygiene is required in the toilet areas at all times. An adequate supply of water, towels, soap and sanitary disposal facilities must be available.

A dignity at work policy is currently being drafted by the Health, Safety and Welfare Representative.

A Staffroom separate from the regular classrooms is provided, where tea and lunch breaks may be taken. Staff must co-operate in maintaining a high standard of hygiene in this area.

Members of staff and students are reminded:

(a) A person who is under medical supervision or on prescribed medication and who has been certified fit for work, should notify the school of any known side effect or temporary physical disabilities which could hinder their work performance and which may be a danger to either themselves or their fellow workers. The school will arrange or assign appropriate tasks for the person to carry out in the Interim.

(b) Staff and students are not allowed to attend the premises or carry out duties whilst under the influence of illicit drugs or alcohol. Any person found breaking this rule will be liable to disciplinary action.

### **Smoking/Vaping**

In accordance with The No Smoking in the Workplace Act (2004) the Board of Management of Merlin Woods Primary School are obliged to ensure that the school shall be a non-smoking/non-vaping area to avoid hazard to staff and pupils of passive smoking.

### **Infectious Diseases**

It is the policy of the Board of Management of Merlin Woods Primary School that all infectious diseases shall be notified and steps taken to ensure the safety of staff and students against all such diseases. The Board of Management will endeavour to minimise the risk by adherence to sound principles of cleanliness, hygiene and disinfection and have provided disposable gloves for use in all First Aid applications, cleaning tasks, etc. Toilets and washrooms shall be provided at all times with an adequate supply of water, soap, towels and a facility for the safe disposal of waste. Merlin Woods Primary School maintains a copy of the HSE document "Managing Infectious Diseases" on its website,

[http://www.merlinwoods.com/uploads/7/4/7/8/74784587/managing\\_infectious\\_diseases\\_in\\_schools\\_2013\\_hse.pdf](http://www.merlinwoods.com/uploads/7/4/7/8/74784587/managing_infectious_diseases_in_schools_2013_hse.pdf).

### **First Aid**

It is the policy of the Board of Management of Merlin Woods Primary School that a first aid box is available in each classroom. The organisation of this is supported and procured by Emer Hughes and Elaine Hayes. The class First Aid boxes is the responsibility of the class teacher to maintain. This box should contain:

- sticking plasters
- Cotton Bandage
- Antiseptic Wipes
- Scissors
- Disposable gloves

A larger First Aid Box is located under the stairs by the yard door and in the servery for adult First Aid. This box will also contain burn cream and gauze.

Disposable gloves must be used at all times in administering First Aid.

All incidents involving children are recorded in the Accident Record Book in the general office. In the event of a child hitting/bumping their head it is policy that the parents' of the child will be called and given the option to pick the child up.

An ice pack can be applied to bumps on the head.

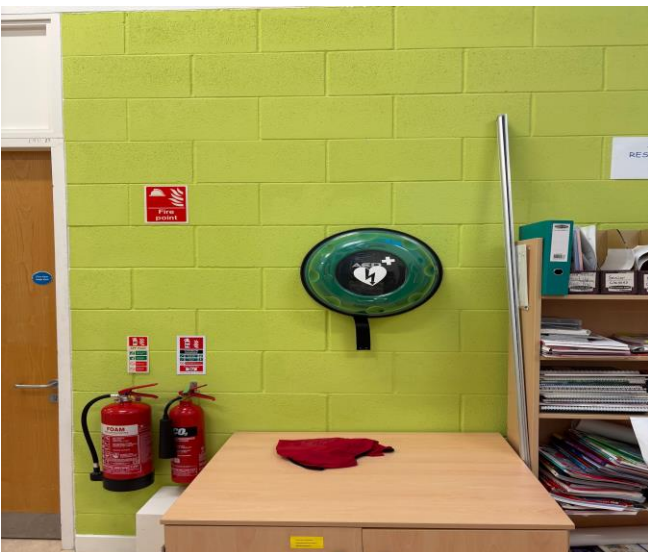
It is the responsibility of the teacher supervising to inform other class teachers of any accidents or incidents which may have taken place on the yard.

## Defibrillator

There are two defibrillators available in Merlin Woods PS. All staff members received first aid training and the use of the defibrillator, most recently in 2024. The batteries are checked annually and replaced as necessary. One defibrillator is available on the outside wall of the school hall and is checked regularly. Please see image below.



The other can be found on the first floor, outside the staffroom. This is portable. Please see image below.



### **Procedures for dealing with Children who are sick or have minor injuries:**

1. Minor Sickness: If a pupil is too sick to comfortably remain at school and participate normally the parent is contacted to arrange for collection. If no contact is able to be made, the Class Teacher keeps the pupil in class, until contact is made. The school does not have a 'sick bay'.
2. Minor injury: If a pupil is injured in school, first aid is administered by the teacher if in class and by the staff on yard duty if during break, and a decision is made about whether the pupil can remain at school with the injury. The decision is made in consultation between the Class Teacher and the Principal. A first aid box is located under the back stairwell as well as all classrooms.

### **Serious Accident Procedure:**

In the event of a serious accident the school will

1. Put all necessary resources of the school at the disposal of the person involved in the accident
2. Inform the Principal or most senior staff member in the absence of the principal.
3. Call an ambulance giving details of the exact location, and nature of the accident.
4. Station a person outside the school to watch out for the Ambulance and to speed the access of the ambulance medical team.
5. Contact the ICE contact of the person involved
6. If a child, accompany them to the hospital.

### **Access To School**

In as much as is compatible with the practical layout of the school premises, anyone entering the school premises shall be required to identify themselves to the office before gaining admittance to the school. Any contractor must make direct contact with the Principal/ BAM FM before initiating any work on the premises and shall be shown a copy of the safety statement applying to the school and shall agree to its provisions.

Contractors are required to have their own insurance, engage in good practice regarding Health & Safety, and they are to indemnify Merlin Woods Primary School.

While work is in progress, any noise shall be avoided wherever possible during school hours and shall at all times be reduced to the minimum necessary. The contractor and his workmen shall not create any hazard, permanent or temporary, without informing the principal or his nominated agent and shall mark such hazard with warning signs or other suitable protection.

### **Staff Parking**

There is a mandatory requirement for staff to use reverse parking on the grounds of Merlin Woods PS.

### **Collecting/Dropping off of Children**

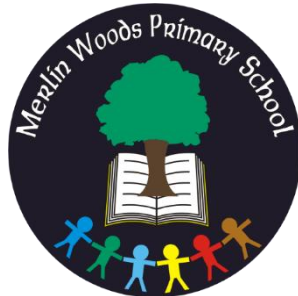
- (1) All parent/guardians/carers, in the interest of safety, are requested to use the drop off space provided, gates must not be obstructed at any times.
- (2) Parents are required to accompany children into the school yard in the morning if they are early, teachers will release the younger children to a parent/guardian, or an adult nominated by them, outside the classroom at home time (Junior Infants to 2<sup>nd</sup>), while older classes are allowed walk home by themselves (3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>). Children from 1<sup>st</sup> class upwards are allowed to walk home by themselves on a case by case basis and by the written request of the parent.

### **Revision of This Safety Statement**

This statement shall be regularly revised by the Board of Management of Merlin Woods Primary School in accordance with experience and the requirements of the Health and Safety Act and the Health and Safety Authority.

**Reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2026**

## Appendix 1



# Merlin Woods Primary School

## Fire Drill & Evacuation Policy

### Introduction:

The fire drill/evacuation policy of Merlin Woods Primary School has been produced following a collaborative consultation process by staff in response to changing circumstances in the school. In line with our school ethos, the school is committed to the care of the whole school community and the provision of a safe and secure environment for learning. This policy is in keeping with those ideals.

### Aims:

This policy aims to;

- Enable the school to provide for the immediate needs of students, staff and visitors in the event of a fire
- Have in place appropriate safety procedures which comply with the Health, Safety and Welfare at Work Act
- To coordinate practices with BAM PPP
- Ensure a safe school environment for all

### Objectives:

- To utilise outside agencies (BAM, local fire station, fire officer) for training and staff development, so as to enhance safety procedures
- To develop a tried and trusted framework which will ensure the safety of all school personnel in the event of a fire.

## **Internal Procedures for Staff:**

- Roll call to be noted every day – teachers must know how many students are in and exactly who is out each day.
- If a student leaves the room during class – Know where the child is going and to which teacher they have gone to. This teacher is then responsible for the student in the event of an alarm. The teachers can check with each other at the assembly. Also if the student is being sent with a note to another teacher the child has to be accounted for in the event of an alarm going off.

In the event of a fire, the following steps must be taken;

- Teacher is to remain calm – if a teacher panics in any way it will distress the students and make the situation harder to deal with.
- The teachers' role is to evacuate themselves and their students above all else – if the alarm is activated, this school is connected to a monitoring system which will immediately contact one of the BAM staff.
- If a teacher sees smoke or a fire they activate one of the red fire boxes by lifting the glass cover at the bottom and pressing the button. Then they follow the evacuation procedure as normal.
- In all classroom/resource areas, children are to stand up, push their chairs under the tables and calmly walk in a single file to the door; Teacher takes the class list from the door.
- All teachers must check the class toilets before vacating the room.
- Evacuation is via the nearest emergency exit.
- Children in wheelchairs in upstairs rooms, remain at the safety point at the top of the stairs. The SNA presses the contact button on the green box before they themselves evacuate.
- Each class is to assemble at the allocated fire assembly point in the basketball court and Junior Yard area. In the event that access to the basketball court is blocked/the fire is outside near the basketball , the alternative assembly points are the sports pitches across from the school
- Evacuate calmly using the nearest exit door and assemble in the assembly point in the playing courts. Listen to the instructions given out by the fire wardens.
- A second count of your students should be done at this point in case someone got lost. In the event of this happening you contact the fire warden or one of the BAM FM staff. Do not re-enter the building looking for the student.
- The BAM FM staff will sweep the building and work with the fire brigade if necessary. Your concern is the students. BAM FM staff only, can tell the principal that the school is safe to re-enter. If the alarm goes off this does not mean the school is safe. Again listen to the instructions of the appointed fire wardens.
- In the event of a very serious fire a second fire assembly point will be used away from the building, in the playing field in the park. This is for a serious fire only.
- During fire drills the BAM FM staff will be stationed around the school to observe the evacuation. It is not a test to see who the best is or who is doing it wrong. If BAM see something that could cause a problem during a real fire alarm activation it will be addressed with the principal. This is to improve the next drill.

- Pupils can only return to the classroom once permission has been given to do so by BAM PPP
- The fire drill is be carried out once a term
- Support Teachers split a class for EPV day cover, etc, take the roll with them on the day they spilt the class. The spilt class go out with their host class, regroup in their normal place in yard and the support teacher takes the roll.

### **Role and Responsibilities:**

All teachers are responsible for the safety and wellbeing of the pupils in their care. The Principal has overall responsibility for ensuring proper procedures are in place.

**No burning of candles/incense or charging of phones allowed in classrooms. Battery candles only.**

### **Evaluation:**

- Positive feedback from all stakeholders
- Maintaining safety standards
- Achieving a coordinated and orderly evacuation in the shortest time possible
- Yearly reviews
  
- **Please see appendices for detailed Fire Drill information**
  
- **Appendix 1 – Fire Drill Protocol for each class level**
- **Appendix 2- Fire Drill Diagram**

**Ratification:** The policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2026

## Appendix 2

### Fire Drill Protocol

Class	Exit	Line up Area
Junior Infant A & B	Staff Door	Junior Play Area Between Jungle gym and silver benches
Senior Infant A & B	SI Entrance Door- Turn left towards back of school and into basketball court	Basketball Court
1A & 1B	1 <sup>st</sup> Class Entrance Door - Turn left towards back of school and into basketball court	Basketball Court
2A & 2B	2 <sup>nd</sup> Class Entrance Door Turn left towards back of school and into basketball court	Basketball Court
3A & 3B	Down front stairs and out the door under canopy- turn right around front of building and enter yard through the green gate	Junior Play Area
4A & 4B	Down front stairs and out the door under canopy- turn right around front of building and enter yard through to green gate	Junior Play Area
5A & 5 B	Down back stairs	Basketball Court
6A & 6B	Down back stairs	Basketball Court
Clever Acorns	Back Entrance Door	Basketball Court
Wise Oaks	Back Entrance Door	Basketball Court

- See Yard Layout document for specific line up points
- Look for class name on fence
- 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Class form one line per class
- 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Class split class in half on court e.g. two shorter lines of 13 side by side

Appendix 3

Fire Drill Diagram 2023

