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SAFETY POLICY

OBJECTIVES

The Board of Management of St. Mura's National School believes that an accident free environment is an essential element in achieving its objectives, reflecting the high value it places on employee and visitor safety. Continuous improvement towards such an environment requires the highest standard of safety and such standards makes a positive contribution to reducing injuries, ill health and property damage.

PLANNING FOR SAFETY

In pursuit of its overall objective, the Board of Management will, as part of their long term plan for safety, adopt objectives aimed at achieving and maintaining progressive improvements in safety performance. Such performance will be monitored continuously.

In addition, the Board of Management will establish and regularly review its safety policy detailing organisational and management responsibilities, along with specific safety arrangements.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Ultimate responsibility for achievement of the overall objectives of this policy rests with the Board of Management.

To this end, achievement of these objectives will be supported by the provision of the appropriate financial and physical resources, including provision of necessary expert advice.

As individual members/employees, we all share a responsibility for our own health and safety as well as for the safety of others who may be affected by the way we work and behave.

EMPLOYEES INVOLVEMENT

Everyone working within St. Mura's N.S. has a positive contribution to make towards creating and maintaining a safe and healthy working environment through adopting

and encouraging work practices that avoid the risk of accidents, injury or damage to health and conforms to the relevant statutory provisions.

This contribution will be encouraged through consultation with staff and a safety representative where one is appointed.

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Board of Management is responsible for ensuring so far as is reasonably practicable safety and freedom from risk to health of the school staff and visitors/contractors and bringing to the attention of the Board of Management any shortfall in the standard of Health and Safety.

The staff employed by the Board of Management will have well defined in their job description their obligation, responsibility and commitment to health and safety.

Where identified the Board of Management will arrange for appropriate training for safety awareness, specialist training and appropriate induction training in which safety awareness, skills rules and best practices are included and other training needs that may be identified from the risk assessments.

The Board of Management, in drawing up this safety policy, and in the context of its statutory requirement, the following safety management and control issues will need to be put in place and reviewed regularly and, at least, once in every twelve months.

It further recognises the importance of information and communication between the Board of Management and staff in keeping themselves informed of legislative changes with regards to health and safety.

SAFE SYSTEMS OF WORK

Maintenance and cleaning activities.

Supervision of visitors and contractors.

First Aid.

Reporting of accidents and dangerous occurrences (general application regulations 1993).

Fire evacuation procedure.

Safe manual handling.

Work environment noise/dust.

Pregnant employees' risk assessment.

Community related activities inside and outside the school.

Overcrowding control.

Visual display units' assessments.

Written safe systems of use of work equipment.

Food safety and hygiene.

Fire safety in places of assembly.

No smoking policy.

DEVELOPING A STRATEGY FOR DEALING WITH STRESS AT WORK.

Recognising that pressure could trigger stress related illnesses that do not indicate weakness or incompetence.

Recognising potential stressors.

Establishing specific action plans to take account of individual personalities, leadership styles, management philosophy and the culture in force.

Increasing awareness of stress problems.

Establishing good communication channels.

Developing a supportive culture.

Improving the work environment.

OCCUPATIONAL ILLNESS

The Board of Management recognises the risk of occupational illness (communicable diseases) due to airborne diseases e.g. TB, measles, mumps and other infectious diseases, e.g. hepatitis and scabies.

As regard to these the Board of Management recognises its responsibility in protecting the health of its staff and will seek medical advice and assistance in putting in place a policy in dealing with the above health related issues.

As from time to time as health related issues develop, the Board of Management will seek the assistance of suitably qualified and competent persons to fulfil their obligations in this area.

AVAILABILITY AND SUITABILITY OF EMPLOYEES WELFARE FACILITIES

Attention must be paid to the following welfare issues:

Provision of adequate restroom/workroom.

Toilet accommodation and washing facilities.

First aid provisions.

Personal protective equipment, i.e. gloves, safety glasses etc.

Role and training of safety representatives.

Appropriate training of staff in health and safety (including manual handling, first aid, safe systems of work, hazard identification, food safety and hygiene, fire safety in places of assembly, emergency planning, role of safety representatives, etc.)

Health and safety induction for new staff.

Regular monitoring and review of health and safety performance.

Allocation of resources to ensure health and safety issues are addressed and rectified where necessary.

IDENTIFYING THE HAZARDS

A hazard is anything which has potential to cause personal injury or ill health. Some hazards such as slippery floors may be common but each environment will have hazards peculiar to itself because of its location, layout, access routes, etc.

The Board of Management recognises that a systematic approach to the identification of hazards needs to be adopted. The human factor hazard may induce illness and that the assessments should be carried out in consultation with the employees who work in and are most familiar with the individual areas.

This risk assessment will be updated and reviewed annually or as circumstances change.

It is the responsibility of the Board of Management, in improving safety standards on its premises and the safety and welfare of its staff, to carry out quarterly safety inspections of the premises in consultation with its employees. The Board of Management will review the safety inspection reports at its regular meetings and will take any remedial action to rectify the hazards identified at the time of inspection.

HAZARD IDENTITY

Hazards are identified under a number of headings, each which should be addressed in carrying out risk assessments. The following guidance is a useful non-exhaustive list to assist in identifying hazards.

LIFE THREATENING HAZARDS

Fire

Electricity

Slippery Floors

Condition of roof, windows, floors, walls, passageways, hall area.

Maintenance of the above

Traffic and car parking

Means of access and egress

Falls from heights

Adequate space to discharge all functions

Persons falling

Objects falling

HUMAN FACTORS SERVICES

Work overload

Water

Heating

Unrealistic personal expectations

Lighting

Ventilation

Smoking

Control and disposal of chemicals

Overcrowding of room

Noise level

The code of practice for the management of fire safety in places of assembly should be strictly adhered to.

Is the place of work safe, clean and tidy?

Is there safe means of access and egress to and from all places?

Are floors, passageways of sound construction and properly maintained? Are they slippery?

Has the issue of stress and strategy for dealing with it been adhered to?

Do you have safe work procedures in place?

Is your equipment and machinery safe? Trailing leads secured to prevent tripping hazard, put away after use.

Are machinery and equipment supplier's instructions available, understood and followed?

Are records kept of safety training?

Are employees involved in pushing, pulling, carrying heavy weights, trained in manual handling?

Is care taken with chemicals? Are labels and being chemical safety data sheets available?

Have you made arrangements for emergencies and fire fighting? Are escape routes identified and clear?

Are items such as paper and chemicals stored safely?

Are there training, information, instruction, supervision and consultation of employees in health and safety issues?

Is portable equipment properly maintained? (Such as stepladders, electrical cables, vacuum cleaners, computers and TV/Video units?)

Is personal protective equipment provided and used?

Do VDU's comply with the 1993 regulations?

Are first aid provisions adequate?

Are records kept of accidents and ill-health?

Are accidents reported to the Health and safety authority?

Are employees complying with safety arrangements?

Are there adequate welfare facilities? (Washroom, toilet accommodation, eating/restroom)?

Are hazards identified such as electricity, oil, traffic, and falls from heights of persons or objects?

Are employees and outside service contractors aware of the safety statement?

Is there a maintenance programme in place?

THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Supporting/implementing the policy.
- Provision of appropriate resources.
- Monitoring safety performance.

- Reviewing the policy at regular intervals.
- Ensuring competent advice is obtained where necessary.
- Consulting with staff on health and safety arrangements.
- Ensuring staff are aware of the policy and know what is expected of them.
- Day to day management of health and safety issues.
- Giving and receiving feedback on the policy.
- Allocation of resources.
- Equipment maintenance, training and consultation.

THE PRINCIPAL IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Ensuring safe work practices are followed.
- Ensuring defects are remedied.
- Ensuring protective arrangements are in place.
- Ensuring accidents/incidents are recorded/investigated.
- Regular inspections.
- Ensuring employees are made aware of policy and arrangements.
- Ensuring employees are appropriately trained.
- Ensuring matters outside their authority are brought up with their managers.
- Ensuring disciplinary procedures apply in cases where safety rules are broken.
- Ensuring fire drills, first aid arrangements are in place.

THE EMPLOYEES ARE REQUIRED TO:

- Be proactive on safety through their behaviour.
- Avoid acts or omissions, which may cause unsafe situations.
- Report defects to the safety representative.
- Co-operate with all safety arrangements.
- Use the personal protective equipment.

INTERNAL HOUSEKEEPING

- Lifting furniture, bending and stretching when cleaning can lead to accidents and cause injury.
- Substances used for cleaning sinks, toilets and floors are potentially dangerous chemicals and may cause dermatitis and chemical burns.

MANAGING THE RISK

- Train all staff in safe handling techniques e.g. ensure assistance is available when lifting heavy furniture.
- Safe working practices for cleaning rooms should be developed.
- Toilet cleaning, always start at the cistern and work down leaving the water area last to be cleaned, always remember work from a clean area to a dirty area.
- Use the safest possible cleaning agent and instruct staff on the correct use of chemicals. Remember never mix cleaners together.

VISUAL DISPLAY UNIT/DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT (VDU)

➤ As a first step in an ergonomic safety programme, it is important to consider the nature of the daily activities and the conditions under which they are to be performed.

MANAGING THE RISK

- Know the percentage of the workday that is spent sitting down.
- How many hours each day are VDU's operated?
- What are the ranges of other tasks, which are carried out each day, and how much exercise do they involve?
- Is there a high degree of movement?
- A workstation should be designed to suit the personnel and the tasks, which have to be performed.

There are four major medical related problem areas:

Back, neck and shoulder pain.

Eyestrain.

Repetitive strain – commonly known as repetitive strain injury (RSI)

Fatigue and mental stress