

OUR LADYS SECONDARY SCHOOL



Fire Safety Policy

Our Lady's Mission Statement

This policy was created in accordance with Our Lady Secondary School's Mission Statement.

Our Lady's Secondary School is a Voluntary Catholic Secondary School operating under the trusteeship of CEIST according to the traditions of the Sisters of Mercy. We, the staff and students, enjoy working together to realise our full potential in a healthy, safe, stimulating and friendly environment where the atmosphere is one of mutual respect, cooperation and challenge. We take a holistic approach focusing on the wellbeing and development of each individual socially, culturally and academically. Within our school community, each student is treated equally. All are considered uniquely talented, with effort valued as much as excellence. On a day-to-day basis, the Christian message inspires everyone in the school to be charitable, inclusive and understanding.

School Context

Our Lady's Secondary School is a Voluntary Catholic School under the trusteeship of CEIST. The school is Co-Educational and currently has approximately 800 students and over 60 teachers as well as a range of ancillary and support staff. The school has a Board of Management comprised of Trustee Nominees, Teacher Nominees and Parent Nominees. The Board of Management delegates the day-to-day running of the school to the Principal. The school supports the principles of inclusiveness, equality of access and parental choice in relation to enrolment. In supporting these principles it also recognizes the rights of the Trustees CEIST, the Religious and Educational Philosophy of the Sisters of Mercy and the funding and resources available.

Mercy Philosophy of Education

Inspired by the vision of Catherine McAuley, Mercy Education is committed to holistic development and to the achievement of the full potential of each student, particularly those who are disadvantaged or marginalised. It is a process informed and influenced by the teaching and example of Jesus Christ and is conducted in an atmosphere of care, respect and joy. Mercy Education is committed to ongoing whole school development in collaboration and partnership with the Board of Management, Staff, Students, Parents/Guardians and the wider community.

CEIST Core Values

The Core Values of CEIST are:

- Promoting Spiritual & Human Development
- Achieving Quality in Teaching and Learning
- Showing Respect for Every Person

- Creating Community
- Being Just and Responsible

Fire Safety Policy Statement

It is the objective of the Board of Management of Our Lady's Secondary School Castleblayney to provide a safe place of work for its employees, students, contractors and visitors and for all of those affected by its activities. The Board of Management of Our Lady's Secondary School has established a Fire Safety Policy. It is the duty of the Board of Management to ensure that adequate resources are provided so that sufficient provision is made for fire safety.

Implementation of the policy is the responsibility of all staff of the school under the overall direction of the Principal assisted by the members of the Fire Safety Committee and all members of staff.

Safe working is a condition of employment. Every employee will assume responsibility for working safely. The success of the programme depends upon the co-operation of staff. All staff should be aware of their responsibilities under the Safety Health and Welfare at Work Act 1989.

A copy of the Safety Statement and appropriate Ancillary Safety Statements will be available to each School/Department and in the school office.

Introduction

The school has an active policy in relation to fire safety. It aims to:

- a) Increase awareness of fire safety within the school community.
- b) Identify and eliminate or control hazards to the greatest extent feasible.
- c) Develop safe evacuation practices.

Role of the Principal

The Principal, as Safety Officer, has overall responsibility for ensuring that the school is provided with the means to meet its statutory obligations for the fire safety. This includes:

- a) To lead and direct the Fire Safety Committee.
- b) Under the direction of the Board of Management to ensure that adequate resources are provided so that sufficient provision is made for fire safety.
- c) To ensure that those responsible for fire safety discharge their duties.
- d) To promote through the Fire Safety Committee a fire safety culture.

- e) To facilitate and ensure that each Subject Department complete a fire safety audit. Each Subject Department must ensure that hazards in their areas are identified, the risks are assessed and the remedial/recommended action is taken when necessary
- f) To periodically instruct that a fire drill be carried out, with an aim of twice per school year.

Role of Fire Safety Committee

This committee consists of Eddie Kelly (Principal and Safety Officer); Jane Treanor and Darren Bishop (Deputy Principals), Enda Tourish (A.S.T.I. School Steward), Tony Graham (S.N.A.), Hugh Carragher and Stephen Smyth (Caretakers). The role of the committee is to:

- a) Ensure fire drills are carried out and monitored.
- b) Check with teachers that all students are accounted for at assembly points when a fire drill takes place.
- c) Review each fire drill with a view to improving practice
- d) Provide feedback to staff re. Fire safety.
- e) Ensure all rooms have a current evacuation plan
- f) Ensure students are aware of fire evacuation procedures.
- g) Consult with staff re. Fire evacuation procedures.
- h) Ensure that the various components of the Fire Safety Policy are communicated to all staff, students, visitors and contractors.
- i) Carry out a fire safety audit of all school fire equipment on an annual basis or more often if necessary.
- j) Identify training needs and facilitate training where necessary and appropriate.
- k) Ensure employee consultation and distribution of necessary information to students on fire safety matters.
- l) Ensure all contractors are familiar with fire drills and evacuation procedures whilst on the premises; they should also be given a copy of the evacuation with their designated assembly point shown. This is the responsibility of the Fire Safety Committee.
- m) Ensure that the various components of the Fire Safety Policy are communicated to all staff, students, visitors and contractors.
- n) Carry out a fire safety audit of all school fire equipment on an annual basis or more often if necessary.
- o) Advise all employees on the nature and location of fire equipment and how it might be operated.
- p) Ensure all employees are instructed in evacuation procedures.

Role of Class teacher

- a) Teachers should ensure they have a copy of all class rolls available to them for every class. A copy of all class rolls should also be available in every classroom for substitute teachers.
- b) Ensure that there is an evacuation map posted in a prominent place in each classroom he/she uses.
- c) Ensure students leave their room in an orderly fashion and follow the designated route to the appropriate assembly point when the fire alarm is activated.
- d) Ensure all doors are closed when leaving the school building.

- e) Accompany their students to the designated assembly area.
- f) Ensure students line up in an orderly and quiet fashion as quickly as possible at the designated assembly area.
- g) Take a class roll as quickly as possible and if there are any students unaccounted for bring it to the attention of a member of the Fire Safety Committee immediately.

Role of student

Students must not endanger themselves or others by their actions or omissions. Thus they must:

- a) Take reasonable care of their own safety and the safety of others.
- b) Co-operate fully with all fire safety rules and regulations issued by the Board of Management of Our Lady's Secondary School.
- c) Co-operate with those with responsibility for safety.
- d) Not interfere or misuse any specified items of safety equipment or any safety device.
- e) Use equipment only if authorised and properly trained.
- f) Report any incident, dangerous occurrence, defective equipment or potential safety hazard to the teaching staff or principal.
- g) Not access or use laboratory or workshop facilities and equipment except under supervision of their teacher.
- h) Not activate any fire alarm- such an action will be viewed as a serious breach of discipline and will result in an appropriate sanction.

Role of School Secretary

The school secretary is central to the smooth operation of a fire drill or actual evacuation. On hearing the fire alarm the secretary is charged with the responsibility to place a phone call to the emergency services. This number should be displayed in a prominent location, in the event of a non-administration staff member placing the call. Help should be sought, if required, from

- a) The fire service
- b) The ambulance service
- c) An Garda Siochana
- d) Local G.P. services

Contractors

The following responsibilities are allocated to contractors:

- a) All contractors must sign the visitors sign in book at the front office when they arrive at the school to carry out works.
- b) All contractors will be expected to comply with the schools policy for fire safety and must ensure that their own health and safety statement is made available whilst work is being carried out.

- c) All contractors must take part in all fire drills and evacuation procedures whilst on the premises and should be given a copy of the evacuation map with their designated assembly point shown. This is the responsibility of the Fire Safety Committee.
- d) All work must be carried out in accordance with relevant statutory provisions and taking into account the safety of others on the site. The contractor must have adequate insurance cover.
- e) Contractors must not commence with any work on the premises or project site until the fire safety procedures relevant to the planned work and agreed with the Principal are in place.
- f) Contractors will take reasonable care of themselves and others who may be affected by their acts or omissions and will co-operate as appropriate with Our Lady's Secondary School Principal and designated employees.
- g) All plant and equipment brought onto the site by contractors must be safe and in good working order.
- h) All transformers, generators, extension leads, plugs and sockets must be suitable for industrial use and in good condition.
- i) Contractors must comply with any safety instructions given by Our Lady's Secondary School.
- j) Our Lady's Secondary School may carry out safety inspections. Contractors informed of any hazards or defects identified during these inspections will be expected to take immediate action.
- k) The Principal must be notified of any material or substance brought onto the site which has, fire or explosive risks. Such materials must be stored and used in accordance with current regulations and recommendations.
- l) Contractors are not allowed to use equipment owned by the school unless written permission is received from the Principal.

Hazard Identification

Nature of Hazard

A fire hazard is any object, condition or practice which can cause an injury or a burn. There is general recognition of many common hazards, e.g. cooking, soldering, welding, chemical burns, etc. There is a need to recognise that unsafe working is equally hazardous and can cause serious injury.

Common causes of accidents are categorised as Physical, Chemical, and Human Factors.

Physical

These are burns of a first to third degree nature. The main risk is in a kitchen canteen or laboratory, where someone manhandles or comes in contact with a substance through trips or slips. The teacher in charge has a duty of care to ensure good housekeeping practice prevails, in the event of a physical burn first aid should be applied at the scene

Chemical

Chemical substances of some sort are used in different areas of the school. They range from common everyday products like glues and correction fluids, cleaning agents to acids etc. In most cases the hazards are well documented and information is available on safety precautions to be taken. Regulations require chemicals to be labelled according to their hazards. Manufacturers and suppliers are legally required to provide information on the safety and health risks of any chemical substances, usually supplied in the form of Material Data Sheets. The data supplied includes information on immediate problems, e.g. flammability, likelihood of explosion, long-term effects of exposure, likelihood of skin problems, and likelihood of chest problems.

Human Factors

Certain accidents and setting off of the fire alarm are attributed to human factors. All false alarms are to be taken seriously, evacuate first investigate once it is clear to all management and fire services that a hoax has taken place.

Fire Safety

(a) Fire Protection

Fire extinguishers, hose reels and fire blankets are provided and correctly sited to meet statutory and insurance requirements.

All firefighting equipment is tested and serviced annually. In accordance with the recommendation of the appropriate Irish Standard for fire equipment, 20% of fire extinguishers will be discharged each year and relevant employees trained in the use of the equipment.

Fire extinguishers colour codes:

Fire Risk: See below	Water RED	Carbon Dioxide BLACK	Dry Powder BLUE	Fire Blanket RED
Paper, Wood, Textiles, Fabric	Yes		Yes	
Flammable Liquids		Yes	Yes	
Flammable Gases		Yes	Yes	
Electrical Hazards		Yes	Yes	
Vehicle Protection			Yes	
Kitchen				Yes

Never direct water at any electrical installation, machinery or wiring
All fire exits and emergency paths or exits are clearly marked.

(b) Prevention

- (a) Regular fire drills are held.
- (b) Students are made aware of fire prevention

Liaison with relevant authorities takes place as is necessary.

c) Evacuation

An evacuation procedure has been prepared and is provided for each employee. Evacuation drills will take place at least twice per year or more frequently if required. Employees are reminded to familiarise themselves with the procedures so that a fast and effective evacuation of the premises can be completed in the event of an emergency.

Fire Assembly points

1. On the Astro Turf Pitch

- 1st Years
- 2nd Years
- 3rd Years
- 4th Years
- 5th Years
- 6th Years
- S.E.N. & Resource Students

2. Outside Astro Turf Pitch at the back of the Gym

- All teaching staff who have not got a teaching group at the time of the alarm.
- Ancillary Staff
- Contractors

Policy Ratified: February 29th 2024

Chairperson of the Board of Management: *Dr. Gary Carville*

Review Date: 2026