

St. Gerard's
School & Support Services



Health & Safety Policy

Aim

The aim of this Health and Safety Policy is to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, a safe, secure and healthy environment for all pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors and contractors. As a special school, we recognise that pupils may have complex needs, including mobility, medical, sensory, behavioural and communication needs. Health and safety arrangements therefore take account of:

- Individual pupil risk assessments
- Reasonable adjustments
- Medical and personal care plans
- Positive behaviour support and de-escalation strategies

Responsibilities

Board of Governors

The Board of Governors has overall responsibility for ensuring that effective health and safety arrangements are in place.

Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

- Implementing this policy
- Ensuring statutory compliance
- Delegating operational duties appropriately

Health and Safety Co-ordinator

The Health and Safety Co-ordinator is responsible for:

- Day-to-day monitoring of health and safety
- Co-ordinating risk assessments
- Maintaining records and liaising with the EA and external contractors

All Staff

All staff must:

- Take reasonable care for their own safety and that of others
- Follow agreed procedures and guidance
- Report hazards, incidents and near misses promptly

Emergency Evacuation and Fire Safety

- Fire drills are carried out at least once per term
- Drills are adapted where necessary to meet individual pupil needs
- Lessons learned from drills are recorded and reviewed

Fire Safety Checks

- Fire alarm tests: weekly
- Emergency lighting, extinguishers and fire equipment: regularly inspected
- Lifts: inspected and maintained in line with statutory guidance

Records are maintained and submitted as required to the Education Authority.

Evacuation Procedures

- On hearing the continuous fire alarm, everyone must evacuate immediately
- Pupils and staff assemble at designated assembly points
- The lift must not be used during an evacuation
- Individual Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) are in place where required

New staff, substitutes and students are briefed on evacuation procedures as part of induction.

First Aid and Medical Needs

- Qualified First Aiders are available on site at all times
- Lists of current First Aiders are displayed and updated annually

Accidents and Incidents

- All accidents are recorded using the EA online accident reporting system
- Head injuries and serious incidents are reported immediately to SLT
- Emergency services are contacted by ringing 999 where required

First Aid Equipment

- First Aid kits are located in designated areas, including reception, PE, and Key Stages Coordinators.
- Specialist medical equipment (e.g. epilepsy rescue medication) is held and managed in line with individual healthcare plans

Smoking, Vaping and Substance Use

The school operates a strict no-smoking and no-vaping policy across the entire school site, including buildings and grounds.

Catering and Food Safety

- Meals are provided and supervised in a safe and hygienic manner
- Dietary, allergy and feeding needs are managed through individual care plans
- Staff involved in feeding or personal care follow agreed training and protocols

Office and Workplace Safety

The school ensures compliance with workplace regulations, including:

- Appropriate room temperature (minimum 16°C for seated work)
- Clean, organised working environments
- Adequate lighting and ventilation
- Safe use of display screen equipment (DSE)

Educational Visits and Off-Site Activities

All educational visits must:

- Be approved by the Principal or Vice-Principal
- Include a completed and approved Risk Assessment
- Have appropriate staffing ratios
- Have written parental consent
- Include appropriate staffing ratios and supervision

Seat belts must be worn on minibuses, and a First Aid kit must be taken on all trips. Individual pupil medical and behavioural needs are considered carefully.

Practical Activities and Specialist Rooms

Staff must:

- Ensure pupils are trained and supervised appropriately
- Carry out risk assessments for activities involving tools, equipment or materials
- Ensure protective equipment is used where required

Rooms not in use should be secured, and equipment safely stored. Emergency evacuation routes are displayed in all rooms.

Tools and equipment must be stored safely. Worktops should be kept free from waste materials and tools which might cause injury. Floors must be kept free of obstacles, obstructions, oil, grease etc. The risk of accidents may be minimised through correct use of tools and equipment. A clear demonstration of their use and careful supervision is necessary. Regular maintenance must be carried out.

Students should know the procedures to be followed in case of an emergency evacuation. Class teachers are to make all students aware of the Emergency Evacuation from each room at the start of the school year.

Those in charge of dangerous machines should take care to safeguard them against misuse. Machines should be used only for the purposes designed. Guards should be provided and used. Some machinery should be used only by the teacher or technician.

Teachers should take all possible precautions to minimise the risk of accidents when using electrical equipment and should be aware of suitable action to be taken in the event of an accident, including the application of resuscitation.

All electrical equipment should be inspected regularly.

Pupils should be instructed in the correct methods of carrying edge tools and instructed in holding devices.

It is essential that pupils be given sound training in the use of hand tools. Misuse of tools should never be tolerated. Hand lever shears and guillotines should never be used by a pupil not properly instructed in their operation or without supervision.

Risk Assessment and Positive Behaviour Support

Risk assessment is a core part of school practice.

- Individual risk assessments are completed where a pupil may present a risk to themselves or others
- Positive Behaviour Support Plans and, where necessary, Positive Handling Plans are in place
- All relevant staff are informed and trained accordingly
- Physical intervention is used only as a last resort and in line with agreed training and policy

School Premises and Site Safety

- Formal inspections of the premises are completed at least once per term
- Identified hazards are reported and addressed promptly
- All staff remain vigilant and report concerns immediately

Monitoring and Review

This policy is:

- Monitored regularly by SLT
- Reviewed annually or sooner if required
- Updated in response to changes in legislation or school context