

## CODE OF BEHAVIOUR 2023-2024

### Ethos

*The Catholic ethos is extremely important to us in St. Finian's College. We seek to develop a sense of community that attempts to live out the teaching of Christ, especially in our treatment of others. The values of Respect, Accountability, Fairness and Honesty are what are most important in our school community. These core qualities underpin the relationships in our school in all of our interactions with each other. We aim to be restorative in our approach.*

### **Restorative Practice**

Restorative Practice is based on a set of core values. The core values include respect, and being respectful of everyone. It is the promotion of empathy and having the skill set to find solutions to specific problems. People learn to respect each other. By showing empathy, we are able to harness the notion of fairness in our relationships. Where conflict arises, it is the ability to resolve conflict and repair harm to a relationship in a collaborative manner.

Restorative Practice allows for building trust between people. It provides a platform for dealing with conflict in a healthy manner.

Our code has been developed in partnership with the Board of Management, Staff, Students and Parents. It is hoped that adherence to this code will allow each student to achieve to their full potential during their time in St Finian's College.

This is in keeping with Section 23 (2) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, and is in accordance with the Guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB).

We, in St Finian's, would like each student to be happy at school and to benefit fully from their post-primary education. High standards of behaviour are expected to protect the values we seek to uphold. Each student can make a positive contribution towards maintaining those high standards in line with our Christian ethos.

**St Finian's College Code of Excellence is a set of standards, practices and procedures designed to encourage and reinforce positive behaviour, and maintain an orderly and effective learning environment for all students and members of staff.**

*Admission to the College is on the understanding that parents and students accept the code of behaviour of the College.*

### **Our code applies at the following times:**

- During the school day, including before and after class, and at break times.
- While wearing the school uniform.
- While travelling to and from school.
- While using school transport.
- While on school field trips, tours or exchanges.
- While involved with or supporting teams or any extra-curricular activity.
- While on online platforms

## Promotion of positive behaviour

**We, in St. Finian's College, will always try to:**

- promote a respectful atmosphere which creates a positive and safe environment for our school community.
- develop positive relationships between students, staff and parents/guardians.
- encourage students to participate fully in all aspects of learning.

**This is established by:**

- being a Restorative Practice school.
- easing the transition from primary to secondary school for our pupils and parents.
- having a Pastoral Care Team comprised of Principal, Deputy Principals, Year Heads, Class Tutors, Guidance Counsellors, School Chaplain, School Prefects, and Mentors who support our students during their time in the college.
- having our Mentor Programme where first year students are mentored by our senior students. Our younger students feel better supported having older students to speak to and to ask questions about life as a student.
- our school community modelling respectful behaviour.
- involving our Student Council in the decision making process.
- affirming positive behaviour through our House System.
- rewarding groups within the school for positive contributions to school life.
- acknowledging academic and extra-curricular achievement in our annual awards ceremony
- highlighting achievement and positive behaviour in the daily announcements.
- reinforcing positive behaviour at class and year group assemblies.
- students & parents/guardians accepting our Anti Bullying Policy
- students & parents/guardians accepting our code of behaviour by reading and signing it before they enrol in the school.
- recognising the importance of the Dignity in the Workplace Charter for our school community

## Class rules/ Class conduct

Co-operation with staff and fellow students is essential in creating a positive classroom environment. We encourage students to behave well and to become independent learners.

### **Respecting others includes:**

- Recognising the teachers' right to teach and the students' right to learn
- Dealing respectfully with staff and each other at all times.
- Treating my friends and members of my class well.
- Following the teachers' instructions.
- Being punctual to class.
- Participating in class to the best of my ability.
- having the necessary homework, text-books and equipment for class.
- Being respectful of school property, public property and other people's property.
- Understanding the importance of a persons' dignity.

### **Behaviour which is disrespectful and un-cooperative will not be accepted.**

In the event of a student causing difficulties in class, the class teacher will deal with issues that arise. If the unacceptable behaviour escalates, it will be addressed by class Tutor, Year Head, Guidance Counsellors, Deputy Principals or Principal, as appropriate.

## Curriculum

**Junior Cycle:** Our students study 7 core subjects: English, Irish, Maths, Religious Education, Science, History and Geography. Students also choose 3 option subjects.

*Students who are awarded full Schola or Associate Schola places in 1<sup>st</sup> year must take Music as one of their options to Junior Cycle.*

**Senior Cycle:** Our students study 6 core subjects: English, Irish, Maths, Non-exam Religion, PE and Careers. Students also choose 4 option subjects. If students opt for LCVP in 5<sup>th</sup> yr, it is understood that they will complete the programme to Leaving Certificate.

## Attendance/Punctuality

**Attendance is recorded each morning. Each student is responsible for swiping their attendance.**

### **A student card is mandatory for all students.**

**Regular attendance** is essential. **Full and half day absences should be explained** to the school secretary by an email from the parent to [secretary@stfinianscollege.ie](mailto:secretary@stfinianscollege.ie) before 10am. Parents will receive a text message where no explanation has been offered for a student's absence. Please ensure that contact details are up to date.

The **National Education Welfare Board – TUSLA** must be informed of any student who has missed 20 days or more. A letter at 12 days' absence will be sent by the Attendance Officer. This must

always be complied with even if there is a genuine reason for the absence, for example, illness. Parents will also be notified by letter should this arise.

**Punctuality** is important. **Late-comers are required to swipe in at** the office on arrival to school. Students who present late to class without a valid reason will have their lateness recorded on VSWare. The Attendance Officer may speak with students and their parents/guardians if punctuality is an issue.

A student who absents themselves from class and/or leaves the college without permission is liable to be suspended.

### **Students Leaving School Early**

#### **Illness**

- If a student is ill, they should report to the school office.
- **If a student is very unwell and needs to go home,** the student's parent/guardian will be contacted by the office and it will be arranged for the student to be collected where possible. The parent/guardian rings the school on arrival for collection and the student exits the building.
- Parents/Guardians must leave a contact number with the school for this purpose or any other emergency
- We encourage parents to inform the school of instances of Infectious Illness (we assure all parents/guardians of absolute confidentiality regarding disclosure of sensitive health information). Parents/Guardians will be informed of any outbreak of serious infections within the school. Communication will be guided by Public Health Advice.

**Students should not contact home themselves without reporting to the office.**

#### **Appointments**

All medical and dental appointments should be arranged, if possible, outside of school hours.

- Where a student wishes to leave the school premises, the parent/guardian must email the school office. **All students under 18 years of age must be collected by a parent/guardian (or by an adult with parental consent) when leaving school early. This is the law. The school is not allowed to release any student under the age of 18 during school hours.**
- Students over 18 years may sign themselves out for appointments (with parental consent by email).
- The secretary notes on VSWare early leavers.
- Transition Year students' parents/guardians give signed consent at the beginning of the year for students to leave the school only on Transition Year business as overseen by a member of staff.

**Students may not leave the school grounds during school hours without permission. A student who leaves the college grounds without permission is liable to be suspended.**

#### **Home-School Communication**

Parents/Guardians have access to our Information System VSWare. On VSWare each student has a profile page showing Term Reports, Attendance, Punctuality, Behaviour to allow parents/guardians to monitor progress. Each parent has a username and password. It is very important that parent's/guardian's details are up to date on our systems. If you have not received your username, please contact the school office at 0449348313 or [secretary@stfinianscollege.ie](mailto:secretary@stfinianscollege.ie)

- End of term and other reports as well as the annual Parent/Teacher meeting inform parents/guardians of general progress.
- Parents/guardians are always welcome to visit the school **by appointment only** to discuss their child's progress or to notify the school of any changes in their family circumstances.
- Parents/guardians will be notified by text or by email of changes to school calendar.

Parents/guardians are asked to check the VSWare system to remain informed as to their child's daily progress.

### **Journal**

The School Journal is an important source of information. It is the responsibility of each student to ensure their journal is maintained well and without graffiti. The Journal contains both our Code of Behaviour and our Anti-Bullying policies. It is important that both of these are signed each year.

#### **The Journal is designed to:**

- Record homework given on a daily basis.
- Provide important information and support
- be a source of communication with students.

**Each student should have their St. Finian's College Journal with them in every class and it is important that students bring the journal home each evening.**

### **Homework**

*Homework is key to success.*

- Homework should be recorded in the journal at the end of each class, even if the teacher is posting homework to Google classroom.
- Students should complete their class work and homework, both oral and written to the best of their ability.
- Parents/Guardians will be informed **by the class teacher** if a student is not considered to be working to their potential. Teachers may notify parents where they are concerned about a student in their class. Please refer to your child's profile on VSWare.
- Students are asked to adhere to the guidelines for the completion of projects, classroom assignments and work assigned by the teacher. Deadlines are set by the Department of Education and should be met.

*Parental support of our Homework policy is greatly appreciated.*

## Damage to Property

On occasion, students who cause damage to school property/school furniture, property of members of the school community will be asked to replace/repair the item or to pay a sum to compensate for the loss/damage of the item.

The school policy is to invoice the parent/guardian the cost to replace/repair damage caused by their child.

The school does not accept responsibility for this damage

We have a CCTV system which assists the school leaders to be vigilant re property of students, please do not leave personal items unattended. The school does not accept responsibility for any loss/damage to personal property.

## Uniform/ Personal Appearance

**In the interest of all students, full school uniform is to be worn:**

- on school premises
- when coming to and leaving school each day
- during in-house and state examinations
- on school excursions or at school functions

and when requested by school staff and/or management.

Our School uniform is available from Tot's Paradise, Mullingar and from the Uniform Boutique Mullingar.

Our PE Uniform is supplied by KC Sports: [kcsports.ie/collections/st-finians-college-mullingar](https://kcsports.ie/collections/st-finians-college-mullingar)

**Essential items of school uniform include:**

### **Senior Cycle students:**

- Crested navy jumper, crested navy polo shirt with navy trousers or check skirt.
- School Jacket with Crest

### **Transition Year students:**

- Have the option of purchasing a Transition Year Half Zip

### **Junior Cycle students:**

- Crested green jumper, crested navy polo shirt with navy trousers or check skirt.
- School Jacket with Crest

**Essential items for all students**

- All students must wear black footwear. **All footwear must be completely black with no other colours. Branded white footwear / white soled footwear is not allowed.**

- Black or Navy plain socks should be worn
- P.E. Uniform: KC Sports supply our PE uniform. It can be ordered online at [kcsports.ie/collections/st-finians-college-mullingar](https://kcsports.ie/collections/st-finians-college-mullingar). Please wear supportive runners.
- A navy fleece with school crest is available from Tots Paradise in Mullingar. **This is a non-compulsory uniform item.**

**Please note:**

- **Students should not substitute an alternative item of clothing for a uniform item of clothing.**
- **Hoodies are not accepted as uniform at any time.**
- **No uniform tracksuit bottoms are allowed in classes unless it is PE class.**
- **If a pupil comes to school without their correct uniform parents/guardians will be contacted and asked to provide the correct uniform. Students may not attend classes if out of uniform.**
- **Items of uniform should be replaced when outgrown or worn out. If any student needs help to replace an item of uniform, please go to the school office and speak with our secretaries. We have a small range of items in stock that have been donated back to the school by past pupils on graduation which are available to families at no cost.**
- **Items of clothing which do not form part of the uniform will be confiscated and returned to the student the same day, e.g. non-uniform jackets, non-uniform shoes, etc. If the uniform violation happens a second time, the item is returned to the parent/guardian.**
- **Students are required to pay particular attention to personal appearance and to the neatness of their uniform, books and schoolbags.**

**Please note that students should ensure their name is on all items of uniform e.g. jumper & jacket.**

**Jewellery**

Pupils are asked to minimise the wearing of jewellery:

- Jewellery that may cause injury is not allowed. No expensive jewellery should be worn to school. Students may be asked to remove items of jewellery for practical subjects for Health and Safety reasons.
- No loud, colourful items allowed.

**Personal Grooming**

Students are expected to be neat and well-groomed in appearance.

- The wearing of **excessive / inappropriate make-up** is not allowed while in school uniform/ or in school.
- The wearing of **fake / artificial acrylic nails** is **not advisable** while in school on health & safety grounds.
- Hairstyles should be neat and tidy.
- **Extreme hairstyles are forbidden.** School management reserves the right to decide whether a particular hairstyle is acceptable or not. Home will be notified in the event of breaches.
- Head coverings on religious grounds should be plain navy blue or black.

**The school would like full co-operation from parents/guardians in ensuring their child is in correct uniform at all times.**

**Please note that the school is the final arbiter with regard to personal appearance**

### **Mobile Phones/Smart Devices**

*The following guidelines were drawn up in order to ensure the quality of teaching and learning in St Finian's College is not interfered with by the use of mobile phones/smart devices and other electronic devices.*

Mobile phones should be left at home where possible. Access to the school phone is available to students.

- **Where a student is in possession of a phone, the phone should be switched off.**
- Where a student requests a toilet break during a class time, **their mobile phone must be placed on the teacher's desk** before leaving the classroom.
- **Mobile phones should not be used or seen in the school building, on corridors, in the school canteen, in the school cinema.**
- Mobile phones cannot be used to take photographs without permission.
- Mobile phones cannot be used to record without permission.
- Mobile phones cannot be used to take videos without permission.
- Mobile phones may be used under the direction of a teacher only.

Students are responsible for the content on their mobile phones/smart devices.

**Mobile phones found in class, in study, or on the corridors between classes without permission may be automatically confiscated with SIM card and kept for one day** in the school office.

*Parents/Guardians should be aware of advice issued to education authorities regarding the risks to young people from overuse of mobile phones/smart devices. Parents/Guardians should also be warned that any student with a mobile phone which has internet access can easily download inappropriate pictures, jokes and illegal or inappropriate content.*

**St Finian's College cannot accept responsibility for the loss or theft of mobile phones/smart devices or personal audio devices.**

**Parents/Guardians who need to contact students in the case of emergency can do so through the school office at 044 9348313**

**Students who wish to contact their parents/guardians in the course of the school day may do so from the school office.**

**Air pods/Head phones/Smart watches have the same rules as the mobile phones.**

### **Property**

While every care is taken to protect the property of students, the college does not accept responsibility for articles lost or stolen.

While the school respects the privacy of students, it reserves the right to inspect students' bags and/or jackets **with prior consent** in the interest of Health & Safety and the good of all the student body.



### **Fire Drill/ School Evacuation Procedures.**

Evacuation routes and assembly points are illustrated on 'Fire Exit Map' in each classroom. It is important that you are aware of these and follow the correct procedure as follows:

#### **Fire Siren activates for FIRST time:**

- Remain in classroom/ current location.

#### **Fire Siren activates for SECOND time:**

- Teacher/Student(s) exit the room in orderly manner.
- Leave all belongings in situ, these are replaceable you are not.
- Staff/ Students out of classroom during ongoing alarm must exit building and locate with their class at the designated 'Assembly Point' as per 'Fire Exit Map' of relevant classroom.
- Always follow the designated exit route as illustrated on 'Exit Map' in each classroom unless the prescribed route is inaccessible.
- Do not run and co-operate with each other/instructions.
- DO NOT USE LIFT.
- Always descend stairs on the right hand side as usual.
- Students remain with Teacher/Supervisor at all times.
- Assemble in line at designated 'Assembly Point'.
- Keep all access routes/points clear for emergency personnel/vehicles/equipment.
- Teacher/Supervisor calls attendance and class remain together.
- DO NOT RE-ENTER the building, await further instruction.
- Principal/Deputy Principals/ Health and Safety Representative will permit re-entry to building, await their instruction(s).
- Full co-operation is expected and appreciated. Keep safe.

The Health & Safety Officer in St Finian's college is Mr D Farrell.

### **Breach of expected standards**

If a student disregards school regulations, the school will impose **“In-house” sanctions**. These include:

- **Detention** may be used as an appropriate sanction for breaches of our Code of Behaviour. Students are given 24-hour notice of detention. Parents/Guardians will be contacted regarding detention so that suitable arrangements can be put in place re collection etc.
- **Confiscation:** Any items that can damage school property or cause harm to other students/staff are prohibited. If found they will be confiscated and not returned to the student. Parents/guardians will be informed.
- The school reserves **the right to withdraw school privileges** from any student **with a poor disciplinary record** i.e. school tours, school concerts, sports competitions etc.

### **Procedures for Suspensions and Expulsions.**

- If a student **continues to breach standards**, they will be advised that an extra-ordinary sanction will be imposed if the conduct does not improve. **Extra-ordinary sanctions include severe detention, internal suspension, suspension and expulsion.**
- Where an issue arises with a student which may involve suspension/expulsion, the parents/guardians together with the student involved, may be required to attend a meeting with the school authorities and will be entitled to a full impartial hearing and a right of reply.
- All negotiations in such matters will be conducted only between the College authorities and the parents/guardians of the student involved.

### **Suspension.**

Suspension is always a very serious matter and will only be used for persistent misconduct or a serious once-off incident. Where suspension is being considered, the following procedures will apply:

- The misconduct or incident will be fully investigated by appropriate personnel. Witnesses to the misconduct or incident may be interviewed. A written record of the investigation will be kept.
- The student against whom the complaint is made will always be given an opportunity to present their side of the story. A written record will be kept.
- Upon completion of the investigation, a meeting of the student, their parents/guardians and the appropriate discipline committee will be held. At this meeting the nature of the misconduct will be outlined and both the student and parents/guardians will be given a right of reply.

- If a decision to suspend is considered to be warranted, the Principal will outline the reasons for such a decision and the duration of and effective date(s) of the suspension.
- The student will be advised of the school's expectations upon their return to school. The student may be on Report Card on their return to school. This involves a daily tracker of behaviour and participation completed by the students' teachers.
- If the student's parents/guardians request that the suspension be reconsidered, they will be asked to withdraw temporarily from the meeting and the discipline committee will consider their request. After doing so the discipline committee will invite the parents/guardians and student to return and the suspension will either be reconfirmed, amended or withdrawn. The reasons for this decision will be outlined.
- All decisions to suspend will be confirmed to parents/guardians in writing.
- All suspensions will be noted in the school's suspension register.
- The National Education and Welfare Board will be notified about any student who has reached a cumulative suspension of more than twenty days.
- At the beginning of each school year the Board of Management will delegate authority to the Principal to suspend for up to three days. All suspensions will be reported to the Board of Management at their next ordinary meeting.
- The Board of Management will consider suspensions for a period longer than three days in the case of a very serious incident, requiring immediate action. In such cases the Board of management has delegated authority to the Principal to suspend for a longer period of time. This will involve consultation between the chairperson of the Board of Management and the Principal and will be confirmed by the Board of Management subsequently.
- For a very serious reason involving health and safety a student may be suspended for longer than three days by the Principal while a decision on the matter is pending from the Board of Management.
- Where the Board of Management suspends a student, and the cumulative number of days' suspension for that student exceeds twenty in any school year, parents/guardians will be informed of their right to appeal the decision to the Trustees and/or the Department of Education and Skills.

- In cases of extreme indiscipline or where other sanctions appear to have failed the matter may be referred to the Board of Management, which has the power to exclude a pupil. In such a case parents/guardians will be informed of their right of appeal to the Board.

Note: Parents/Guardians and students are asked to note that it is not possible to detail every regulation governing one's behaviour at school. Each student is accepted into the school on the understanding that they comply with the school regulations as detailed in the journal and school policies. Parents/Guardians and students are asked to re-sign the Code of Behaviour and Anti Bullying Policy at the beginning of each school year. The values of Respect, Accountability, Fairness and Honesty are what are most important in our school community.

The following actions may merit a suspension:

- In cases where the health and safety of the student or of others in the school community could be at risk, it may be necessary to suspend a student with immediate effect pending an investigation and the following of due procedures.
- A serious breach of the Code of Behaviour that indicates that the student should be removed from the school.
- Repeated less serious breaches of the Code of Behaviour that have not been rectified by other interventions and disciplinary measures short of suspension.
- Threatening and or abusive behaviour or language towards staff/students.
- Persistent bullying as per school Anti-Bullying Policy
- Leaving the school grounds without permission
- Any interference with school security or fire alarm systems
- Instigating or being involved in a physical fight on the school premises.
- Failure to turn up for detention
- Truancy i.e. missing school or classes
- Damaging school property
- Inappropriate use of mobile phone/smart device. Please see Appendix 2 Acceptable User Policy
- Stealing / Theft
- Inappropriate use of technology/chrome books
- Smoking / Vaping in the school building or school grounds. Smoking/Vaping is prohibited in accordance with government legislation. The possession of electronic cigarettes is also prohibited.
- Abusive or disparaging comments about St Finian's College, its staff on social media or otherwise.

**The possession and/or consumption of alcohol and the possession and/or use of drugs or other substances by students on the school premises, in school uniform or while representing the school is absolutely forbidden. Breach of this regulation will normally be referred to the Board of Management and/or Gardaí and may lead to expulsion from the school.**

**This list is not comprehensive and the school reserves the right to impose sanctions for other violations which it considers serious.**

**By sending your child to St Finian's College, your child, and you as parent(s)/legal guardian(s) automatically accept the school's ethos and with implicit agreement to observe the rules and regulations as set out in the schools Code of Behaviour.**

## **Expulsion.**

The Board of Management has approved this expulsion policy and its procedures having consulted with students, staff and parents/guardians. The policy has been developed in line with the guidelines issued by the National Education Welfare Board pertaining to expulsions.

The Board of Management will consider expulsion only in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. Such consideration will normally only occur following the failure of all other possible interventions to address the misbehaviour. These interventions will include following the code of behaviour and using all the counselling, psychological and appropriate psychiatric services available to the school.

### **A decision to exclude a student will require serious grounds such as:**

- A student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.
- The student's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to health and safety.
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.
- The student being uncontrollable or grossly insubordinate to school management or other staff members and not amenable to any form of school discipline or authority.
- Parents/Guardians being unable or refusing to exercise their responsibility for the student's behaviour
- The student's behaviour being a danger to themselves or to others
- When guarantees of reasonable behaviour following repeated suspensions are not forthcoming or are not being met
- The student's conduct acting as a source of serious bad example and having an adverse influence on other students in the school.

### **Expulsion for first offence**

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence. The kinds of behaviour that will result in a proposal to expel on the basis of a single breach of the Code of Behaviour include but are not limited to:

- A serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
- A serious act of violence or serious physical assault
- Supplying drugs to others in or out of school
- Sexual assault
- Sexual harassment

### **Where expulsion is being considered the following procedure will apply:**

Step 1. *A detailed investigation will be carried out.*

- The parents/guardians of the student involved will be informed in writing about the details of the alleged serious misconduct and the proposed investigation.
- The parents/guardians and student will be given every opportunity, including meeting with Principal and/or appropriate discipline committee, to respond to the complaint.
- If parents/guardians fail to meet the Principal when requested to do so, they will be invited to a further meeting and advised that if they fail to meet with the Principal the school will regrettably be still obliged to make a decision in the matter and respond to the alleged misconduct.

Step 2. *A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.*

**The Principal will:**

- Inform the parents/guardians and the student that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.
- Ensure that the parents/guardians have all the records of the allegations against the student, and written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.
- Provide the Board of Management with the same records as those given to the parents/guardians.
- Notify the parents/guardians of the date of the hearing by the Board of Management and invite them to the hearing.
- Advise the parents/guardians that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management and also that they can be accompanied at the hearing.
- Ensure that the parents/guardians are given adequate notice of the date of the hearing in order to allow them to prepare for same.

Step 3. *Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendations and the holding of a hearing.*

**It is the responsibility of the Board of Management to ensure that the investigation has been properly conducted. When the Board of Management decides to consider expulsion it will:**

- Hold a hearing.
- At the hearing the Principal, parents/guardians or a student over the age of 18 will put their case to the Board of Management in each other's presence. Each party will be allowed to question the evidence of the other party directly. The parents/guardians or student over the age of 18 can make a case for the lessening of the sanction. In the conduct of the hearing, the Board of Management will take care to ensure that they are, and are seen to be, impartial as between the Principal and the student. After both sides have been heard, the Board of Management will ensure that the Principal and the parents/guardians or student are not present for the Board of Management's deliberations on the matter.

Step 4. *The Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.*

- Having heard from all the parties, it is the responsibility of the Board of Management to decide whether or not the alleged misconduct is substantiated and, if so, whether or not expulsion is the appropriate sanction. If the Board of Management decides to exclude the student, the following will apply:
- The Board of Management will notify the Education and Welfare Office (EWO) in writing of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion.
- The student cannot be excluded for twenty days from the date on which the Education Welfare Officer receives written notification from the Board of Management of its proposed expulsion.
- The Board of Management will inform the parents/guardians in writing about its conclusions and will also inform them that the Education Welfare Officer has been so informed.

Step 5. *Consultations arranged by the Education Welfare Officer.*

**Within twenty days of receipt of a notification from the Board of Management of its opinion that a student should be excluded, the Education Welfare Officer will:**

- Make all reasonable effort to meet with the Principal, parents/guardians and the student, and anyone else who may be of assistance.
- Convene a meeting of those parties who agree to attend. The discussions may result in an agreement that avoids expulsion, or it may focus on alternative educational possibilities.
- While these discussions and consultations are ongoing, the Board of Management may suspend the student, if their presence in the school could pose a threat to the health and safety of other students or would interfere with the teaching and learning of other students.

Step 6. *Confirmation of the decision to exclude.*

**When the twenty-day period following notification to the Education Welfare Officer has elapsed, and where the Board of Management is still of the view that the student should be excluded, the Board of Management will formally confirm the decision in writing to the parents/guardians or student aged over 18.**

- The parents/guardians will be notified immediately that the expulsion will now proceed.
- The parents/guardians and the student will be told of their right to appeal and will be supplied with the standard form on which to lodge an appeal.
- A formal record will be made of the decision to exclude the student.

### **Right to Appeal.**

A parent, or a student aged over 18 years, may appeal a decision to exclude to the Trustees and/or to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. The National Education and Welfare Board may also lodge an appeal on behalf of the student.

**The school reserves the right to apply its Code of Behaviour in respect of negative behaviour that occurs outside of school and is not school related, if in the opinion of the principal and/or the BOM, the alleged negative behaviour has created a hostile environment at school for a member of the school community, or has infringed on the rights of a member of the school community and/or has materially or substantially disrupted the education process of the orderly operation of the school.**

ACCEPTANCE OF THE RULES

We have read the rules and regulations of the College and are willing to abide by them.

Signed:..... ( Parent/Guardian)

Date:.....

I have read the rules and regulations of the College and am willing to abide by them.

Signed:..... ( Pupil )

Date:.....

After consultation with the school community, this Code of Behaviour was ratified by The Board of management on **20 April 2023**.

It will be reviewed every two years.

**Signed:** Mr Aidan Farrell **Date:** 20/4/2023

**Chairperson**

**Signed:** Mr John Mc Hale **Date:** 20/4/2023

**Principal**





## **BEHAVIOURS OF CONCERN POLICY 2023-2024**

A behaviour of concern policy is a document that outlines how a school or an organisation will respond to behaviours that pose a risk of harm to the person or others. The policy may include the use of physical intervention in exceptional circumstances, the development of individual behaviour plans, and the provision of training and support for staff and students. This policy aims to protect the safety and wellbeing of everyone involved.

St Finian's College is committed to ensuring that all individuals enjoy equal access to the curriculum and to school. This document sets out the procedure for responding to and supporting people with behaviours of concern.

St Finian's College is a restorative practice school and is committed to ensuring behaviours of concern are managed in a positive and supportive way that protects both the safety of staff and other people and the rights of the individual demonstrating the behaviours of concern.

It provides support strategies in conjunction with appropriate management to prevent or significantly reduce the risk of behaviours of concern.

### **PROCEDURE**

#### ***Identifying Behaviours of Concern***

A behaviour of concern can refer to any behaviour that causes physical harm to the person or another person, destroying property resulting in the risk of harm to the person or any other person, running outside the school grounds or bringing dangerous objects to school.

Behaviours of concern can include:

- Aggression toward others
- Self-injurious behaviour
- Inappropriate social and sexual behaviour
- Self-stimulating behaviour such as excessive rocking
- Running away into the areas outside the school grounds
- Running away out onto the road beside the school or onto the main road beside the school
- Extreme withdrawal or noncompliance.

This procedure addresses the management of behaviours of concern through consultation and by providing positive support as part of an overall behaviour management policy.

***To provide support to people who may have behaviours of concern, St Finian's College staff will:***

- Respond to behaviours of concern in a positive, encouraging way
- Discuss how to manage the behaviours of concern with the person as appropriate and with members of their natural support network e.g., parent/guardian, social worker, therapist etc.
- Help develop a behaviour support plan that is proactive understanding the factors that may affect behaviour.

***All human beings behave according to a variety of factors that can include but are not limited to:***

- Personal life experiences
- Attitudes and expectations of the individual and others
- Physical and social environments
- Physical, mental, and oral health
- The cognitive and physical impacts
- Medications they take
- Discrimination, for example, being denied access to education
- Poor family access to information, support, or physical environments
- Exclusion from activities, conversations, and decisions.

### ***Proactive Support Strategies***

1. Where behaviours of concern are identified, modifications to the environment and class work will be made where practicable to reduce or prevent the behaviour occurring.

2. Where available, the individual's behaviour support plan will be referred to.

3. If appropriate, a staff member will talk to the individual about their behaviour, and problem solve any strategies which could help them reduce the need to use behaviour of concern to have their needs met.

4. Any modifications or changes will be included into the individual's support plan and all staff will be made aware.

### **When behaviours of concern arise**

If a pupil displays behaviours of concern, St Finian's College staff may need to balance the care of the individual with their duty to protect other people and also themselves.

Any actions taken or strategies used should be in direct accordance with the person's profile information and Positive Behaviour Support Plan.

***Where behaviours of concern arise staff should, taking care not to put themselves at risk:***

- Try to redirect the individual
- Remove the individual who is displaying the behaviour of concern away from other people, or if this is unsuccessful move other people away to a safe distance
- Talk to the individual who is displaying a behaviour of concern in a calm manner using short assertive communication in an attempt to diffuse the situation
- Refer to the individual's Behaviour Support Plan if one exists
- If the individual continues with the behaviour of concern and the staff member is unable to support the individual in reducing this behaviour and it is considered an emergency situation the staff should contact the class teacher/principal, who will contact the parent/guardian or the gardaí if required.
- The staff member/Volunteer should stay with the individual if possible until they are settled, or if not possible, in the area to be able to observe the individual and ensure safety.

***Where Physical Interventions are required:***

- Presence: diffuse/deescalate the situation. Stand in front of the student/s and speak calmly and quietly.
- Lead/guide/usher the student/s where you need them to go. To prevent leaving a room it may require blocking the door handle.
- Holding: 1 adult holds, both arms using hands
- Restraining: 2 adults hold using minimum force for a short time.

***Sample Situations where Physical Interventions may be required:***

- Student has a weapon intent on using it for violent purpose.
- A physical attack by a person on another or where a physical attack is about to happen.
- Throwing furniture, breaking glass where there is a possibility of harming others
- Putting themselves in danger e.g. self-harm, running off the grounds,

The Duty of Care threshold is the same level as that of the reasonably careful parent. Where intervention is required, as long as it is reasonable, proportionate and necessary our Duty of Care has been discharged.

Supervision & Supervision Time: It is vital that staff members are where they are scheduled to be. If a staff member is not in school, alternative arrangements must be made.

***Reporting Requirements of an Incident***

Students in special classes or with special educational needs have a student support file. SNAs keep detailed notes on students that are in their care. This is best practice.

Behaviour graphs can record incidents of low and high intensity aggression towards others and their frequency.

Teachers/SNAs/specialist teachers/SEN Team can be involved in arranging specific accommodations to minimise transitions which reduce instances of aggression/behaviours of concern.

Staff involved in the situation are to complete a Report at the time of the incident.

Staff involved will be debriefed after an incident and the Individual's Behaviour Management Plan evaluated.

Staff will need to discuss their own personal reactions to the incident that occurred, as well as the effectiveness of the procedures that were in place. It is important to learn from each incident.

Time is also needed to discuss the strategies that need to be implemented and maintained to prevent further issues.

The next Training for staff is August 2024 by Mason Hayes Curran.

## Appendix 2

### **Online Classes Rules/ Conduct\***

**The following are the guidelines in the event that we have online classes. They may change as new developments arise.**

#### **School Closure of building due to unforeseen circumstance**

In the event of a school building closure for all, all classes will revert to the online platform Google Classroom. Classes will take place per teacher and student timetable. In the event of a school building closure for a year group, all classes for that year group will revert to the online platform. All other classes will continue in school for all other year groups.

#### **Xbox & PlayStation Devices will run Google Classroom**

In the event that we have to revert to online learning: please note that Xbox and PlayStation devices will run the Google Classroom just as a computer or laptop or phone will. Google classroom can be opened on Xbox and PlayStation. There is not an app that you can add to your consoles. Instead, you are going to have to use the built in browsers that come on the two devices. On Xbox, it is Microsoft Edge. On PlayStation, it is the www browser. You will probably know how to find the browsers on the consoles, but if not, there is a search function you can access on the home screen.

Once the browser has been opened:

- Type in classroom.google.com in the URL bar
- A prompt for a Google account will appear
- Type in your school email and password – it doesn't end in google.com and that is ok!
- The Classroom home screen will open up

If you have a keyboard you can plug in, you will have a much easier time of navigation. Otherwise, you will have to use your controller to click on the classroom tiles, open up assignments and type.

You can also open assignments and interact with video and written instructions. You can also open attachments like Docs and Slides and type on them. This is not easy with a controller, but you can access the work and use email/google docs to submit your work or write on paper if necessary.

## **Chromebook Loan Scheme**

Students are welcome to avail of the Chromebook Loan Scheme where they have no device to access Google Classroom available to them. Contact the school office for details.

## **Daily Timetable for Live Stream/ Google Classroom in the event of reverting to online learning**

A Live Stream Classroom runs as per student timetable with slight modifications.

All classes begin on time. Teachers will need to log out at least 5 minutes before the end of a timetabled class in order to be ready to begin the next lesson on time. This allows for a movement break for students between classes and time for teachers to transition between each class.

Not all classes may be live streamed. Pre-recorded lessons may be uploaded at times.

On occasion, where a class is not live streamed, work will be left on Google Classroom instead.

## **Live streaming where a year group is not in attendance**

Students engaging online through a live streamed class should be suitably dressed for school and in a suitable location.

All student cameras should be switched on and students should be visible to the teacher.

All student mics should be muted unless the teacher directs otherwise.

Pupils are asked to log into their online classes as scheduled on their timetable.

## **Discipline**

Pupils should engage with online classes with the same respect and positive attitude as they would in a school based classroom. Online behaviour should be appropriate and respectful.

A Google Meet is provided to ensure the continuation of Teaching & Learning during periods where the school building is required to close during term time. Pupils should follow our code of behaviour.

Where serious breaches of discipline occur, a Google Meet classroom may be closed or a student may be suspended from the Google Meet classroom.

## **Privacy**

Students should have their cameras on with headphones and be on their own in a room with no other people present.

No parents/guardians are allowed to attend a Google Live Stream class.

Please do not use Google Classroom to communicate with a teacher, but rather use the teachers school email address. If necessary, parents/guardians can also notify the office at [secretary@stfinianscollege.ie](mailto:secretary@stfinianscollege.ie) if they have a query/concern they wish to have addressed.

Only students who are on the class list for that class may be present at a Live stream or use the code to gain entry to the Google Classroom. No sharing of links / codes to classes is permitted. No student would be allowed to attend a different class if the school were open.

Responsibility for a school email account rests with the student. Passwords should not be shared.

### **Absent students where the year group is in attendance**

Any student who is absent has access to Google classroom but not to Live streaming. Extenuating circumstances may necessitate an exception.

Google classroom will mention what was covered in class and list homework. E.g. German class: CD Chpt 4 Listening Unit 7, Maths: Chapter 4 Pg. 56 Qs 1-3

If a digital presentation was used in the class, the teacher may choose to share it on Google Classroom.

### **SEN provision**

Students receiving SEN supports outside the mainstream classroom will receive support from the SEN Team through email, phone calls, google meets, google classroom, etc.

Teachers are at times uploading differentiated work for students in their classrooms.

### **Unwell**

In the event that a student is unwell, they may not be in a position to log into Google classroom or complete an assignment. Pupils can email their teachers if this is the case. Teachers, if concerned about a student's progress, will check with the Year Head/Deputy Principal.

(See Guidelines on submitting work screencast video which was prepared by Mr S Murphy on our website [www.stfinianscollege.ie](http://www.stfinianscollege.ie)).

### **Attendance during school building closure**

Where the school is closed and classes are online, Attendance in Google classroom is monitored on the online platform by the teachers, the Year Head and the Deputy Principals. Parents/Guardians are notified weekly on their son/daughter's attendance levels.

St Finian's College 2023-2024

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES & ACCEPTABLE USAGE POLICY ("A.U.P.")

INTRODUCTION

These guidelines and A.U.P. have been developed to assist all employees of St Finian's College (hereinafter referred to as "the School") in making ethical, respectful and acceptable decisions about their professional and personal social media usage and to provide clear direction on the importance of protecting the School's reputation and confidential information.

Social media refers to social and professional networking platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Instagram, blogs, message boards and forums and other similar online facilities.

The guidelines and A.U.P. are not intended to prevent employees from engaging in social media but are intended to inform employees as to what is considered by the School to constitute appropriate / inappropriate social media usage and conduct.

For those employees who are members of the School's teaching staff, the guidelines and A.U.P. give effect to agreed professional protocols as prescribed by the Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers (TEACHING COUNCIL, JUNE 2012) WHICH PROVIDES THAT TEACHERS SHOULD: -

*"ensure that any communication with pupils/students, colleagues, parents, school management and others is appropriate, including communication via electronic media, such as email, texting and social networking sites."*

and

*"ensure that they do not knowingly access, download or otherwise have in their possession while engaged in school activities, inappropriate materials/images in electronic or other format."*

All employees should be mindful of what they post on social media, who can see it and how it can be linked back to the School and work colleagues. Misuse of social media can cause injury to others and can have a negative impact on the reputation of the School. Social media communications are never truly private and once information is published it becomes part of a permanent record.

Employees are **at all times prohibited from using or publishing information on social media which has the potential to negatively impact / reflect on the School and / or its employees and / or its students e.g.:** -

- publishing defamatory, abusive or offensive material concerning any employee, volunteer, member of School management, parent(s), student(s), visitor or other member of the School community;
- publishing any confidential or sensitive information concerning the School or members of the School community;
- publishing material that might reasonably be considered to have the effect of damaging the reputation of the School.

The School reserves the right to take disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, in respect of employees who engage in prohibited conduct and conduct in breach of this policy.

Given the ever developing and changing nature of social media and the internet the within guidelines and policy will be reviewed and adapted as required.

This policy should be read in conjunction with staff policies which are applicable to social media usage, in particular the dignity at work, internet and email usage, data protection, the Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers and other and disciplinary policies and procedures.

## **ACCEPTABLE USAGE POLICY**

### **A. SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE ON A SOCIAL MEDIA SITE OR PROFILE ESTABLISHED IN THE COURSE OF EMPLOYMENT WHICH RELATES TO SCHOOL BUSINESS / MATTERS**

- (i) **Seek permission:** Employees must seek or have permission from the Principal / Deputy Principal(s) before setting up a site or profile relating to School business and or School matters / registering in the School's name on social media sites, user groups, special interest forums and bulletin boards / using social media for teaching and learning purposes.
- (ii) **Property:** The property rights in a sanctioned social media account in the name of or on behalf of the School are vested in the School.
- (iii) **Responsibility:** A permitted employee is responsible for his/her social media usage, for ensuring that private and confidential information is respected and protected at all times and for compliance with the terms and conditions of the relevant social media platform.
- (iv) **Privacy & Confidential information:** Confidential information pertaining to the School, its employees, volunteers, students, parents and others in the School community must be respected and maintained at all times. Personal information about any students, parents, employees or volunteers must not be divulged or discussed on social media sites.
- (v) **Unacceptable use:** Employees must not create, publish, download or communicate material/content that could reasonably be regarded as defamatory, inappropriate, discriminatory, offensive, hostile, pornographic, damaging to the School's reputation or referring to a third person without their permission. Uploading, forwarding or linking to the aforementioned content is also unacceptable. Employees must never reveal sensitive details whether relating to the School, its employees, volunteers, students, parents and other members of the School community on social media sites.
- (vi) **Behaviour:** Postings by an employee on a social media site that are defamatory, inappropriate, discriminatory, offensive, hostile, pornographic, divulging personal data without consent or damaging to the School's reputation will be addressed pursuant to the School's disciplinary procedure and may result in disciplinary sanction up to and including dismissal.



## **B. PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE**

- (i) **Boundaries:** Personal profiles are not to be used to conduct school business or to communicate with students/parents. Online interaction with management, other employees and/or school contacts should be appropriate and professional in nature. Employees must not use the official School e-mail address when participating in personal social media / social media that is not related to the employee's job. Personal use of social media must not occur during working time but is restricted to break times at work.
- (ii) **Identity:** Where an employee chooses to identify him/herself on social media as an employee of the School, s/he must make it clear that their communications do not represent the School, its ethos, position, opinions or views. The employee must write in the first person and state clearly s/he is posting in a personal capacity and not in the course of employment or on behalf of the School and state clearly that the views expressed are his/her own and not those of the School. Employees should at all times be mindful of their communications and possible consequences.
- (iii) **Be mindful and respectful:** Employees must be mindful that their conduct not only reflects on themselves but also reflects on their professionalism and the School. Employees should exercise sound judgement, common sense and respect when participating in social media. Employees should not use insulting, offensive or disparaging language. If in doubt, don't publish or post anything. Information published online is permanent and never completely private.
- (iv) **Responsibility:** Employees are personally responsible for their posts and actions on social media.
- (v) **Privacy & Confidential information:** The obligations detailed at (A)(iv) above apply also to employees' personal social media usage. Do not divulge or discuss confidential information pertaining to the School, its employees, volunteers, students, parents and others in the School community and personal information, including photographs, of third persons (including employees, students, parents and other members of the School community) must not be posted, divulged or discussed without the permission of the person concerned.
- (vi) **Unacceptable use:** Employees must not create, publish, download or communicate material/content that could reasonably be regarded as defamatory, inappropriate, discriminatory, offensive, hostile, pornographic, damaging to the School's reputation or referring to a third person without their permission. Uploading, forwarding or linking to the aforementioned content is also unacceptable. Employees must never reveal sensitive details whether relating to the School, its employees, volunteers, students, parents and other members of the School community on social media sites.
- (vii) **Behaviour:** Postings by an employee on a social media site that are defamatory, inappropriate, discriminatory, offensive, hostile, pornographic, divulging personal data without consent or bring the School into disrepute will be addressed pursuant to the School's disciplinary procedure and may result in disciplinary sanction up to and including dismissal.

## **REPORTING**

Employees should immediately report to the Principal / Deputy Principal any inappropriate, abusive or defamatory or other unacceptable social media activity concerning the School, its employees, volunteers, students or other members of the School community. Such reports will be fully and confidentially investigated, the reported activity will be reviewed and, where appropriate, the content will be reported using the relevant online reporting mechanism.

## **ENFORCEMENT**

The School will monitor social media usage on School computers, laptops, mobiles, tablets, notebook computers, smartphones, School accounts and School user names. The foregoing IT resources are the School's property and are to be used for legitimate School business. Whilst the School will not specifically monitor social media for references to the School, its employees, volunteers, students, parents and other members of the School community, employees should not expect privacy in this regard.

A reported or suspected breach of this policy is a serious matter and will be investigated by School management pursuant to the appropriate workplace procedure. The School reserves the right to use information that is expressly prohibited by this policy and which comes to School management's attention whether through monitoring or otherwise for disciplinary purposes.

Non-compliance by employees with any aspect of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

### **C. Review of Policy**

The Board of Management after one year, and every two years thereafter will review this policy.

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting of \_\_\_\_\_  
(date)

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Chairperson

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Principal

Next review date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 4: GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL TOURS 2023-2024**

### **Policy Statement**

It is the policy of the Board of Management (BOM) of St. Finian's College, /Principal/Deputy Principals to encourage, where appropriate, extra-curricular and/or co-curricular activities which further the broader educational development of students.

### **Definition**

A school tour is defined as any group travel involving at least one overnight stay.

### **Rationale**

To ensure the safety of all participants through effective preparation and vigilant supervision so as to ensure the educational/cultural value to all concerned. When it is intended to take a group of students out of school on a school tour, the following procedure should be followed.

### **Approval**

1. The Tour Leader(s) must obtain permission from the BOM/ Principal/Deputy Principals to take students on a school tour. A general outline of the tour, including travel dates, tour company details, travel insurance, the total tour price and the general tour itinerary, should accompany the request for permission. If possible permission should be sought from the September BOM meeting.
2. Prior to seeking permission, the Tour Leaders must ensure that the proposed dates do not impinge upon the normal teaching routine of the school year.
3. All school tours must conform to the criteria as set down in the Department of Education and Science Circular M29/04 relating to Educational Tours by school groups (inside and outside the State).

### **Tour Team.**

1. A Tour Team, led by the Tour Leader(s) should be put in place as soon as possible. A decision by Management will be made on a replacement in case a member of the team should subsequently be unable to travel.
2. The Tour Team may come from different departments within the school. If a sufficient number of team members are not available within the school, other adults may come from outside the school provided they have been vetted appropriately. Tour Team members may include: (a) Teaching Staff (b) Special Needs Assistants (c) Secretarial Staff (d) Parents (e) Members of the BOM (f) Staff Partners (g) A responsible adult.
3. The Tours Leader(s) should meet the full Tour Team at the outset so as to discuss individual duties. Ideally all members of the Tour Team should be involved in organizing the tour, taking up duties in one of the following areas: (a) Tour Finances

(Leader/Deputy Leader) (b) Passports (c) E111 forms- any member of the team (d) Tour Itinerary, cultural passes, internal tours- any member of the Tour team (e) General needs-medical kit, home contact numbers, medical service contact numbers in tour area etc- any member of the team.

### **Tour Finances:**

All income and expenditure related to the tour should conform fully to the accounting practices of the school. A full account of income and expenditure should, at reasonable notice, be available to the Principal/Deputy Principals/BOM. The Tour Leader is responsible for the following financial procedures:

1. The Tour Leader must put all monies through the office on the Way2Pay system, the account name to include the tour destination and the year e.g. Paris 2019.
2. Collect the money in instalments, on specific dates.
3. Pay the deposit, other interim payments and the final payment to the tour company, by the various due dates.
4. When on tour the Tour Leader should keep account of all money spent.
5. If, for whatever reason, there is money left over at the end of the tour, it should be refunded to the parents.

### **Notice to Parents:**

1. Once permission has been granted by the BOM the parents/Guardians of the selected students should receive a circular outlining the general nature of the proposed tour.
2. The circular should specify:
  - The objectives of the tour.
  - The itinerary and duration of the tour.
  - The total cost involved and methods of payment (deadlines etc.).
  - Information concerning insurance and indemnity.
  - The general rules of behaviour to be observed.
  - If numbers are limited and a deposit is required to secure a place. (A student's record of adhering to the school's Code of Behaviour will also be taken into consideration when allocating places).
3. The circular will inform parents/guardians of their duty to make the school aware of any health and safety issues which might affect their child while on tour.
4. The signed consent of parents/guardians is an essential pre-requisite for the participation of any student on the tour.

## **Meeting Parents/Guardians before trips abroad.**

In the week before departure (or as close to this date as possible) a meeting of the parents/guardians of all students travelling on a foreign tour should be held. Where possible all students and staff travelling should attend this meeting as well. The following information will be disseminated.

1. A detailed itinerary – dates, times, locations, hotels, addresses, contact phone numbers etc.
2. Advice on a reasonable daily allowance for each student, in the currency of the country to be visited.
3. Advice on protecting their money when on tour.
4. Clarification of insurance and any other matters.

Parents/Guardians should also use the meeting to provide the Tour Leader with written information on the form provided, concerning the medical background of their child.

1. Where a student requires constant or regular medication, specific written details must be given to the Tour Leader. Parents/Guardians may request a private meeting at another time to inform the Tour Leader about the illness and the manner medication should be administered.
2. The Tour Leader should establish if a non-medical person can administer the medication.
3. Each parent/guardian must complete a form which includes medical history, contact numbers, allergies and medication to be taken. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians that a student has medication sufficient to last the entire tour.
4. In the event of a medical/dental emergency while on tour it may be necessary for the Tour Leader to act in loco parentis. The following agreement should be issued to all parents/guardians and must be signed prior to the tour.

***We, the tour leaders (named below), will act on medical advice presented to us in the event of an accident or emergency, where it is not possible to contact parents/guardians or the next of kin.***

5. Before the tour leaves parents/guardians must specify in writing the person/s they wish the Tour Leaders to contact in the event of parents/guardians being unavailable. In the event of an emergency every effort will be made to contact parents /guardians first.
6. The Tour Leader must ensure that complete contact information is left on file in the office, available for use in the event of an emergency.

The list should include:

- Names, addresses and home contact numbers of all those going on the tour.

- Full details of the itinerary, hotel addresses, phone numbers etc.
- A 24hr contact number for the Tour Leader(s).

### **Tour Supervision**

It's the responsibility of each adult supervisor to:

1. Call students together at specific times in busy areas (bus depots, airports etc.)
2. Count the group members on and off planes, ships, trains, buses etc.
3. Arrange specific meeting points and times to meet students when on day trips (city landmarks, cafes, ski slopes etc.)

The Tour Leader should place teachers on a Supervision Rota for overnight accommodation. Students should be made aware of this.

The Tour Leader should:

1. Arrange for nightly corridor supervision.
2. Arrange for calling students each morning.
3. Ensure teachers are on corridor duty until necessary.

It is not recommended that personnel other than current staff are engaged in chaperoning or supervising students in their overnight accommodation although in certain instances this may be necessary. If there are plans to use anyone other than staff personnel in this capacity then, in keeping with the school Child Protection Policy, the tour team member will require Garda vetting prior to the tour taking place.

### **Student Code of Behaviour.**

A student's record of adhering to the school Code of Behaviour will be taken into consideration when allocating places on the tour.

When on tour the Code of Excellence is to be observed by all students.

The Principal/Deputy Principal will meet with the students prior to departure and outline aspects of the Code of Excellence as follows:

1. Where applicable students must adhere to the school rules at all times.
2. Students must follow the rules of the hotel, hostel or other type of accommodation where they are staying.
3. Students must be well behaved on public/private transport while on tour.
4. Students are responsible for leaving seats/seating areas on all forms of transport in a tidy condition.
5. Students are responsible for keeping their bedroom's tidy.

The Tour Team should check all rooms before students have access to them and make a note of any damage done prior to their arrival. Vacated rooms should also be checked for damage.

### **Sanctions on Tour:**

Should a student be guilty of **minor misbehaviour**, the incident should be dealt with in a swift and firm manner and a verbal caution may be all that is required. The Tour Leader may however feel that specific sanctions are required such as:

1. The student missing a half- day's activities (not however an activity related to health and safety).
2. The student missing out on a specific activity e.g. bowling.
3. The student missing an evening activity e.g. disco.

If a sanction is being imposed, it must be made clear to the student why it is being imposed. A student prevented from attending an activity must be supervised by a teaching member of the tour team for the duration of the activity. Further sanctions may be imposed when the student returns to school e.g. the student may be banned from involvement in future tours.

Examples of **serious misbehaviour** include:

1. Use/possession of alcohol.
2. Use/possession of illegal substances (drugs etc.)
3. Use/possession of cigarettes/e cigarettes.
4. Misuse of legal substances (lighter fluid, tippex etc.)
5. Disruptive behaviour on coach, plane, boat or in the hotel/hostel.
6. Lack of respect for accommodation rules.
7. Lack of respect for Tour Team members or any other supervising adults.
8. Theft or criminal damage to property of others.
9. Any behaviour that impacts negatively on the health and safety of others or brings the reputation of the school into disrepute.

Where a student is guilty of **serious misbehaviour** the Tour Leader will phone the student's parents/guardians to provide them with details of the incident/s.

In ongoing and extreme cases of dangerous and/or gross misbehaviour a student may be sent home. In the event of this happening, the parents/guardians will be informed and if necessary will be requested to collect the offending student at their expense.

Incidents of **serious misbehaviour** must be reported to the Principal/Deputy Principals on return to school.

**Reporting back to BOM/Principal/Deputy Principals:**

On return, The Tour Leader will update Principal/Deputy Principals with a general report outlining the following:

1. The achievements/success of the tour.
2. Details of any incidents which required the imposition of sanctions while on tour.
3. A review of the School Tour Policy and suggestions for ways to improve or strengthen it prior to future school tours.

**Review of Policy**

The Board of Management after one year, and every two years thereafter will review this policy.

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting of \_\_\_\_\_  
(date)

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Chairperson

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Principal

Next review date: \_\_\_\_\_



## **Anti-Bullying Policy** **2023-2024**



**Bullying is not acceptable in St. Finian's College and will not be tolerated.**

### **Introduction.**

1. The Board of Management of St. Finian's College, Mullingar is committed to providing all students with an environment that is free from any form of bullying. This commitment is expressed in the College Charter. The school has a central role in our students' social, moral development just as it does in their academic progress. In school, we work towards standards of behaviour based on the basic principles of honesty, respect, consideration, responsibility, truthfulness and courtesy. The individuality of each student needs to be accommodated while at the same time acknowledging the right of every student to an education in an environment free of disruption.

**In accordance with the requirements of the Education Welfare Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of St. Finian's College has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the Anti- Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools which were published in September 2013.**

### **Aims of the Policy**

- To foster a school ethos of mutual and self-respect
- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour
- To outline, promote and raise awareness of preventative approaches that can be used in response to reported incidences of bullying

- To develop a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour
- To outline procedures for noting and reporting instances of bullying behaviour
- To outline procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour

2. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils, and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

- A positive school culture and climate which is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity; encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; involves collaboration among and between staff & pupils and promotes respectful relationships across the school community; encourages the work of the student council in this area
- Effective leadership
- A school-wide approach
- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils and explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils
- Supports for staff
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies) and ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.
- Ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages
- Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use
- Follow-up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules

- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school
- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas
- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour
- Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision
- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying 'hot spots' and 'hot times' for bullying in the school
  - Hot spots tend to be in the school grounds/ outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision
  - Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are on break time or moving between classrooms.
- Support the establishment and work of student councils

**3.** In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools bullying is defined as follows:

*'Unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated overtime'.*

In other words, bullying can be defined as repeated aggression whether it is **verbal**, **psychological** or **physical**, which is conducted by an individual or a group against others.

It is behaviour which is intentionally **aggravating** and **intimidating**. It includes behaviour such as **teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting, exclusion** or **extortion** by one or more pupils against a victim. Bullying behaviour also includes **cyber bullying, abusive calls/texts, abusive emails**, and **abusive website comments**. Bullying behaviour thrives in an atmosphere of uncertainty and secrecy in which the victim often feels a sense of hopelessness.

**Isolated instances of aggressive behaviour, which would be dealt with under the Code of Behaviour, would not be described as bullying. However, when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing, it is bullying.**

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

### **What is psychological bullying?**

Psychological bullying is similar to playing mind games and can be particularly intimidating for its victim. Malicious rumours are an insidious form of this bullying which attacks a person's self-image, while hurtful facial looks expressing aggression and/or dislike are subtler but equally damaging. This type of bullying is intended to cause severe emotional distress.

*Psychological bullying includes:*

- Excluding
- Isolating
- Gossiping
- Spreading rumours or lies
- Demeaning
- Ridiculing
- Passing notes or drawings
- Writing remarks in public places
- Using peer pressure to intimidate
- Threatening gestures or looks

### **What is verbal bullying?**

Verbal bullying is highly personal in nature and leaves its victim feeling angry, frightened and powerless. It is typically directed at the young person's family, culture, race or religion or indeed at any small thing that makes them slightly different such as a physical trait or perceived academic ability. Due to technological advances, **cyberbullying** is a new dynamic which engages the internet, mobile phones and other technology to abuse its victims.

*Verbal bullying includes:*

- Name-calling
- Teasing
- Jeering
- Taunting
- Slagging/insulting
- Threatening
- Dangerous dares
- Abusive anonymous phone calls

### **What is physical bullying?**

What may be written off as "horseplay" or "mess fights" within the context of bullying can often be a disguise or precursor of more serious physical assaults. While both boys and girls participate in physical bullying, boys are more prone to it given stronger tendencies towards physical aggression. Young children especially are vulnerable to extortion bullying where things such as money,

possessions, equipment, lunch vouchers or even food, are demanded from them and threats for not “paying up” are made.

*Physical bullying includes:*

- Hitting, beating or punching
  - Pulling or pushing
  - Kicking
- Tripping
- Pinching
- Choking
- Spitting
- Stealing
- Damaging property or possessions
- Demanding money or possessions
  - Forcing into theft
- Locking in or out of a space
  - Throwing objects
- Threatening with a weapon
  - Inflicting bodily harm
- Humiliating acts (e.g. “wedgies” or pulling up of skirts)

### **What is cyber bullying?**

Cyberbullying is **bullying** that takes place using electronic technology. Electronic technology includes devices and equipment such as mobile phones, computers, and tablets as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages, chat, and websites

- Denigration: Spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person’s reputation
- Harassment: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual
- Impersonation: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person’s name
- Flaming: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight
- Trickery: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online
- Outing: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images
- Exclusion: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group
- Cyber stalking: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety
- Silent telephone/mobile phone call
- Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls
- Abusive text messages
- Abusive email
- Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube/ Instagram/Snapchat/WhatsApp or on games consoles
- Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures
- Abusive posts on any form of communication technology

## **What is Identity Based Bullying?**

**Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation** (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).

### **Homophobic and Transgender**

- Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation
- Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation
- Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner
- Physical intimidation or attacks
- Threats

### **Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community**

- Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background
- Exclusion on the basis of any of the above

### **Relational**

This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:

- Malicious gossip
- Isolation & exclusion
- Ignoring
- Excluding from the group
- Taking someone's friends away
- "Bitching"
- Spreading rumours
- Breaking confidence
- Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear
- The "look"
- Use or terminology such as 'nerd' in a derogatory way

### **Sexual**

- Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching
- Harassment

### **Special Educational Needs,**

#### **Disability**

- Name calling
- Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs
- Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying
- Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues.
- Mimicking a person's disability
- Setting others up for ridicule.

### Some indications of bullying

- Anxiety about attending school.
- Deterioration in educational performance.
- Pattern of physical illness.
- Unexplained changes in mood/behaviour.
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress.
- Possessions missing.
- Increases requests for money.
- Unexplained bruising.
- Reluctance to say what is troubling him/her.

These are all signs of a variety of problems as well as bullying.

The school acknowledges that there are three parties involved in bullying – those who bully, those who are bullied and those who witness the bullying. Staff and teachers bear this in mind when dealing with bullying incidences and try to support and work with all parties involved.

## Procedures for noting and reporting incidents

### Student to Student Bullying

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:

- The Year Heads in conjunction with the Principal and Deputy Principals will investigate and deal with bullying issues.

## 5. Prevention of Bullying

- Teachers try to establish **supportive, respectful relationships** with students so that if a pupil is in difficulty, they will be more likely to feel comfortable in approaching a teacher. Caring Aspects classes and class tutors with a teaching group support this.
- The **SPHE** programme, including R.S.E., is taught to all Junior Certificate classes to build self-esteem and raise awareness about bullying. These are personal safety skills programmes which seek to enhance students' self-esteem and self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying. Various other social, health and media education programmes can further help to address the problem of bullying behaviour.
- **Teachers reminding students frequently** that they can talk to them if they have concerns, including concerns about bullying.
- **Posters** displayed in corridors, classrooms and cloakroom areas with clear guidance about what steps to take if you are being bullied.
- **Mentor System**
- **Guest Speakers** including the Community Garda and former targets of bullying behaviour.
- **Raising awareness** through the school **website and social media platforms**.

- **Good relationships and communication** amongst members of staff means that all teachers and SNAs are aware if a bullying issue arises, and all staff monitor the situation, particularly during break times.
- Prevention and awareness raising measures focusing on **cyber-bullying** by educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while online. Digital Media Literacy classes.
- The work could be extended into many other areas such as **Art, Drama, Religious Education, and Physical Education**. Co-operation and group enterprise can be promoted through team sports, school clubs and societies.
- **Sporting activities** in particular can provide excellent opportunities for channelling and learning how to control aggression and for instilling the principles of fair play.
- **Promotion** of lunch time activities.
- **Information Evenings** for Parents.
- **Specific Induction** of 1<sup>st</sup> Years: What is acceptable/ unacceptable behaviour?
- **Staff Training**
- **Zero tolerance approach** to negative behaviour of any kind.
- **Enable Students** to talk out against bullying behaviour and to support students at risk.

## **6. Procedures for Investigation**

The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame).

With this in mind the school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

### **STAGE 1**

(i) In investigating and dealing with bullying, **the investigating teacher(s)** will exercise his/her/their **professional judgement** to determine **whether bullying has occurred**, what **type** if it has and how best the situation might be resolved.

(ii) All **reports**, including anonymous reports of bullying **must be investigated and dealt with by the investigating teacher(s) initially**. In that way, students will gain confidence in reporting. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all students that when they report incidents of bullying, they are behaving responsibly.

(iii) **Non-teaching staff** such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus drivers, caretakers, cleaners must be encouraged to **report any incidents** of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the **relevant investigating teacher**.

(iv) **Parents and pupils are required to co-operate** with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible. All incidents of bullying reported, will be noted, taken seriously and dealt with promptly, appropriately and effectively. If parents have concerns about their child being bullied they should inform the school immediately.



(v) It is very important that **all involved** (including students and parents) **understand the above approach** from the outset

(vi) The investigating teacher(s) should take a **calm, unemotional problem-solving approach** when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by students, staff or parents.

(vii) All **interviews** should be conducted with **sensitivity** and with due regard to the rights of all students concerned. Students who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.

(viii) When **analysing incidents** of bullying behaviour, the **investigating teacher(s)** should seek answers to questions of **what, where, when, who and why**. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.

(ix) If a **group is involved**, **each member** should be **interviewed individually** at first. **Thereafter**, if necessary, all those involved could be met as a group. At the **group meeting**, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is **clear about each other's statements**.

(x) **Each member of the group** should be **supported** through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher.

(xi) Where the investigating teacher(s) has/have determined that a **pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour**, it should be **made clear** to him/her how he/she is **in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy** and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.

(xii) It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to **write down their account of the incident(s)**.

(xiii) In cases where it has been **determined by the investigating teacher** that **bullying behaviour has occurred**, the **parents** of the parties involved should be **contacted at an early stage** to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. The school should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school.

(xiv) It must also be **made clear to all involved** (each set of students and parents) that in any situation where **disciplinary sanctions** are required, this is a **private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school**.

(xv) **Follow-up meetings** with the **relevant parties involved** may be **arranged separately** with a view to **possibly bringing them together at a later date** if the student who has been bullied is ready and agreeable

(xvi) An **additional follow-up meeting** with parents of the students involved may take place after an appropriate time to ensure that the matter has been **resolved satisfactorily**.

(xvii) The situation will be monitored on an ongoing basis by the **Year Head** to ensure that those who **were** involved in bullying behaviour **continue to behave appropriately**.

(xviii) **The Principal/Deputy Principals** will be fully briefed on serious incidents of bullying behaviour. Other **relevant staff** will be alerted to ensure vigilance in terms of ongoing monitoring.

(xiv) Counselling by our school Guidance counsellor may be arranged for all parties involved to offer continued support.

## STAGE 2

(xix) Where a **parent is not satisfied** that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the **school's complaints procedures**.

(xx) In the event that a parent has **exhausted the school's complaints** procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the **Ombudsman for Children**.

(xxi) It is the **duty of the school to provide a safe environment** for all the children. Should the above interventions fail and the bullying continue, a programme of appropriate sanctions may be implemented by the Principal in consultation with the parents and Board of Management. Sanctions implemented will aim to encourage positive behaviour and support the esteem of the student. In **extreme cases** of bullying these sanctions may include **expulsion** or a period of **suspension** during which there will be ongoing consultation with the parents to decide on appropriate action(s) to be taken in the best interests of the student. **Suspension** for any period of time will be reported in writing by the Principal to the Chair of the Board of Management.

(xxii) The school reserves the right to apply its anti-bullying policy in respect of bullying behaviour that occurs at a location, activity, function or program that is not school related if in the opinion of the principal and/or the BOM the alleged bullying behaviour has created a hostile environment at school for the victim, has infringed on the rights of the victim at the school and/or has materially or substantially disrupted the education process or the orderly operation of the school.

### Bullying by Adults

The Board of Management of St. Finian's College is committed to promoting **positive working relations** amongst staff, with parents and with outside visitors. It formally adopts the HSA Dignity in the Workplace Charter, endorsed by ICTU and IBEC and adopted by the JMB and ASTI.

### RECORDING

Noting and reporting of bullying behaviour is to be documented using the *template for recording bullying behaviour (Appendix 3)*. All records must be maintained in *accordance with relevant data protection legislation*. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour will adhere to the following:

(i) While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the investigating teacher(s), the investigating teacher(s) will use his/her/their professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.

(ii) If it is **established by the investigating teacher(s)** that bullying has occurred, the investigating teacher(s) **must keep appropriate written records** which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

(iii) The investigating teacher(s) **must use the recording template** to record the bullying behaviour (**Appendix 3**).

(iv) **Two copies** of these recordings will be made. One will be given to the **Principal/Deputy Principals** and the other will be kept by the relevant **Year Head**.

## **Support Programme**

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves a **whole school approach**. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, **no one intervention/support programme works in all situations**. Therefore, various approaches and intervention strategies may be used **involving teachers, mentors, year heads, tutors, the school chaplain and the school counsellor**. It is also **suggested** that if necessary **parents seek referrals to appropriate outside agencies** in order to **receive further support** for the pupils and their families if needed.

### **Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils**

8. The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

## **Prevention of Harassment**

9. The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

### **Availability of Policy**

10. This policy upon ratification has been supplied to all parents, has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website, is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

### **Review of Policy**

11. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to parents, school personnel, published on the school website, will be readily accessible to parents and pupils on request and provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Reviewed:

October 2023

**Student Council October 2023**

The Student Council of St Finian's College wishes to inform you that their annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Student Council meeting of \_\_\_\_\_ [date].

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

School Captains

Board of Management: October 2023

The Board of Management of St Finian's College wishes to inform you that:

The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting October 2023.

This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in Appendix 4 of the Department's Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Principal

**St Finian's College**  
**HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDANCE FIRE SAFETY POLICY 2023-2024**

**INTRODUCTION**

St Finian's College will ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, that all staff, pupils, contractors and visitors are protected from the risks of fire whilst on the premises.

**LEGAL REQUIREMENTS**

Section 18(2) of the Fire Services Act 1981 states: "It shall be the duty of every person having control over premises to which this section applies to take all reasonable measures to guard against the outbreak of fire on such premises, and to ensure as far as is reasonably practicable the safety of persons on the premises in the event of fire." All school Boards have a legal responsibility under the Fire Services Act 1981 as amended by the Licensing of Indoor Events Act 2003, to ensure that their school buildings are safe.

The purpose of the legislation is to place a greater emphasis on fire prevention by ensuring that all persons responsible for premises comply with their statutory duties and implement the general fire precautions which are needed to protect all persons from death or injury in the case of fire.

This Policy explains how the school complies with the Fire Safety Act to ensure that, where possible, fire is prevented and that any fire risks are adequately controlled.

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

The School Fire Safety Policy forms part of the School's Health and Safety Policy and in common with that policy extends through the whole school, with specific responsibilities as below:

- The Board of Management ensures that an appropriate policy is in place in the school and that arrangements are made for its effective implementation
- The Principal has the ultimate responsibility for the implementation and management of this policy
- The Health & Safety Officer is responsible for the effective implementation of this Policy and its role within the School's Health and Safety Policy. Certain day to day responsibilities are delegated to the Health & Safety Officer.
- All employees have the responsibility to cooperate and to ensure that the workplace is safe from fire and its effects and must not do anything that will place themselves or other people at risk.

## **POLICY OBJECTIVES**

- To safeguard all persons from death or injury in the event of fire by the effective management of fire safety;
- to minimise the risk of fire and to limit fire spread;
- To protect the means of escape;
- to minimise the potential for fire to disrupt services, damage buildings and equipment, or harm the environment.

## **MANAGING FIRE SAFETY**

The school has delegated day to day responsibility for managing fire safety to the AP2 post holder i.e. Health & Safety Officer.

The Health & Safety Officer will:

1. Ensure the prevention of an outbreak of fire through the establishment of day to day fire prevention practices.
2. Incorporate arrangements for fire and evacuation drills; Ensure that all staff, students, contractors, visitors and third-party hirers are made aware of and comply with the school's fire procedures;
3. Incorporate arrangements for the instruction and training of staff; Provide appropriate instruction and training for all school staff on the action to be taken to protect people and property including regular fire evacuation practices for all the school;
4. Ensure that all means of escape are properly maintained, kept free from obstruction and available for safe and effective use at all times; and that the means of escape have adequate emergency lighting; self-closing doors along the defined escape routes and protected escape routes, such as stairwells, etc. should be closed and not held open. All fire doors self-closers should be allowed to operate freely. All fire/emergency exits from the premises should be provided with easily openable and operable devices, such as a panic latch push bar or a panic latch touch bar. Doors on escape routes should be free of lock, latch or bolt fastenings. Emergency exit push bars should be fixed immediately if they are reported broken or not operating. Management ensures that areas with moveable stools, seats, tables, are patrolled and controlled during operational hours to ensure that all circulation areas and all means of escapes do not become obstructed at any time. Ensure all exits from the premises are kept clear at all times. This is monitored during supervision periods as part of the daily means of escape checks.
5. Identify any special risks, e.g. the storage of hazardous materials, and put in place appropriate procedures to minimise the risks;
6. Provide and maintain in working order all firefighting appliances and devices including:
  - a) fire detection and alarm systems;
  - b) emergency lighting systems;
  - c) firefighting equipment;
  - d) notices and signage relating to fire procedures;

e) means of escape, taking into account the needs of any disabled users.

7. Carry out or arrange to have carried out a fire safety risk assessment on each of the school buildings to ensure that the school's facilities are compliant; and reduce the risk of fire incidences by carrying out appropriate task risk assessments;

8. Inform the public of the procedures to be used in the event of a fire or other emergency.

9. Consult with and implement recommendations of the local fire brigade. They will liaise with third parties; the emergency services, and the school's insurers to ensure that best practice for fire prevention and procedures is in place;

10. Produce an emergency plan and erection of fire notices.

11. Monitor and review this policy on a regular basis so as to ensure that any new risk or alteration to regulations is addressed.

### **FIRE SAFETY RECORDS**

The keeping of fire safety records is an important element of the fire safety programme. The Health & Safety Officer, Donall Farrell, is responsible for the implementation and overseeing of the fire safety programme. He will keep a Fire Safety Register (Fire Log Book) to record all fire safety matters. The register will be kept on the premises at all times and will be available for inspection by any authorised officer of the fire authority.

The following data will be recorded in the register: -

- (a) The name of the Fire Safety Manager (and those nominated to deputise for him/her).
- (b) The details of specific duties that have been assigned to staff.
- (c) The details of instruction and training given to staff, and by whom.
- (d) The date of each fire and evacuation drill, the names of staff taking part, and the type of exercise held.
- (e) The type, number and location of fire protection equipment on the premises including water supplies, hydrants etc.
- (f) The date of each inspection and test carried out on fire protection equipment and systems, along with brief comments on the results of the checks and actions taken (and by whom) to remedy defects.
- (g) The details of all fire incidents and false alarms that occur and the action taken.

### **Fire Safety Register 2022-2023**

- a. **Fire Safety Manager:** Donall Farrell

Deputies: Frank Molloy, Lawrence Brannelly, John Mc Hale, Aisling Ryan, Emma Carey

- b. **Specific duties assigned to staff.**

All staff and students are requested to familiarise themselves with school fire drill exit and assembly points. All information is available from the school's safety representative, **Mr Donall Farrell**.

The assembly point signs are coloured green and black A-H. The signage in the school grounds indicate meeting points. Each room has a detailed route for evacuation. Meeting point zones are also identified on the room door.

Evacuation routes and assembly points are illustrated on 'Fire Exit Map' in each classroom. It is important that you are aware of these and follow the correct procedure as follows:

**Fire Siren activates for FIRST time:**

- Remain in the classroom/ current location.

**Fire Siren activates for SECOND time:**

- Teacher/Student(s) exit the room in an orderly manner.
- Leave all belongings in situ, these are replaceable you are not.
- Staff/ Students who may be out of their classroom during an ongoing alarm must exit the building and locate their class at the designated 'Assembly Point' as per 'Fire Exit Map' of the relevant classroom.
- Always follow the designated exit route as illustrated on 'Exit Map' in each classroom unless the prescribed route is inaccessible.
- DO NOT RUN.
- DO NOT USE LIFT.
- Co-operate with each other/instructions.
- Always descend stairs on the right hand side as usual.
- Students remain with the Teacher/Supervisor at all times.
- Assemble in line at designated 'Assembly Point'.
- Keep all access routes/points clear for emergency personnel/vehicles/equipment.
- Teacher/Supervisor calls attendance and class remains together.
- DO NOT RE-ENTER the building, await further instruction.
- Principal/Deputy Principals/ Health and Safety Representative will permit re-entry to the building, awaiting their instruction(s).
- Full cooperation is expected and appreciated. Keep safe.

**(c) Staff Training**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Staff</u>	<u>Type of training</u>
August 2022	Whole Staff Training	Emergency Evacuation Plan i.e the operation of the fire Management system and staff roles and responsibilities.
August 2022	Donall Farrell	Fire Safety Register Maintaining the records accurately
August 2022	Whole staff	Fire safety Awareness &  Fire Warden Training



(d) Fire Drill & Evacuation Drill:

Date	Staff	Type of Exercise
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(e) **Fire protection equipment**

Type	Number	Location of
Water supply		
Hydrant		
Fire Extinguisher		

(f) **Inspection and Test History**

Date	System	Comments	Actions by .....
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(g) **Details of all fire incidents and false alarms that occur and the action taken.**

Date:	Fire incident/False Alarm	Comments	Action by.....
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### **MONITORING**

The school utilises the services of various outside personnel to carry out effective monitoring of its duties.

The school fire detection and alarm system is maintained and checked by Apex Fire Systems. The contractor is Christopher Shaw. The alarm sounders are tested on a weekly basis by Donall Farrell, Health & Safety Officer.

The school emergency lighting is checked periodically by Ray Mc Donnell, Electrical contractor;

Notices of procedures to be followed in the event of a fire and relevant signage are updated as and when required and checked annually by Donall Farrell, Health & Safety Officer;

Firefighting equipment is visually checked weekly by Donall Farrell, Health & Safety Officer and extinguishers are replenished or replaced annually by Christopher Shaw of Apex Fire Ltd; Donall Farrell, Health & Safety, is responsible to ensure that the firefighting equipment is installed, inspected, maintained, discharge tested and refilled and that those working in and occupying the premises or building are trained proficiently in their use.

A Fire Log Book which contains records of fire safety issues is maintained by the Health and Safety Officer Donall Farrell and located at the school office.

These issues include:

- fire drills;
- the storing of hazardous materials;
- the inspection and testing of: fire detection and alarm systems;
- emergency lighting systems;
- firefighting equipment;
- staff training records.

## **FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT**

The school has carried out a comprehensive fire risk assessment for each of its buildings.

These assessments are kept in the school office.

The fire risk assessment identifies who will be at risk if there is a fire, where people may be working and who else may be at risk, either in the premises or nearby, such as members of the public, visiting contractors, etc., and where these people are likely to be located.

The fire risk assessment will be reviewed and amended annually if it is either no longer valid or if any changes are planned, such as:

Any structural changes (alterations to the layout of the premises, erection of partitions, refurbishment etc.) which may affect the spread of fire;

Any change to the use of the premises which may affect the risk rating;

Any change to work processes or work equipment which may introduce new fire hazards;

Any change to the numbers of people using the premises to ensure that escape routes can accommodate the numbers safely.

## **FIRE SAFETY TRAINING**

All staff receive basic fire safety induction training at the beginning of the school year in August. Staff attend refresher sessions annually.

Key staff in the individual school buildings receive more detailed instruction. Fire Safety Awareness Training and Fire Warden Training are delivered by a competent service provider.

Pupils are given instruction by their tutors during the first week of the August term on their actions to be taken in the event of a fire.

Fire drills are planned each term to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's evacuation procedures.

The findings of the drill are reported to staff by email and any conclusions and remedial actions are recorded and implemented.

## **EVACUATION PROCEDURES**

The evacuation procedures which are to be followed in the event of a fire alarm are outlined in this Policy. This document details the responsibilities of staff and individuals during an evacuation and subsequent roll call. The document also includes specific Guidance on the Evacuation of Disabled Persons from the School Buildings.

## EVACUATION PROCEDURE

### THE FIRE ALARM

**A PERSON DISCOVERING FIRE** should break the glass of the nearest alarm and contact the school office. The secretary rings (9)999 on hearing the alarm.

If fire is in the kitchen Anne Brannelly, the Kitchen Manager rings (9)999 and immediately sends someone to break the glass of the alarm and tells Donall Farrell, Health & Safety Officer and the Principal John Mc Hale that the Fire Service has been notified. If John Mc Hale is not available, Aisling Ryan/ Emma Carey will act in his place. If Anne Brannelly is unavailable, Teresa Mc Carthy Bawle will act in her place.

**On hearing the fire alarm:**

### **ALL PERSONS PROCEED TO THEIR DESIGNATED ASSEMBLY POINT**

Where appropriate, the caretakers Frank Molloy, Lawrence Brannelly and Dominic Flynn ensure Master switches for gas and electricity are off and windows closed.

**In the event of a gas leak, when evacuation is likely to be as a result of verbal instructions rather than a fire alarm sounding, if possible leave windows open to dissipate gas and no electrical switches should be used.**

In classrooms, pupils nearest windows should be told to close them.

Staff assemble pupils IN SILENCE and instruct them to proceed to their designated Assembly Point. Assembly points are noted on the back of classroom doors. The list is attached below this document.

Pupils move IN SILENCE, walking rapidly NOT running.

The classroom door should be closed behind the last person to leave.

Use the directed route - the quickest fire escape route is displayed in each room - unless a blockage makes this impossible.

Be prepared to find an alternative route if necessary.

Should the alarm ring during Break or Lunchtime pupils should be instructed to leave the building by the nearest safe fire exit and proceed to their class group Assembly Point.

Staff should assist this process where possible without putting themselves at risk.

Under no circumstances should staff or pupils return to their classrooms.

All double doors should be opened by those who are first to reach them and closed by the last person to pass through them.

Staff should have their teacher journal/chromebook with them to take attendance.

Donall Farrell will make contact with the caretaking staff to establish their whereabouts and to direct them to specific tasks as necessary and will attempt to identify the source of the fire

from external visual observation. The Health & Safety Officer will report the safety and whereabouts of the caretaking staff to the principal and will maintain contact throughout the procedure.

Where safe to do so, the zone triggered by the alarm will be noted.

The Health & Safety Officer will guide the Fire Service on their arrival.

### **PROCEDURE FOR ASSEMBLY AND ROLL CALL**

Classes line up in order at designated Assembly Points.

TEACHERS use VSWare to supervise roll calls.

Once roll call is completed, absences are reported to Deputy Principals/Principal or to Donall Farrell, depending on the Assembly Area.

Staff/Visitors Reporting Procedure:

Staff/Visitors make their way to the Assembly Point H at the college yard. The Health & Safety Officer will check with the Principal (or with the most senior teacher or member of staff in their absence) that all persons are accounted for, and will await the arrival of Fire Service and respond to and relay Fire Officer's instructions

Secretaries and office staff exit by the front door and assemble at the flagpoles.

**No-one should leave the Assembly Point until instructed to do so by the Principal/Deputy Principal/Health & Safety Officer.**

### **Guidance on the Evacuation of Disabled Persons from the School Buildings**

Students and employees with a disability have been identified and this information is held in the school office. Having considered the risks, the Health & Safety Officer has specific procedures for assisting in the evacuation of persons with a known disability.

St Finian's has two special classes for students with Autism.

Extra Fire Evacuation Drills take place to ensure these students know their Emergency Evacuation Plan, their designated exit, their designated Assembly Point.

The special class teacher is trained in this and is responsible for the students in these classrooms.

Where teachers have a student with a known disability, they ensure that that student is aware that the alarm has been triggered and that they follow the evacuation procedure accordingly.

Disabled staff have identified themselves to the Principal and any specific requirements are addressed as soon as they are known.

### **Specific Evacuation Requirements Wheelchair users/Persons with Mobility Difficulty**

Wheelchair users or any person with difficulty walking (e.g. anyone temporarily using crutches) should wait until everyone else has left the room before making their way to the exit, assisted by a third party if required.

### **Visitors with disabilities**

On arrival, disabled visitors to the School are asked to identify any special requirements in the case of an emergency evacuation. The person hosting the visitor should ensure the visitor's safety in the event of an emergency evacuation.

Wherever possible (i.e. when on ground floors) all persons, including wheelchair users, should make their own way out of the building by utilising the fire escape routes. Whenever the route is blocked or the person is above ground floor, wheelchair users must be either assisted by a third party.

When evacuating the upper floors of the buildings, anyone unable to leave without assistance should wait for assistance in front of the Guidance room on Level 4, in the area of the middle stairs on Level 3 and Level 2.

### **Lifts must not be used during an emergency evacuation**

### **SEATED EVENT**

A seating plan layout is needed for all seated events. The following applies to all row-seating events;

#### **Seated events (seating in rows):**

Any events with seating in rows the following requirements should be followed:

A seating plan layout designed in compliance with B.S. 9999: 2017 Annex D (normative) is to be used for all such events with the prior approval from Westmeath Fire Service

Seat way widths are not less than 300 mm and are constant throughout the length of the row sufficient width to enable easy movement towards the gangway(s) for all

Gangways/passageways are designed in accordance with table D.1 of Annex D of B.S. 9999: 2017

Temporary seating should meet the following recommendations:

Seating for more than 50 persons laid out on the floor area should be secured together in lengths of not fewer than four seats. The current seats will be phased out and replaced with the correct seating as they need replacing or funds become available to upgrade the seating. Where seats are secured together, it should not be possible to separate them, nor for a row to "snake", merely by pushing one or more.

#### **Possible Hazard Areas**

**Electrical:** The fixed Electrical Installations will be tested periodically by Ray Mc Donnell, Electrician. All MCB Panels are labelled completely.

**Heating:** The fixed installation is periodically tested and certified to ensure all is in working order.

**Signage:** All Isolation switches and slam shut valves (for gas, electrical, ventilation etc...) are signed appropriately in all areas. Clear unambiguous signage is provided adjacent to any isolation switches or vales to identify them and how they operate.

**Fire:** Rooms housing any plant, electrics or electrical fuse boards or other hazards are not being used as storage areas (for combustible items) or housekeeping stores also. This is prohibited and these areas should be kept clear at all times as it is only adding to the potential risk of a fire.

**Asbestos:** Test completed and all is fine. No asbestos found.

**Bin storage:** Rubbish containers are located in designated bin storage areas away from the building, escape routes and building entrances and exits. They are located in the sheds to the rear of the college.

**Fire Doors:** All fire doors throughout have appropriate fire door signage. As the building is undergoing extensive changes next year, temporary fire doors stickers are being used.

Fire door signs must be signed using one of the following;

Fire Door Keep Shut; – at eye level, on both faces of each leaf that are fitted

Fire Door - Keep Locked; used on fire doors not fitted with self-closers (e.g. cleaners store, plant rooms etc...)

Automatic fire door keeps clear; used on fire doors connected to hold open devices that release on activation of the fire alarm system

**Emergency Lighting:** An inspection and test of the entire existing emergency lighting and exit signage system was carried out by contractor Ray Mc Donnell in June 2022. Ray will take responsibility for testing, maintenance and management of the emergency lighting system. Ray Mc Donnell has improved the areas of the existing school buildings that required some upgrades of the emergency lighting and exit signage (green signage) systems. The maintenance contract includes scheduled periodic reviews and tests to occur at least 4 times a year, of intervals of no less than 2 months and no greater than 4 months, on a quarterly basis. Staff will be provided with training/instruction on the emergency lighting system from the maintenance contractor. This enables the responsible staff members to carry out the regular checks required and understand how the system works.

Assessment Prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Prepared: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed by Principal: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed by the B of M Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Review Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix A

## Fire Safety Records Sample

## Fire Drill &amp; Evacuation Drill:

Date	Drill Type	Comments/ Observations	Actions taken by ....

Appendix B  
TypeFire Safety Records  
Number**Fire protection equipment**  
Location of

Date	Type	Number	Location of	Checked by
	Water supply			
	Hydrant			
	Fire Extinguisher			

## Appendix C

## Fire Safety Records

**In house Inspection and Test History****Inspection of systems and checks on means of escape and life safety systems**

Date	System	By whom	Actions taken

**External agreement with contractors****Maintenance & Servicing including testing of emergency lighting and exit signage system**

Date	System	By whom	Actions taken

## Appendix D

## Fire Safety Records

**Details of all fire incidents and false alarms that occur and the action taken.**

Date	Fire incident/ False alarm	Service Provider Observations	Actions taken & by whom

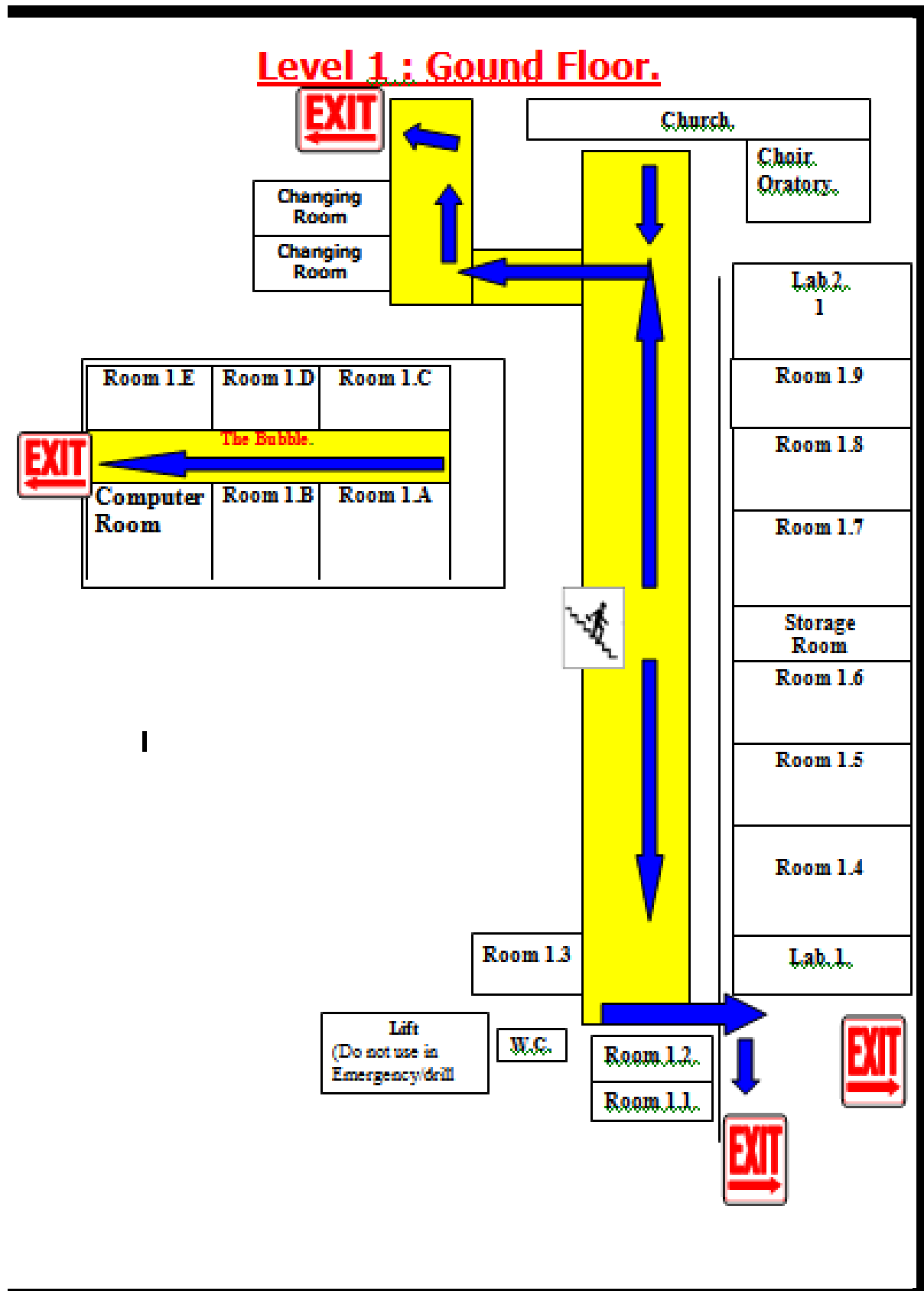
## Appendix E

## Checks and records on the means of escape

Record checks on the means of escape from the premises to ensure that all escape routes at all times are clearly indicated and unobstructed, exits doors clear and easily opened at all times, and external areas near exits unobstructed.

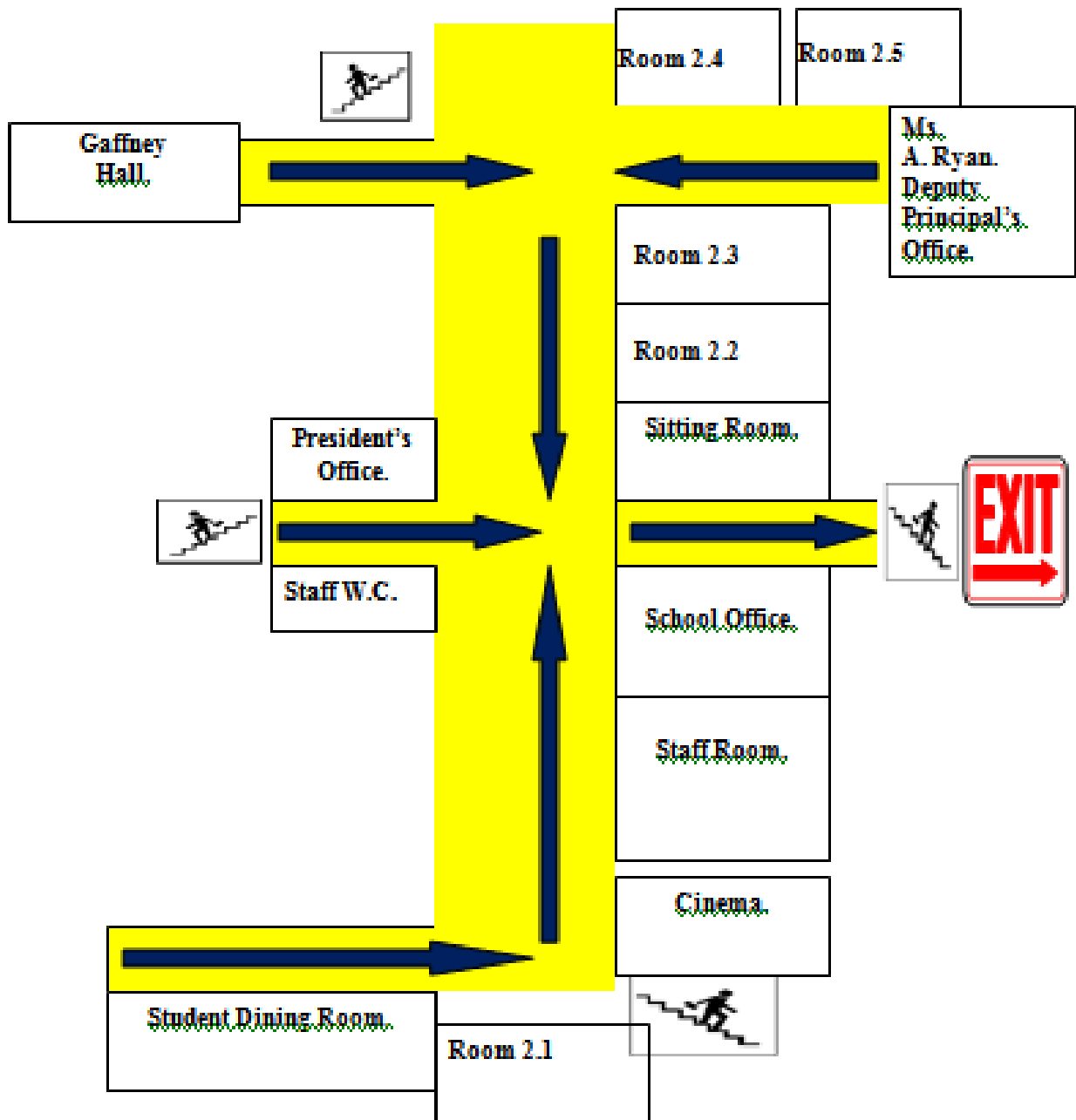
	Date	Checked by	Action needed
Exits on ground floor			
Exits on main corridor			
Exits on 3rd floor			
Exits on 4th floor			
Emergency Fire exit at study hall			
Emergency fire exit at Gaffney Hall			
Student Entrances & Exits			
Emergency Lighting systems			
Fire Alarm boxes			
Fire extinguishers			





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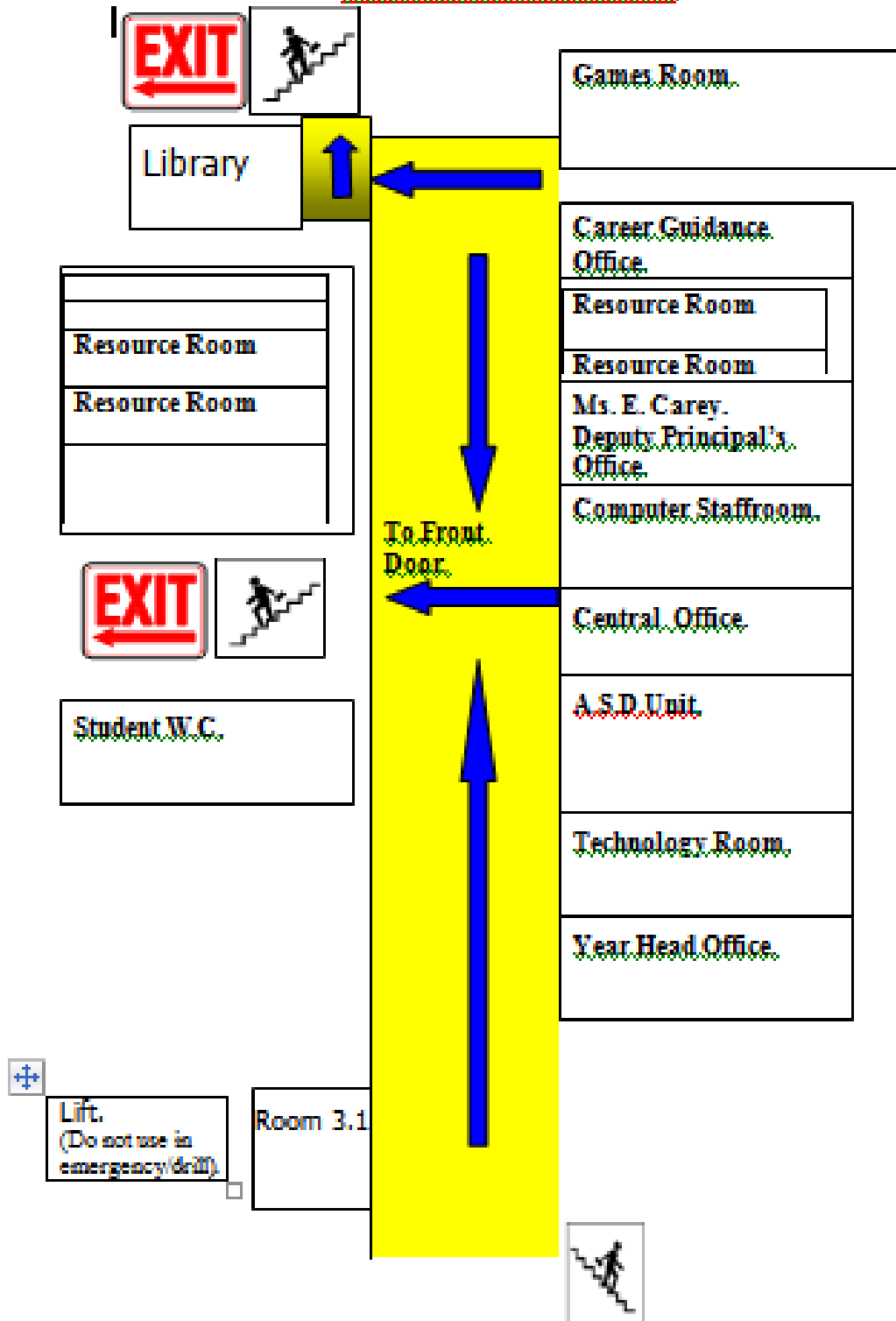
## Level 2 / Main Floor Plan.



**PLEASE NOTE THE POSITION OF YOUR NEAREST EXIT**

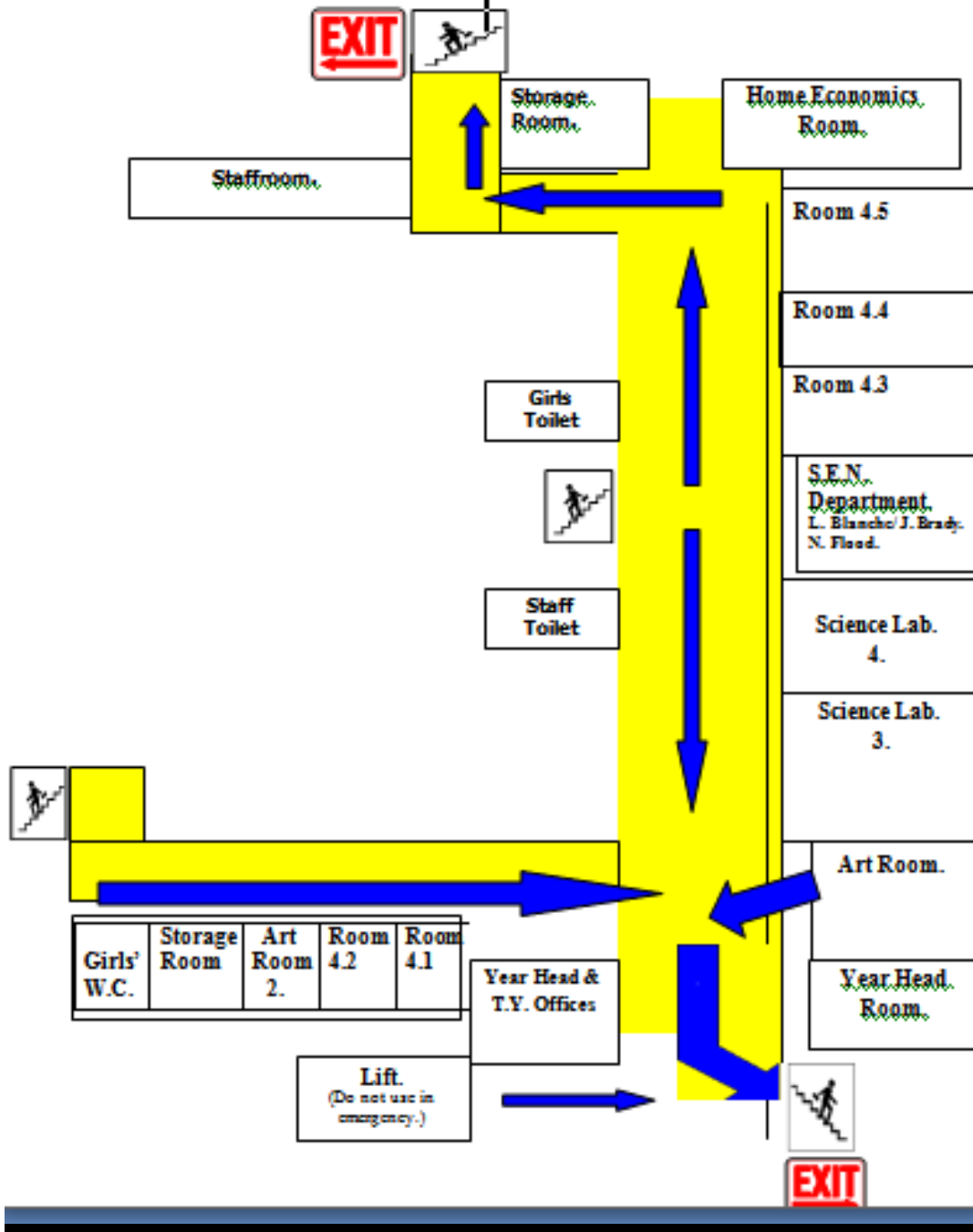
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**Level 3 Floor Plan**



**PLEASE NOTE THE POSITION OF YOUR NEAREST EXIT**

**Level 4/ Top Floor Plan.**



Appendix 8

<b>Fire Drill Assembly Zones</b>	
<p><u>Zone A Student Entrance</u></p> <p>Art Room 1</p> <p>Art Room 2</p> <p>Room 4.1</p> <p>Room 4.2</p> <p>Lab 3</p> <p>Lab 4</p> <p>Career Guidance Office</p>	<p><u>Zone B Handball Alleys</u></p> <p>1. Music Centre</p> <p>2. D.C.G. Room</p> <p>3. Technology Room</p> <p>-</p>
<p><u>Zone C Pavilion</u></p> <p>Room 1.7</p> <p>Room 1.8</p> <p>Room 1.8</p> <p>Lab 2</p> <p>Oratory</p> <p>Church</p>	<p><u>Zone D Main Avenue</u></p> <p>Gaffney Hall</p> <p>Games Room</p> <p>Canteen</p> <p>Staffroom</p> <p>Room 2.1</p> <p>Room 2.2</p> <p>Room 2.3</p> <p>Room 2.4</p> <p>Room 2.5</p>

Zone E Yard in Front of Gym

1. Room 1A
2. Room 1B
3. Room 1C
4. Room 1D
5. Room 1E
6. Computer Room

Zone F Basketball Courts

- Room 1.1
- Room 1.2
- Room 1.3
- Room 1.4
- Room 1.5
- Room 1.6
- Lab 1

Zone G Flagpole

1. Room 3.1
2. A.S.D. Classes
3. All resource rooms/offices
4. Library
5. Room 4.3
6. Room 4.4
7. Room 4.5
8. Study hall

Zone H

- Ancillary Staff
- Contractors

**P.E. / Teams PLEASE REMAIN ON THE PITCHES**

Appendix 9

Fire Safety Training & Fire warden Training for staff records

**Staff Training**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Staff</u>	<u>Type of training</u>
August 2022	Whole Staff Training	Emergency Evacuation Plan i.e the operation of the fire Management system and staff roles and responsibilities.
August 2022	Donall Farrell	Fire Safety Register Maintaining the records accurately
August 2022	Whole staff	Fire safety Awareness &  Fire Warden Training

Appendix 9

Spot check of systems Sample

	Date	By whom	Observations	Actions needed and by whom
Fire alarm board				
Fire extinguishers				
Fire hoses				
Escape routes				
Fire doors				
Signage outdoor				
Signage indoor				
Notices of procedures				
Fire safety notice cards				
Staff Training				
Electrical Installations				
Heating system				
Isolation switches				
Fire hydrants				
Emergency Lighting				

## Appendix 10

## Fire Extinguishers Monthly Check Sample

Donall Farrell, Health & Safety, is responsible to ensure that the firefighting equipment is installed, inspected, maintained, discharge tested and refilled and that those working in and occupying the premises or building are trained proficiently in their use.

	Fire Extinguisher Monthly Check
Date of review	
Number of PFEs inspected	
Carried out by	
Details of any faults	
Actions taken	