

## Brannoxtown CNS

### Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy

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Brannoxtown Community National School (CNS) is a primary school under Patronage of the Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board (KWETB). Brannoxtown CNS opened in September 2018 with a new Principal, Dr. Sarah FitzPatrick. Brannoxtown CNS operates within the regulations laid down by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and follows the Primary School Curriculum (DES, 1999) which may be amended from time to time, in accordance with Sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act (1998). The Principal and the Board of Management fully subscribe to the principles of partnership, accountability, inclusion, respect for diversity, parental choice and equality, in developing and implementing all school policies.

#### 1. Introduction

Following the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act (HSE, 2005) and its associated regulations, the Board of Management is responsible for safeguarding the health and welfare of all staff and for protecting students, visitors, contractors and others from injury or ill-health arising from any work activity at Brannoxtown CNS. The successful implementation of this policy requires the full support and active co-operation of all staff, students, parents, contractors and visitors to the school. This policy was prepared in line with the following existing school policies:

- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Child Safeguarding Assessment of Risk of Harm to the Child
- First Aid, Accident and Injury Policy
- Fire Safety Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Critical Incident Policy
- Supervision Policy
- Administration of Medicines Policy
- Covid 19: Health and Safety Risk Assessment
- Covid 19: Response Plan.

#### 2. Rationale

The purpose of this policy is:

- To create a **safe workplace** for the school community by ensuring all individuals understand their **role** with regard to **health and safety procedures**.
- To provide an understanding of the school's **duty of care** towards the children.
- To outline the **procedures and practices** followed at the school to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and staff.
- To promote all aspects of child and staff **wellbeing** including academic, physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual development of all children.

#### 3. School Ethos

This policy is in keeping with the school ethos through the provision of a safe, secure and caring learning environment for each child. The school's four values—respect, effort, teamwork and ambition are reflected in our overall approach to nurturing the health, safety and wellbeing of children and staff.

#### 4. Policy Objectives

The objectives of the policy are:

- To ensure the **physical safety** and **wellbeing** of all staff and children.
- To develop a framework of procedures whereby all injuries, accidents and incidents are dealt with in a **competent and safe manner**.
- To promote positive **wellbeing** among children and staff.

## 5. Consultation and Information

It is the policy of the Board of Management of Brannoxtown CNS:

- To consult with staff in the preparation and completion of the Health and Safety Statement and related policies
- To issue a copy of the Safety Statement to all present and future staff, all members of the Board of Management (and any subsequent revised copies)
- To communicate any new messages regarding health, safety and welfare at work (not contained in the document) to all staff, once agreed.
- To prioritise health, safety and welfare in staff training and development plans.

## 6 Responsibilities

### a. Board of Management

The Board of Management has overall responsibility for ensuring the school and its systems are healthy and safe for staff. The Board has a duty of care to any others who come into and/or use the school building whether during or outside of school times. It is also the Board's responsibility to:

- Develop, oversee and review the school's Safety Statement to ensure that all work is carried out in accordance with the relevant statutory provisions (Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act, 2005) and that all reasonable, practicable measures are taken to avoid risk to staff, children or others who may be affected.
- Continually improve the systems in place for the management of occupational safety, health and welfare and review it periodically to ensure it remains relevant, appropriate and effective.
- Discuss regular reports on safety and health matters and consult with staff on matters related to safety, health and welfare at work.
- Undertake a risk assessment at least once per year and ensure that identified hazards are eliminated or minimised as far as is reasonably practical.
- Provide information, training, instruction and supervision where necessary, to enable staff to perform their work safely and effectively.
- Provide the necessary resources to ensure the safety, health and welfare of all those to whom it owes a duty of care, including staff, students, contractors and visitors.
- Maintain a constant and continuing interest in safety, health and welfare matters pertinent to the activities of the school.

The Board of Management is committed to playing an active role in the implementation of this occupational safety, health and welfare policy and undertakes to review and revise it in light of changes in legislation, experience and other relevant developments.

### b. Safety Committee

The Safety Committee is made up of the school's Principal, Dr. Sarah FitzPatrick and Health and Safety Officer, Ms. Dawn Heffernan, APII. The Safety Committee will help to support the implementation, review and maintenance of safety procedures at Brannoxtown CNS.

The responsibilities of the safety committee are to:

- Comply with the requirements of the 2005 Act.
- Support and report to the Board of Management on all matters related to health, safety and wellbeing.
- Manage safety, health and welfare in the school on a day-to-day basis.
- Implement and review school policies concerning health, safety and wellbeing.
- Ensure that fire safety checks, routine maintenance work and fire drills are carried out.

- Ensure that health and safety procedures are adhered to by all staff, children and visitors at Brannoxtown CNS.
- Communicates regularly with all members of the school community on safety health and welfare matters.
- Report and investigate incidents/accidents when it is deemed necessary.

### **c. Class Teachers**

Once a child enters the school building at 8.50 a.m., the teachers are in loco parentis and thus primarily responsible for the child's health, safety and welfare. The responsibilities of class teachers are to:

- Supervise the children in the morning before school begins at home-time.
  - One teacher has supervision duty at the set-down area from 8.40 am. Another teacher supervises children on the playground before they enter the school building at 8.50 am. When the weather does not permit children to remain in the schoolyard, supervision is on the ground floor of the school building.
  - It is the responsibility of the class teacher to walk children to the set-down area at dismissal time (1:30 or 2:30pm) and to safely hand over each child to the parent(s) or to the person who has been designated by the parents and is listed on Aladdin.
- Supervise children throughout the school day
  - Class teachers are responsible for taking particular care and anticipating potential causes of injury during activities that are more likely to pose hazards such as physical education, SESE (Social, Environmental, and Scientific Education) and arts and crafts.
- Supervise children at break times.
  - During break times, a class teacher will supervise the schoolyard. Minor cuts and bruises will be dealt with as per the section on First Aid below. Incidents or accidents will be recorded in the school's First Aid or Incident Book located outside Room 1 and reported to parents and/or Principal if necessary. If the weather is inclement, children will be supervised in their classrooms.
- Support substitute teachers to work effectively with their class/another class.
  - If class teachers are absent, a substitute teacher may be called in as per DES regulations in relation to sick leave or other leave; and/or children may be divided up between the other classes for the school day. In cases of longer absences, substitute or temporary teachers may be engaged.
- Ensure a colleague can provide temporary supervision cover if he/she may have to leave the classroom for a short period of time.
- Safely manage and monitor children's movements when they may leave their classrooms for limited periods of time, normally in pairs, to undertake specific errands.

### **d. Employees and Volunteers (including student teachers on placement)**

The responsibilities of all employees and volunteers are to:

- Comply with all statutory obligations on employees, designated under the 2005 Act.
- Take reasonable care to protect his or her own safety, health and welfare and that of any other person who may be affected by his or her acts or omissions at work.
- Engage in proper conduct and not to engage in behaviour such as violence or bullying which could endanger another person at work or his or her safety, health and welfare.
- Co-operate with school management in the implementation of the safety statement.
- Inform children of the safety procedures associated with individual lessons, rooms and tasks e.g. science lessons, use of the kitchen, etc.
- Ensure that children follow safe procedures.
- Formally check classroom/immediate work environment to ensure it is safe and free from fault or defect.
- Check that equipment is safe before use.
- Ensure that risk assessments are conducted for any new hazards.

- Co-operate with the school safety committee where one is established.
- Follow protocols in training and instructions provided by the employer such as correct use of any article/substance and wearing/using protective clothing and equipment.
- Report accidents, near misses and dangerous occurrences to relevant persons as outlined in the safety, health and welfare statement.

#### **e. Parents**

Parents are entitled to receive information on, and to be consulted on the school's health, safety and wellbeing policies and practices. In collaboration with the Board of Management and others, parents are responsible for ensuring the implementation of health and safety law in general and this policy in particular. The responsibilities of all parents are to:

- Take reasonable care of their own safety, health and welfare and that of any person who may be affected by their acts or omissions.
- Care for their own and any other children who accompany them to the school.
- Implement the school's health and safety protocols especially if they are involved with any school activities such as meetings, special events or extracurricular activities.
- To report any health and safety concerns to the Principal and/or the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

#### **f. Children**

All children have opportunities to learn about health and safety and wellbeing priorities and procedures at Brannoxtown CNS, in an age-appropriate way. As part of the SPHE programme, children are taught about safety in the home; safety regarding medicines; safety when crossing the road and safety in relation to strangers. Children develop strategies to monitor and safeguard their own and others' health, safety and wellbeing.

### **7. Emergencies**

#### **a. Emergency routes and exits**

The route is depicted on a notice which is inside the classroom door. Staff members and children practise the emergency exit procedures during fire drills.

#### **b. Fire protection**

A fire drill will be held at least once each term. Listed below are the procedures for children and teachers in the event of a fire:

- When you hear the fire alarm:
  - **Stand up** and push in your chair.
  - Do not pick up your personal belongings.
  - **Line up** at the door quietly.
- The classroom **teacher** will check toilets, close windows and doors and take fire drill roll.
- Children **exit** the classroom and the main school entrance **calmly**.
- Each class **walks** across the playground directly to the **Designated Assembly Area** and lines up in front of their class sign, e.g., Room 1, attached to the school fence.
- Children **line up** in single file standing **quietly** while the teacher counts children and checks the roll.
- Children and staff wait patiently until permitted to re-enter the school building.
- The **Health and Safety Officer** checks that all classes have exited the school building **safely** and in collaboration with the Principal announces when classes can return.

A fire register is maintained by the Health and Safety Officer. This includes records of termly checks of means of escape routes, fire extinguishers and all fire drills. Any contractor completing hot work (including welding, soldering, use of blow lamps, blow torches and cutting equipment) must be qualified to do so, must have a hot works permit, must carry a fully charged fire extinguisher and must make a full check one hour after completion of

the work. Details are outlined in the *Fire Safety Policy* for Brannoxtown CNS (available on our website).

#### **c. Emergency contact details**

Emergency contact details of the parents and guardians of all children in the school, as well as the next of kin of all staff, are maintained on Aladdin. Parents are required to provide these details at the beginning of each school year and to immediately notify the school of updates to their own or other emergency contacts' information.

#### **d. First Aid**

The school recognises the importance of taking the appropriate measures in cases of accidents and injury, including, where necessary, securing the site and immediately telephoning the emergency services. All school staff will receive and be certified in First Aid training on a two-yearly basis. A fully equipped First Aid box is available on the ground floor (underneath the printer in the foyer) and on the first floor (outside the staff toilets). Surplus First Aid resources and the First Aid Travel kit is located in Room 4.

#### **e. Getting Help**

In an urgent situation, the member of staff phones another member of staff through the internal telephone system. If this option is unavailable, the teacher sends two children with a red card to another member of staff. If the situation is not urgent, but a member of staff would like another member staff to come when they are able, they send children with a green card. If the situation requires adult help and there is no adult available, one teacher on the floor will supervise both classes while the other teacher attends the situation.

#### **f. Emergency Closures**

In the event of a significant event which threatens the safety/coping mechanisms of the school such as heavy snowfall, high winds, thunderstorms, disconnection of services, death or critical incident, the Principal will consult with the Chairperson of the Board of Management, as soon as feasible, to decide whether it is in the interests of all parties to close the school. If it is decided that it would be unsafe to keep the school open, an exceptional closure will be deemed to have been granted by the Board of Management. Exceptional closures will be kept to an absolute minimum. Parents will be informed at the earliest opportunity of any such closure using a range of communication techniques (text-a-parent, email, telephone calls, posting on the school website, message on school voicemail, note at the school gate, etc.). If school is open when an incident occurs, staff will remain on the premises until all children have been collected.

#### **g. Critical Incident Policy**

Our *Critical Incident Policy* provides a clear roadmap for the school to respond to any incident which may threaten to overwhelm the school's normal coping mechanisms such as a serious accident or incident or death of an individual in the school community.

### **8. Safety**

#### **a. Safe Access and Exit Routes**

Every effort will be made to ensure that all building users can safely access, exit and move around the school grounds and building. Entrances and corridors will be kept free from obstruction. Mobility aids are always permitted and facilitated.

#### **b. Children Leaving Early**

If a child needs to leave school early, parents must make every effort to notify the school in advance, in line with the school's *Attendance Policy*. If a person other than a parent is collecting the child, he/she should be notified to the school in advance. If not, a parent's written permission is required, using the Class Dojo app for non-emergency situations and contacting the school phone for emergency situations. **c. Securing the School Grounds**

To ensure children remain inside the school premises during the school day, measures will be taken to ensure children cannot exit by themselves. The school gates will be closed every day at 8.50am.

#### ***d. School Trips***

When feasible and practicable, parents will be asked to accompany school groups on excursions. In the interest of safety, parents are asked not to bring younger children with them. Where transport is required, the school will hire buses that are adequate for the size of the group from a reputable company that provides safe vehicles and drivers. All passengers will be required to use safety belts on buses.

A teacher or other responsible adult always leads the way and the group is required to stay together, using waiting points where necessary. Another adult always walks behind or next to the last child in the group. Children are counted when leaving school and at various points during the trip. Specifically, in the case of swimming, teachers will inspect the changing rooms on arrival. Children are asked to follow the swimming pool rules and to follow the swimming instructor's directions.

#### ***e. Equipment, cleaning and maintenance***

The school provides safe equipment for both staff and children, including where necessary, guards and appropriate personal protective equipment. Equipment is appropriately certified, maintained to a high standard and disposed of if it poses a safety risk. Electrical equipment is only used/maintained by staff qualified to do so. Equipment and substances for maintenance, cleaning, catering and similar is stored securely away from children.

School cleaning and maintenance is normally scheduled outside of school hours; at present, cleaning is before 8am and after 2.30 p.m., Monday to Friday, with additional work being completed at the weekend. If a potential hazard arises during the school day, e.g. broken glass, wet floor, it should be removed or cleaned up immediately. If this is not possible, children should not enter the area until it is possible to do so.

Appropriate training will be provided in the safe handling and use of equipment and in the unlikely event of there being a need for hazardous substances in the school. This will include training in manual handling, which will focus on: avoidance of manual handling wherever possible, reduction of manual handling through the use of mechanical aids and the sharing of loads, and skills for safe manual handling. Work at height will be avoided wherever possible and must never take place without other people being on the premises. Safe step-ladder and ladder practice must be observed and ordinary school furniture must never be used to undertake work at height. Teachers are requested to comply with these safety procedures in their classrooms and throughout the school.

### **9. Health**

#### ***a. Enrolment***

Parents are requested to inform the school of any illnesses or allergies the child may have when completing the enrolment form. They are also reminded to immediately notify the school of any change to their child's health. The school is not liable if uninformed of any illnesses/allergies. When their child starts school, parents are asked to provide permission for the school to contact a doctor or to call an ambulance if needed. A medical information display is maintained in the staff room to note the medical needs of specific high risk individuals.

#### ***b. Administration of Medicine***

Staff members may not administer medication without the specific authorisation of the principal, following Board of Management approval, following a parent's written request. A

written record of the date and time of administration is completed by the teacher and put in the child's class medical file on the same day (with the exception of asthma inhalers). The child's parent will be informed on the same day that medication has been administered. In the case where medicine is administered daily, this will be routinely recorded in an individual log book and stored in the child's file. Please refer to the school's *Administration of Medication Policy*.

### **c. Infectious Disease**

In the case of any infectious disease, parents will be informed as soon as possible, and appropriate action will be taken by the Principal and Board of Management to limit the associated risks. As outlined in the school's *Covid-19: Health and Safety Risk Assessment*, a designated isolation area is located in Room 1 of the school building. This area will be utilised if a child is suspected of having any communicable disease. In the case of a suspected Covid-19 case, all procedures outlined in this *Covid-19: Health and Safety Risk Assessment* and *Covid-19 Response Plan* will be followed.

### **d. Health Promotion**

The school will promote safe and healthy living in curriculum subjects and specific cross-curricular and extra-curricular initiatives. For example, walking and cycling to school are encouraged and the school's *Healthy Eating Policy* (available online) promotes healthy eating and healthy lunch boxes.

## **10. Other Welfare Issues**

### **a. Animals**

No animals may be brought into the school grounds at any time, with the exception of therapy and assistance dogs. An exception may be a short visit by a pet as part of a specific learning project, with prior approval.

### **b. Other Policies**

A range of other, related health, safety and wellbeing issues, including positive behaviour, child protection, equality of access and participation, anti-bullying, teachers' professional conduct are discussed in detail in separate policies for Brannoxtown CNS.

## **11. Accident/Incident Reports**

### **a. Reporting School Accidents/Incidents**

All accidents or incidents that take place at school are recorded in either the First Aid Book, the Incident Book or both. Both are located outside Room 1, the Principal's Room. Depending on the nature of the accident/incident, parents will either be informed immediately by a phone call or a text message, or at the end of the day either verbally or by receiving an Accident Note.

All potential serious accidents, or instances of ill health, that result from compromised health and safety circumstances, whether involving employees, children or members of the public must be reported immediately to the Principal, investigated and subsequently recorded on the school's Aladdin system. An accident/incident report must be completed on Aladdin by the staff member in attendance. This report is then retained in child's electronic file and shared with the school's insurer. Depending on the gravity of the event/accident, the Principal may send a copy of the report to the school's patron, the Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board (KWETB).

### **b. Reporting to the Health and Safety Authority**

Any accident in the school which results in a staff member or child being injured and unable to perform his/her normal duties for more than 3 consecutive days (weekends included)

will be reported to the Health and Safety Authority. Accidents will be reported by filling out the online Accident Report Form at: [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie). Accidents will be reported promptly; fatal or potentially fatal accidents will be reported immediately, by telephone in the first instance, while non-fatal accidents will be reported as soon as practicable, in most cases within two weeks of the occurrence of the accident.

## 12. Wellbeing

Wellbeing has a central role in the school's ethos and values. Our school is committed to promoting wellbeing among all members of our school community, in all aspects of school life. Children's learning is enriched and children have better academic outcomes when they are happy in their work, believe in themselves and feel acknowledged and supported in their school. Staff at Brannoxtown CNS take a whole school approach to the promotion of wellbeing; it is at the core of the school's practice.

### a. GMGY

The school's patron's programme *Goodness Me! Goodness You!* (GMGY), describes wellbeing as "a state of being confident, emotionally resilient, happy and safe" (NCCA, 2018, pg. 40). This definition of wellbeing is one which encompasses the child's awareness of their values and abilities, taking action to safeguard these values and having a positive, yet creative outlook on life. GMGY supports and fosters each child's wellbeing through understanding citizenship, exploring philosophy, values education and identity education.

### b. SPHE

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) provides opportunities to foster each child's personal development, health and wellbeing and help each child create and maintain supportive relationships and become an active and responsible citizen. Through SPHE, children can develop a framework of values, attitudes, understanding and skills that will inform their actions and decisions in these areas of their lives both now and in the future. SPHE permeates all aspects of the school curriculum. The two-year SPHE curriculum recommended by the organisation providing Professional Development Support for Teachers (PDST) is followed at Brannoxtown CNS.

### c. Weaving Wellbeing

*Weaving Wellbeing* is an Irish designed, positive mental health programme aimed to enhance wellbeing in children from 8-12 years. Brannoxtown CNS started this programme in September 2020 with all children from First to Sixth Class. The Weaving Wellbeing programme gives children the opportunity to weave positivity into their daily lives through a range of activities in a variety of areas resilience skills, mindfulness and developing self-efficacy through empowering beliefs. Lessons are designed to be implemented within the framework of the SPHE curriculum.

### d. Aistear

Aistear is the national curriculum framework for early childhood education and care. It has a central role in teaching and learning in the Junior Room at Brannoxtown CNS. Through the framework, teachers provide enjoyable and appropriately challenging learning experiences that afford children the opportunity to grow and develop as competent and confident learners through playful experiences. *Wellbeing* is one of four themes in Aistear. It focuses on children being confident, happy and healthy. The other themes are *Identity and Belonging*, *Communicating* and *Exploring and Thinking*.

### e. School wide initiatives

All staff at Brannoxtown CNS are committed to developing several initiatives that promote children's wellbeing across the school:

- **Active School:** The Active School Flag (ASF) initiative is a Department of Education and Skills (DES) initiative supported by Healthy Ireland (HI) which aims to get more schools, more active, more often. It is awarded to schools that strive to achieve a physically educated and physically active school community. Brannoxtown CNS are working towards achieving the active flag through activities during yard time, homework challenges and whole class challenges.
- **Creative Schools:** Creative Schools is an initiative of the Creative Ireland Programme to promote the creative potential of every child. It aims to put the arts and creativity at the heart of children and young people's lives. Brannoxtown CNS was a recipient of this award in 2019. The school's overall goal is to integrate creativity and fun into its approach to learning across all curriculum areas.
- **Green Schools:** Green Schools is an international education programme, which enables schools to take environmental issues from the curriculum and apply them to the day-to-day running of their school. The aim of the Green School programme is to create an understanding of the importance the world has to all humans and the impact humans have on the world. It enables children to become active citizens, creates the awareness of social responsibilities and encourages outdoor activities which has a positive effect on wellbeing.

### **13. BCNS Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy: Monitoring and Reviewing**

#### **a. Success Criteria**

The effectiveness of this school policy in its present form is measured by the following criteria:

- A relatively accident-free school environment is maintained.
- The roles and responsibilities of children, parents and teachers are clear in everyday health and safety procedures and in the event an emergency situation.
- Feedback is shared by children, parents and staff on the school's response to everyday health, safety and wellbeing procedures and protocols.
- The effectiveness of the policy is monitored and evaluated at staff meetings.

#### **b. Implementation and Timetable for Review**

Following approval by the Board of Management, this policy will apply with immediate effect at Brannoxtown CNS. This policy and related policies will be reviewed annually or in line with a change in Department legislation.

#### **c. Ratification and Communication**

Following feedback from members of the Brannoxtown CNS Board of Management, this Accident and Injury Policy will be finalised and posted on the school's website. Hardcopies of the policy are available to parents on request. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management of Brannoxtown CNS in February, 2020.

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

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

Ms. Deirdre O'Donovan  
Chairperson

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

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

Dr. Sarah FitzPatrick  
Principal

### **References**

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