



St. Nicholas' NS

Fire Drill & Evacuation Policy.

Aims:

This policy aims to:

- Enable the school to provide for the immediate needs of students, staff, and visitors in the event of a fire or the fire alarm sounding.
- Ensure appropriate safety procedures are in place in compliance with the Health, Safety, and Welfare at Work Act.
- Establish a structured evacuation plan that accounts for all school community members, including those requiring assistance.
- Ensure efficient verification of fire alarms before evacuation if there is suspicion of a false activation.
- Implement effective communication procedures for emergencies, including parental notification if needed.
- Maintain alternative evacuation plans for extreme weather conditions.
- Provide annual staff training and student awareness programs on fire safety.

School Ethos:

The school is committed to the care of the whole school community and the provision of a safe and secure environment for learning. This policy is in keeping with those ideals.

Objectives:

- To utilize outside agencies (Rathkeale Fire Station, fire officers) for pupil and staff fire safety development.

- To develop a tested and trusted framework that ensures the safety of all school personnel in the event of a fire.
- To implement a clear role allocation among staff members to support an orderly evacuation.
- To increase fire drills to at least two per term, with one scheduled and one unannounced drill.
- To maintain emergency attendance records in both digital and printed formats for roll call verification.
- To establish a Personal Evacuation Plan (PEP) for students or staff who require additional assistance during evacuations.
- To introduce emergency communication procedures with parents if an evacuation occurs due to a real fire.

Internal Procedures:

In the event of a fire, the following steps must be taken:

- Activation of the fire alarm immediately upon detection of fire.
- Verification of the alarm by school leadership before evacuation if there is any suspicion of a false activation.
- Children must stand up, push their chairs under the tables, and calmly walk in single file to the designated exit.
- Teachers must check classroom toilets before vacating the room.
- SNAs will accompany the class where they are working at that time.
- Each class must proceed calmly and promptly to the allocated fire assembly point in the playground.
- If external conditions (severe weather, unsafe environment) prevent outdoor assembly, an alternative indoor evacuation point will be communicated to staff.
- The class teachers will bring the fire drill classroom list and Principal will bring the digital attendance record to the fire assembly point.
- Teachers will confirm that all students are accounted for.
- Designated staff members i.e. school secretary will check hallways, bathrooms, and common areas before confirming full evacuation.
- Pupils and staff may only return to the building once permission is given by the principal or fire authority.

Fire Drill Frequency:

- Fire drills will take place at least once per term, including one unannounced drill to assess readiness.
- If an evacuation occurs due to a real fire emergency or a similar type emergency, parents will be notified via [text, email, or school communication app] once all students are accounted for.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Principal and Deputy Principal:

- Overall responsibility for ensuring proper procedures are in place.
- Fire alarm verification if necessary.
- Ensuring that fire extinguishers are checked annually, with a compliance certificate displayed in the school.
- Coordinating roll call and parent communication during real emergencies.

Teachers & SNAs:

- Responsible for the safe evacuation of pupils in their care.
- Checking toilets/classroom spaces before leaving.
- Escorting students to the designated assembly area.
- Ensuring students remain calm and orderly throughout the drill.

Evaluation & Review:

Feedback Collection: Input from staff and students will be gathered after each drill to identify areas for improvement.

Performance Monitoring: Success is measured by an orderly and coordinated evacuation in the shortest time possible.

Annual Review: The policy will be reviewed and discussed yearly to incorporate best practices and update evacuation plans as needed.

Ratification:

The policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management in April 2025.

Signed: _____ (Chairperson)

Date: _____