

SAFETY, HEALTH AND WELFARE STATEMENT

This document sets out the *Safety, Health and Welfare* policy of Greenfields Childcare Centre and Montessori School and specifies the means provided to achieve this policy.

Our aim is to comply with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005.

Our objective is to provide a safe and healthy work environment for all our children, employees, parents, students and visitors.

Greenfields Childcare Centre and Montessori School is committed, in so far as is reasonable and practicable to provide the following;

- A safe workplace
- Safe means of access and egress
- Safe equipment
- Safe systems of work
- Provision of appropriate information, training and supervision
- Provision of protective equipment if necessary
- Provision of emergency plans

The success of the policy will depend on the co-operation of all employees. It is therefore important that you read and understand our safety policy and understand your role in our overall arrangements for health and safety. A copy of the Safety statement will be available in the office for inspection also each employee shall have a copy of the Safety Statement. It is our intention to review this statement regularly, or in light of experience and/or change in legislation.

Opening Statement

This document sets out the Safety Policy of Greenfields Childcare Centre and Montessori School's commitment to providing safety and health in the workplace and specifies the manner, the organisation, the resources and the co-operation required to achieve that policy. Our objective is to provide a safe and healthy work environment for all our employees and to meet our obligations to children, contractors, visitors and others that may be affected by our operations.

It is our intention to review this Policy regularly (at a minimum of once a year) in the light of changing situations, experience and the new developments at our centre. All employees (and others) are encouraged to put forward constructive suggestions for improving this safety policy. Where changes are made they will be clearly marked and the reason for change will be stated.

The contents of this statement will be made known to all employees, including parents, contractors, visitors and all others that may be affected by our operations.

Signed;

Chairperson: _____

Secretary: _____

Treasurer: _____

Date: _____

Review of Statement

At Greenfields in accordance to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, on completion of a risk assessment will review the Safety Statement where:-

- There has being significant changes to the matters concerning the statement
- There is reason to believe the statement is no longer valid
- An inspector in the course of an inspection, investigation, examination, inquiry directs that the safety statement be amended within 30days of the giving of that direction.

Safe Systems of Work

It is the policy of Greenfields Childcare Centre and Montessori School to ensure that tasks are within the competence and capacity of our employees. The systems of work are designed with this in mind. Good ergonomics are also taken into account in designing, operating and changing systems of work. The training provided to employees indentifies the areas where care and skill must be exercised.

It is our policy, when purchasing equipment, altering existing or changing systems of work, that employees study such purposed purchases or changes to ensure, as far as reasonable and practicable, that they are without significant hazard.

Safe systems of work will include consideration for the Safety and Health of children, parents, students and visitors.

Systems of work will be reviewed regularly or on request from any employee or parent.

Duties of the Employer

Here at Greenfields we ensure as far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of all our employees.

Our duties include:-

- Managing and conducting work activities in such a way as to ensure as far as is reasonably practicable the safety, health and welfare at work of all our employees.
- Managing and conducting work activities in such a way as to prevent, so far as is reasonably practicable, any improper conduct or behaviour likely to put the safety, health or welfare at work of his/her employees at risk.
- Ensure that the place of work is maintained in a condition that is safe and without risk to health
- Ensure that the place of work has a safe means of entering and exiting.
- Ensure all fire exits are not blocked and all employees, parents and contractors know where they are positioned.
- Provide systems of work that are planned, organised, preformed, maintained and revised as appropriate
- Provide and maintain facilities and arrangements for the welfare of all employees at work
- Provided appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision necessary , as far as is reasonable to, all employees
- Where risks cannot be eliminated or adequately controlled, provide and maintain such suitable protective clothing and equipment as is necessary to ensure the safety, health and welfare of all employees
- Prepare and revise, as appropriate, adequate plans and procedures to be followed and measures to be taken in case of emergency or serious and imminent danger
- Report accidents and dangerous occurrences to the Health and Safety Authority
- Ensure that any measures taken in relation to health, safety and welfare at work do not involve financial cost to any employee

Duties of Employees

It shall be the duty of every employee while at work;

- To take reasonable care for his/her own safety, health and welfare and that of any other person who may be affected by his/her acts or omissions while at work.
- Ensure that he/she is not under the influence of an intoxicant to the extent that he/she is in such a state as to endanger his/her own safety, health or welfare or that of others.
- If reasonable required by your employer, submit to any appropriate, reasonable and proportionate test for intoxicants by, or under the supervision of, a registered medical practitioner.
- To co-operate with his/her employer and any other persons to such an extent as will enable his/her employer and any other person to comply with any other relevant statutory provision.
- Not engage in improper conduct or other behaviour that is likely to endanger his/her own safety, health or welfare at work or that of any other person/child.
- Attend any relevant training relating to health, safety and welfare or relating to work carried out.
- Having regard to his/her training and the instructions given by his/her employer, make correct use of any article or substance provided for use by the employee at work or for the protection of his/her safety, health and welfare, including protective clothing or equipment.
- To report to their manager any defects in equipment which might cause a hazard
- Report to the manager any work being carried on, or likely to be carried on, in a manner which may endanger the safety, health and welfare at work of the employee or that of others.
- Report to the manager any defects in the place and systems of work, any article or substance which might endanger the health, safety and welfare of the employee or others.
- Report to the manager any contravention of the relevant statutory provisions which may endanger the safety, health, and welfare at work of the employee or others.
- An employee shall not, on entering into a contract of employment, misrepresent him/herself to the employer with regard to the level of health and safety training they have received.
- An employee shall not intentionally, recklessly or without reasonable cause, interfere with, misuse or damage any property of Greenfields.

Instruction and Training

Greenfields Childcare Centre and Montessori School expects that all employees will co-operate in the training provided. Certain tasks in our operation require that strict safety procedures be followed. Where this arises the employees receive special instructions. It is essential that no person attempt a potentially hazardous task without instruction.

Training is seen as an essential part of the work and development of an employee and the Childcare Centre. Opportunities are provided to enable employees to develop their potential, in particular in the introduction of new work equipment or new work systems, change of equipment and/or the introduction of new technology. Time for training is programmed into employee's schedule (in as far as practicable) and outside training courses are funded (where possible) and employees are encouraged to attend.

In relation to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 the employer shall, when providing training/ instruction to his/her employees ensure that;

- **Training and instruction are provided in a manner and, as appropriate, language that will be understood by the employee concerned.**
- **The employee's capabilities in relation to safety, health and welfare are taken into account when assigned a task e.g. if a staff member states back pain they will not be able to take part in moving furniture.**

Induction Training programs are provided and new employees are also familiarised with their job description, workload, codes of practice, procedures and health and safety issues.

In-service training programs are provided and new employees are also familiarised with their job description, workload, and codes of practice, procedures and health and safety issues.

Any person working in Greenfields who is an employee of another employer will receive instructions relating to any risks to their safety, health and welfare in that place of work as appropriate.

Person responsible for instruction: The Manager or when not available a Designated Room Leader.

Stress

Care is taken that the employees (and students) are not required to undertake a job which outstrips the skills of the person, resulting in qualitative overload.

The Management of Greenfields Childcare Centre and Montessori School recognises that in the caring/teaching profession there is a real danger of stress and the individual can easily find him/herself in a situation where he/she;

- Either cannot or will not delegate chores to another.
- Has no real sense of his/her responsibility.
- Cannot say 'no' to a new task because of fear of reprisal or creating a bad image, of feeling it is a matter of immediate urgency.

Care is taken when interviewing as to the suitability of the candidate for his/her particular job.

Management/Employees/Students have frequent meetings where methods/feelings are openly discussed and conclusions come to. This ensures support and understanding. Greenfields Childcare Centre and Montessori School recognise the stress involved in caring for young children.

To achieve a satisfied, efficient and motivated workforce Greenfields Childcare Centre and Montessori School have set out the following principals;

- Keeping employees informed of developments and progress.
- Being fair/just.
- Understanding the psychology of groups, especially small groups and the good that flows from a harmonious team.
- Providing the means by which people can develop in their jobs (in as far as is practicable)
- Encouraging responsible attitudes

Feedback – help alleviate stress levels

There are two main forms of feedback:

1. Recognition – for good performance and effort. Credit is given to personal qualities which contribute to successful performance.
2. Constructive Criticism – effective criticism is seen as a method of improving poor performance without impairing motivation.

Emergencies and Dangers

Here at Greenfields Child Care Centre and Montessori School we regard safety in relation to emergencies and dangers very seriously and deal with these through certain guidelines. In accordance to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, our manager shall in preparing procedures to be followed in the case of an emergency;-

- Provide adequate measures in completing First Aid, Fire Drills and evacuation of employees in relation to our place of work.
- Have contact with relevant emergency services – fire service, medical assistance rescue services.
- Designate employees to certain areas of Safety and Welfare i.e. Health and safety Officer and ensure these employees have adequate training and the equipment available to them is adequate to the potential hazard.

In the event of an emergency or serious and imminent danger, an employer/manager shall;-

- Inform all employees concerned of the risk involved and the steps to be followed to protect everyone from it.
- Stop employees from resuming work where there is still a serious danger to their health and safety.
- Ensure that, an employee can take the necessary steps to avoid the consequences of the danger, if the appropriate guidance or instruction is absent or the employee's superior who is responsible cannot be contacted.

Also an employer must ensure that only employees who have received appropriate instructions have access to the area where a serious, specific danger exists.

Bullying in the Work Place

Bullying is a health and safety issue, and is considered a workplace hazard which must be treated within the Safety Management System. A risk assessment will be carried out to eliminate or reduce the risk of its consequences should it occur.

Employees have a responsibility to ensure that they are not contributing to a bullying culture and to take reasonable care for his/her own safety, health and welfare and that of any other person who may be affected by his/her own acts or omissions while at work.

Managers and supervisors should be alert to the possibility of bullying behaviour and be familiar with the policies and procedures for dealing with allegations of bullying.

Accident Prevention

At Greenfields Childcare Centre and Montessori School we have frequent meetings with regard to accident prevention. It is the policy of Greenfields to promote the health, well being and personal safety of all children, adults, volunteers and students involved in our service, through developing and regularly reviewing accident prevention procedures and fire safety procedures. However we are aware that accidents may occur regardless of how vigilant we are and therefore we have set up an accident investigation procedure. We investigate all accidents for a number of reasons. Including:

- We may have statutory obligation we need to identify
- Information needs to be gathered so that suitable remedial action may be taken.
- A report will be required for the insurance company if necessary.
- A parent (if a child has been involved) has a right to know what has happened.
- A record is kept for future analysis.

Risk assessments are carried out every month by our manager and designated Health and Safety Officer, throughout the building. Also once a year the Health and Safety Representative from the committee carry out a safety Audit.

Accident Investigation

Accident Investigation report must include;

- Name and address of the injured person
- The age
- How long they have been in Greenfields.
- Description of injuries
- Did they receive first aid and by whom
- Were they taken to hospital and were they detained.
- Exactly where the accident occurred
- The date, time
- The weather conditions must be stated if it occurred outside
- The lighting at the scene
- Details of the actual accident
- Witnesses
- Were any photographs taken?
- How many children/ adults were at the scene at the time the accident occurred.

There is a detailed Report Sheet available to all employees.

Fire and Evacuation

Greenfields Childcare Centre and Montessori School has a comprehensive fire and evacuation plan. This deals with raising the alarm, evacuation, fire fighting, and roles of staff/management in an emergency.

Fire Detection Equipment

We have smoke detectors throughout the building which automatically raise the alarm when they are exposed to smoke.

Evacuation Procedures:

On hearing the alarm all employees and children evacuate the building and assemble at the assembly points. Room leaders are in charge of the roll call register and this is checked. The parents sign in and out book is brought and checked by designated person. These staff members communicate the outcome of their roll call to the manager. This manager takes control of the situation and is responsible for dealing with any emergency and authorising re-entry to the building in conjunction with the Fire Brigade.

Fire Fighting Equipment:

There are appropriate fire extinguishers located around the building. At least half of staff members have been trained in their use. The extinguishers are checked weekly by our caretaker and by the suppliers each year. The location of the nearest fire hydrant connection is known to employees.

Fire Drill:

Greenfields is committed to doing emergency drills once a month as to ensure that all children/employees/others fully understand the procedure.

Good Housekeeping

Cleaning:

Floors, walls and ceilings are kept clean, as are windows and lighting fixtures. Equipment is washed at least once a week. Tables and chairs in every room are washed each day. Special care is taken of eating areas to ensure cleanliness. All drains are kept in a clean condition. All spills are cleaned up immediately and warning signs posted for all wet floors. Floors are mopped daily and warning signs are posted.

Safe Access:

Passageways are of sufficient width and clearly marked. All passageways are kept clear of materials and equipment. Space between tables is sufficient for safe movement. All floors are free from slippery materials, loose objects, and are maintained in good condition.

Waste Disposal:

Sufficient, suitable containers are available for scrap, waste and spillage. There are safe means of access to disposal unit. The containers are removed regularly in a safe and healthy manner.

Storage:

Materials, articles, equipment is stored in properly designed areas and there is ample storage space. All storage space is so constructed to ensure stability. All storage space is kept within safe maximum heights. There is safe means of access to every storage area and sufficient storage containers are provided.

Lighting:

Lighting is satisfactory at all points and the distribution of natural light or artificial light is not being impaired. Defective or missing bulbs are replaced immediately. Care is taken to ensure that no shadow is being cast on passageways.

Health and Welfare:

There is a qualified person in charge of First Aid and the First Aid Box is readily available and complete. All toilets and washing facilities are kept in a clean condition and well maintained. There is adequate accommodation for clothing and there is drinking water conveniently accessible. All cloths, delph, utensils are kept in a clean condition and regularly sterilised.

General:

All necessary statutory notices are displayed. All electrical sockets, outlets and switches are properly maintained and serviced and all sockets are covered. The playground equipment is checked before use and anything that is broken or hazardous is disposed of. The outdoor play space is inspected daily for broken glass etc. The premise is adequately heated and ventilated. The detergents, cleaning fluids and disinfectants are kept in a special locked cupboard. No employees or student is allowed to take hot liquid out of the staff area.

Electricity

We in Greenfields Childcare Centre and Montessori School always employ an electrical expert to install any electrical equipment or to make any changes to the electrical wiring or appliances which may be required. When using appliances staff are instructed to;

- Check before use
- Only use the control provided
- Keep dry at all times
- Switch off if a fault occurs
- Report faults immediately.

We also recognise the general practice of overload which is practised in many homes and offices and attention is drawn to the capabilities of each sockets/plugs. (Trip switches are in use throughout Greenfields)

Hygiene

The importance of hygiene at Greenfields Childcare Centre and Montessori School manifests itself on two fronts: - operational hygiene and structural hygiene. The first entails educating all our employees on an ongoing basis in all areas of personal hygiene. As far as infrastructural hygiene is concerned in as far as possible all equipment is designed to prevent bacterial infestation. The aim is to ensure that all personnel are as well educated towards hygiene as possible.

Food:

The management of Greenfields Childcare Centre and Montessori School are particularly conscious of the dangers of gastro-enteritis and Salmonella poisoning. There are sufficient facilities for cleaning and disinfecting hands and for cleaning utensils so that no one has any excuse for unhygienic practices. In food preparation areas, hands will be washed under running water before handling food, raw and cooked food will be prepared in separate areas, fresh fruit and vegetables will be washed thoroughly and all utensils will be kept clean and stored appropriately. The habits of the employees in this regard are regularly monitored.

All food areas are treated in an appropriate manner to ensure that conditions for the spread of bacteria are minimised. 'Best before' dates are strictly adhered to.

Waste:

Employees are also made familiar with the June 1990 directive in Waste Disposal. This directive covers the disposal of waste in an environmentally safe manner and such waste disposal procedures are followed at all times.

All waste is disposed of properly and out of reach of children and a lid is kept on all dustbins at all times.

All bins are disinfected on a weekly basis.

In the case of clearing bodily fluids, disposable latex gloves are worn and all areas are disinfected.

Insurance

Greenfields Childcare Centre and Montessori School holds appropriate and adequate insurance cover in order to comply with statutory insurance responsibilities, protect the group's property and to protect the Managing Directors in the event of a valid claim against them. It also covers any liability incurred with regard to the children.

Contractors

In considering a contractor for any task to be performed, Greenfields Childcare Centre and Montessori School satisfies itself that:

1. The contractor has a thorough knowledge of safety standards in his/her particular speciality and has a record of putting them into practice.
2. The contractor's safety statement is thorough and up to date and accurately reflects his/her operating practices.
3. The insurance is adequate.

In award of a contract the following points are discussed and agreed with the contractor in advance:

1. The contractor's compliance with all Greenfields in house safety rules and with the Health and Safety Legislation.
2. Attention must be taken of the whereabouts of the children and the special hazards and risks which exist in a pre-school centre.
3. Hazards to be brought on-site by the contractor must be revealed, controlled and minimised by the contractor.
4. Inspection of work on completion of contract.

Sub – Contractors:

It is a condition of Greenfields that any main contractor intending to use subcontractors on our site makes these sub-contractors aware of our;

1. Safety Statement
2. In-house safety rules
3. Any special conditions imposed by us to minimise a hazard and protect our own workforce and the children.

Students and Volunteers

Students and Volunteers play an important part in Greenfields childcare Centre and Montessori School but are never used in place of paid workers or in achieving essential staff ratios.

Students are carefully selected in conjunction with the Training College and both students and volunteers are informed of the exceptions, working conditions, etc.

No student or volunteer is at any time in sole charge of any children and they are closely supervised.

Children and Adults with Disabilities or Special Needs

Greenfields Child Care Centre and Montessori School believes that groups should provide for children and adults with special needs. The proportion of children does not exceed 1 in 8 which ensures that the group can adequately and safely provide for all the children's needs.

Children and adults who are HIV positive are not excluded as they pose no risk to others because of our hygiene rules. Special care is taken that the individual who is HIV positive is protected from cross infection.

Extra special care with regards to safety is taken of children or adults with special needs.