

St. Mary's
Secondary School
BALLINA
Co. Mayo
Health & Safety Policy

Safety Statement.

In accordance with the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act 2005, it is the policy of the Board of Management of St. Mary's Secondary School, Ballina, Co. Mayo (hereafter referred to as the Board of Management) to ensure, insofar as it is reasonable, practicable and possible, the safety, health and welfare at work of all school staff and to protect pupils, visitors, contractors and other persons on the school premises from injury and/or ill-health arising from any work activity.

The successful implementation of this policy requires the full support and active co-operation of all members of the school staff in whatever capacity they are employed. It also requires the full and wholehearted co-operation of students, visitors to the school for whatever reason and contractors working on the school premises in whatever capacity they are employed.

It is recognised that hazard identification, risk assessment and control measures are legislative requirements which must be carried out by the employer to ensure the safety, health and welfare of all staff.

The Board of Management, in it's capacity as an employer, undertakes, insofar as it is reasonable and practicable, to :-

- a. Promote standards of safety, health and welfare that comply with the provisions and requirements of the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act 2005 and with other relevant legislation, standards and codes of practice.
- b. Provide information, training, instruction and supervision, where necessary, to enable staff to perform their work in a safe and effective manner.
- c. Maintain a constant and continuing interest in matters of health and safety relevant to the school.
- d. Continually strive to improve the system in place for the management of occupational safety and health and review it on a regular basis to ensure that it remains relevant, appropriate and effective.
- e. Consult with staff on matters relating to health, safety and welfare at work.
- f. Provide the necessary resources to ensure the safety, health and welfare of all those to whom it owes a duty of care, i.e. all school staff in whatever capacity they are employed, pupils, to the school in whatever capacity they are employed, and visitors to the school in whatever capacity that may be.

The Board of Management is committed to playing an active role in the implementation of the Health & Safety Policy and undertakes to review and, where necessary, revise it so as to take account of changes in the legislation, experience and other relevant developments.

Signed :

At M. Brett

Chairperson, Board of Management.

School : St. Marys Secondary School

Date : 6th Dec 2016

Health & Safety Policy

Managing Health & Safety in St. Mary's Secondary School, Ballina.

At present, the responsibility for Health & Safety in the aforementioned school is the responsibility of an assistant principal as part of their post of responsibility. At the time of compiling this policy the school does not have a Health & Safety Representative.

Role of the designated Safety Officer.

The Health & Safety Officer is an Assistant Principal and is responsible for co-ordinating the management of Health & Safety within the school. The Health & Safety Officer will liaise with the School Principal and/or with the Board of Management of the school on matters relating to Health & Safety within the school. Where it is necessary for the Health & Safety Officer to bring concerns relating to Health & Safety within the school to the attention of the Board of Management of the school this will be done through the School Principal, usually by means of letter or memorandum.

Notwithstanding what has been stated in the foregoing paragraph, management retains responsibility for overall safety issues within the school. Management also retains responsibility for having urgent repairs carried out or for taking corrective action on a daily basis. More complex matters are referred to the Board of Management of the school for resolution. The Board of Management has ultimate responsibility for the resolution and resourcing of health and safety issues within the school. The Dept. of Education and Science must also take responsibility for larger amounts of funding required to rectify more serious hazards.

General Safety.

It is the aim of the Board of Management of St. Mary's Secondary School to provide a working environment which is safe. However, staff, students and other persons on the school premises - whether contractors or visitors - have a role to play in the attainment of this aim. They may fulfill their responsibility by :

- Observing the general rules of safety and adhering to the terms of the Code of Conduct.
- Using all plant, machinery and equipment in a safe and proper manner and under supervision if required to do so.
- Employing proper procedures when carrying out tasks and ensuring that no practices are used which may act as a source of danger to the user or to others.
- Keeping work areas clean and tidy at all times.
- Ensuring that corridors, particularly those which lead to exits, are kept free of obstruction at all times.

- Ensuring that corridors, particularly those which lead to exits, are kept free of obstruction at all times.
- Making sure that fire points and fire hoses are accessible at all times and ready for use should the need arise.
- Practising fire drill procedures, keeping clear of cars in the car park and roadways (insofar as that is possible) and entering/exiting the school in a safe manner.

Description of the Workplace.

St. Mary's Secondary School is located on an elevated site overlooking the town of Ballina. Since its inception in 1890 when founded by the Sisters of Mercy the school has grown in an incremental fashion in response to increasing student numbers. The school is composed of eight (8 no.) separate buildings located on one fairly large site.

The original school was housed in one building which is currently the oldest part of the school. It is known as 'St. Mary's'. Although it is now a two storey building it was originally a single storey building, the upper storey having been added at a later date. There is one main entrance to this building and there is also a side entrance in one of the gables. Inside the main door a corridor runs to the left and right as one enters. To the left lie the main stairs to the upper storey. The right leads to a classroom and on the other side of that classroom, inside the side door another flight of stairs lead to the upper storey. On the ground floor of this building there are - in total - four classrooms, two blocks of toilets and an office. On the first floor there are four classrooms, a small suite of of toilets and a small room which leads to the second stairway commonly known as the 'backstairs' which takes one downstairs to the side door in the gable end of the building. Due to the age of 'St. Mary's' I think that it would be safe to assume that it is of stone construction.

Beside St. Mary's is another building known as 'St. Anne's'. As far as a layman can ascertain its construction is predominantly of pre-cast concrete. It is roughly T shaped. There is a main entrance in the bar of the T at the front. This is the sole main entrance. However, at the other end of this building there is a fire exit door allowing exit from the building at this point. At this end of the building also there are two general purpose classrooms which each have a fire exit door. There is also a Home Economics kitchen here which has a fire exit door. This building is home to a variety of rooms. There are five general purpose rooms currently in use as classrooms. Close to the main entrance there is a Biology lab. with a store room leading of it. Close to the main entrance also there is a small room which is used for one-to-one or small group tuition mainly for special needs pupils. This building also contains an Art room, a Computer room as well as a Home Economics kitchen (already mentioned) and a suite of toilets. The Art room does not have a fire exit door but is close to the fire exit door at the end of the corridor which has been mentioned already. The Computer room does have a fire exit door.

Located a short distance away from 'St. Anne's' and 'St. Mary's' is the largest building on the site. I use the term 'largest' both in terms of floor area and number of rooms. Although constructed in the late 1980's, it is still referred to as 'The New School'. It was built on a steeply sloping site and is on two levels. Due to the nature of the site and the construction of the building the main entrance is on the upper level. This upper level houses seven classrooms in total. Also situated on this level are the offices of the Principal, Deputy-Principal and the office of the school secretaries. The offices of the school Chaplain and career-guidance teacher are also located on this upper level also.

The school library is located on this level also as is the school canteen and the staffroom. Close to the main entrance a suite of toilets is located. The front door provides the main point of entry and exit to this building but it is not the only one. At the opposite end of the main corridor there is another door used by students for entering and exiting the building. This is not a fire exit door but is in use all the time and would be a point of exit in the event of a fire. There is a further exit door beside the staffroom although this door is not used by students as a rule. There is also a fire exit door which leads outside from the school canteen. Two classrooms which were added to this building at a later stage and which are positioned close to the main entrance also have a fire exit door each. There is also a fire exit door leading directly from the library down a flight of steps outside to the lower level of the building. This fire exit door however is permanently locked and a locked gate has been positioned at the bottom of the steps to prevent intruders climbing the steps.

This measure was necessary due to a number of instances of vandalism in this part of the building and also to prevent the threat of a break-in to the school via the library. In mitigation it has to be stated that any occupants of the library would be close to the main entrance to the school in the event of an evacuation being necessary.

Directly beneath this level is the lower level of the building. Access to this lower level is usually gained from the upper level via a staircase inside the main entrance door or another staircase at the opposite end of the main hallway. As is the case in the upper level, a corridor runs the length of this lower level as well. At either end of this corridor there is a suite of toilets. This level houses a Geography room and a Music room with a small general purpose classroom sandwiched between them. There is also an Art room, a Chemistry lab., a Physics lab. (with a storeroom between them), a demonstration room and a Home Economics kitchen on this level.

At either end of this corridor there are doors leading directly outside on to the lower level. These doors are locked but the key to them is contained in a small cabinet with a breakable glass face beside them. The Home Economics kitchen, the Chemistry lab., Physics lab. and Art room also have fire exit doors leading directly outside. With regard to the rooms mentioned in the foregoing sentence the fire doors are of the 'push down bar' variety as is the fire exit door in the library, mentioned in a previous paragraph. The rest of the fire exit doors which have been mentioned in connection with the 'New School' have a lock and the key in a little cabinet with a breakable glass face beside the each door.

Of the remaining five buildings, four are pre-fabricated. They will be referred to from here on as 'pre-fabs'. One of these pre-fabs (and the latest to be erected) is adjacent to the 'New School' described in the previous paragraphs. It is a very large single room which could easily be subdivided into two classrooms. In the same wall of this pre-fab there are two doors side by side with only a few feet in length separating them, hence my comment about the pre-fab being suitable for sub-division into two rooms.

Close to St. Mary's (which was mentioned earlier) and sited parallel to it, there is a pre-fab. block of four classrooms. Two of these classrooms have direct entry from the outside. These are located at either end of the pre-fab. block. In the case of the two centre rooms a single door leads into a little hall. This contains a door to the left and another to the right, both giving access to a classroom each. Apart from the entrance doors, all of these classrooms have fire exit doors of the 'push down bar' variety leading directly outside.

Close to 'St. Anne's' mentioned earlier there is another pre-fab. block. An outer door leads to a small hallway. A door to the left and another door to the right lead into general purpose classrooms. A third door directly opposite the outer door leads into a small classroom which is currently used as a special needs classroom/resource room. The two main classrooms in this building have fire exit doors of the 'push down bar' variety at the rear leading directly outside. Exit from the special needs classroom is through the main entrance door to the building.

The remaining pre-fab is a larger building than any of the pre-fabs detailed so far. Entry to this building is gained by double doors. Once inside, on the right there is a suite of toilets followed by three general purpose classrooms running the length of the central hallway. Just inside the main entrance doors on the left there is a storage room, an office and a further three general purpose classrooms. At the end of the central hallway there are double fire doors of the 'push down bar' variety leading directly outside.

The remaining building in the school complex is the Sports/P.E. Hall. While this is on the same site as the rest of the school it is some distance away from the rest of the school buildings. This building consists of a large hall with a wooden floor. This hall is used for P.E. and indoor sports such as basketball etc. It is also used for staging school musicals, school pantomimes, parent - teacher meetings and exams, both school exams and state exams. At one end of the hall there is a stage. This building also contains a suite of toilets and two classrooms although they are not currently in use as classrooms. There are two entry points to this building. The main outer entrance which has double doors leads into a short hallway. Straight ahead double doors lead directly into the P.E. hall. To the right, off this hallway another hallway leads past a suite of toilets into a classroom. The other classroom beside it is accessed from outside providing the second entrance referred to earlier. The P.E. hall can also be accessed from this classroom.

The P.E. hall has two separate fire exit doors. These are located in the wall opposite the entrance doors. One set of fire doors are located at the top of the hall close to the stage, while the other set of doors are at the bottom of the hall. Both of these fire exit doors are double doors and are secured with bolts. Both lead directly outside.

St. Mary's Secondary School - Entry and Exit Points.

In total there are three entrances to St. Mary's Secondary School.

1. There is a pedestrian entrance from Convent Hill Road through the grounds of the adjoining primary school.
2. The entrance which is most widely used is also located on Convent Hill Road. It is a short distance further down the aforementioned road from the entrance referred to in No. 1 above. This entrance is thought of as the main entrance due to the fact that it is used by so many people on a daily basis. However, strictly speaking, it is not the official school entrance to the school. It is the official entrance to the Convent building - no longer occupied by the Sisters of Mercy. That said, it is used by large numbers of people on a daily basis both pedestrian traffic and motor traffic. The motor traffic includes staff and ancillary staff cars, vans and lorries delivering materials and some parents who deliver their offspring to the school itself.
3. The third entrance is located a short distance further down Convent Hill Road from the entrance described in No. 2 above. This road leads into a housing estate called - appropriately enough - 'Convent Hill Estate'. This is the official entrance to St. Mary's Secondary School. Inside the main gates here there is a car park with basketball courts beyond. From here the school can be accessed on foot up a flight of steps or up a winding roadway. This roadway can be accessed by cars but would not be suitable for larger vehicles owing to the narrowness of the roadway.

The number of entrances to the school and the diverse range of traffic entering and leaving the school grounds creates it's own problems in terms of traffic management and pedestrian safety. This is a theme that will be returned to in later sections of this Health & Safety Policy.

Specific Hazards

Traffic Management.

Due to the nature of the school layout, pedestrian traffic is a feature of school life during the length of the school day. That in itself might not pose such a problem if it were not for the fact that students are sharing the internal roadway with motor traffic.

Students arrive at the school in a variety of ways. Some arrive by bus, others are driven by their parents or other family members, others walk to school and a small minority drive their own cars to school.

Most students who are driven to school are deposited at the entrance on Convent Hill, referred to on page no 8 as 'entrance no. 2'. Although not the official school entrance it is the one most widely used. These students then make the trip from this entrance to their classroom for roll call and tutor class. A length of pavement runs from the entrance gates to where the entrance drive diverges. At this point one section of the drive goes straight ahead to the front of the Convent. Another section veers to the left past one side of the Convent, around the back of the Convent, around the other side and links up with the other drive at the front of the Convent.

The pavement mentioned in the foregoing paragraph only runs to the point of divergence of the drive. Students going straight on to the front of the Convent to access the school have to share the rest of the drive with motor traffic.

Where the junction occurs a pedestrian crossing was painted in a number of years ago at the point where students cross the driveway. While this has made things somewhat safer it is far from ideal. One is relying on drivers to observe the pedestrian crossing and bring their vehicles to a halt allowing students to cross at the pedestrian crossing. One is also relying on students looking left and particularly looking right before they venture across the pedestrian crossing. This junction would benefit from the installation of a flashing amber or red light and an appropriate sign warning both pedestrians and drivers to exercise caution.

Movement Between Classes And Buildings.

During the school day students are on the move between various buildings every forty minutes or so. With vehicular access to almost all parts of the school the risk of a student being injured by a motor vehicle are quite real. Short of banning all motor traffic from the school grounds it is difficult to see an overall solution to this problem.

Buildings on the school site.

Another building which is located on the school grounds is the residence formerly occupied by the Sisters of Mercy. This is a large two storey building mainly of stone construction. A section added at a later date is of concrete block construction. Since the Sisters of Mercy re-located to alternative accommodation a number of years ago this building has been unoccupied. While the building is intact and - generally speaking - is structurally in good repair, it is subject to the depredations visited by time and the weather on any unoccupied building

The major concern here lies with the roof of the building. The roof is of a very steep pitch and the roofing material is slate. These are not the modern manufactured slates but the older type of slate. Due to the high pitch of the roof and the very exposed nature of the school site there is always the risk of slates becoming loose and being dislodged during storms. They pose a threat particularly to pedestrians. Due to the layout of the school it is difficult, if not impossible, to avoid being in proximity to one side or another of this building.

On a more general note it has to be stated that very few buildings on this school site have any degree of shelter. The site is both high and exposed. Depending on the direction of the wind one side or another of most buildings will be buffeted. Fortunately, to date, storm damage has been minimal but there is the risk of material becoming dislodged and airborne during storms. The fact that there are so many individual buildings has created a number of 'corridors' between the various buildings. These have the effect of funneling the wind along certain routes giving it added velocity and force.

Access to the school.

The open nature of the school site makes it easy for persons not having any connection with the school to enter the school grounds at will. As already stated there are three separate points of entry to the school which leaves it very open to trespassers and/or intruders. So far there have not been many instances of intrusion which could be deemed serious but it does remain a concern. The only all-encompassing solution would be to lock all entrances from the beginning to the end of the school day but that would not be feasible.

Problems relating to buildings - St. Mary's Building.

The first floor of St. Mary's is served by a stairway at either end. One of these stairways is reasonably wide but the other stairway is quite narrow. In relation to the latter stairway, not only is it narrow but it is also quite steep. As it is in daily use by both staff and students caution is needed when ascending or descending these stairs.

Problems relating to buildings - the 'New School'.

Apart from the pre-fabs, most of which have been acquired fairly recently, the most recently constructed building is the building referred to as the 'New School'. This building was constructed in the mid to late 1980's. As has been mentioned earlier it was constructed on a steeply sloping site and is over two levels. The top level effectively forms the ground floor of the building. The level underneath it is lit by a combination of natural and artificial light but could be considered a basement.

Whether due to the nature of the site or for some other reason this building has a lot of gables and the roof is in sections. A number of problems have arisen with this building commencing fairly soon after it was constructed.

- **Cracks.** There is a large crack running from the lower level to the upper level. This crack runs upwards along a wall in the lower level of the building and continues through a section of floor in the upper level. This is not a hairline crack. It is quite deep and runs through the blockwork.
- **Ingress of water.** The roof of this building is in a number of sections. Most of the roof is of pitch design but some sections of it are flat. There have been problems for quite some time with water seeping through the sections of flat roof and downwards onto the ceilings of the rooms below. This is an persistent problem and can only be rectified by enlisting the services of a building contractor to apply a waterproof solution to the area of flat roof affected in an effort to prevent ingress of water. Both the problem and the solution are ongoing.
- **Mould and dampness.** The exterior of this building has never been either rendered or painted. It's on an exposed site with one side facing south while the other side faces north. In the absence of either paint or render there is nothing to prevent dampness seeping through the blockwork to the internal walls inside. I am unable to comment on the degree of insulating material in the cavity of the external walls. The result of this is the appearance of a black mould on the walls of a number of rooms in this building. This mould is to be observed both in rooms on the upper level and rooms on the lower level. This mould is usually to be found where the wall meets the ceiling and sometimes the mould growth can be observed further down the wall. It is particularly prevalent in the corners of rooms. Although it has been treated it has tended to return again, indicating a fundamental underlying problem.
- **Movement of traffic within the school.** As has been mentioned earlier there are three points of entry to the school grounds.
There is a pedestrian access which is shared to some extent with the adjoining primary school. Many students living in the housing estates around St. Mary's Secondary School travel to school on foot and use this entrance. When they get into the school grounds they are obliged to cross a fairly large car park and an internal roadway system. Part of this internal roadway system runs between the car park referred to above and the rear of the convent building. The traffic flow is two way and is fairly busy in the morning and in the evening. This presents a hazard for pedestrian traffic crossing this roadway at these times. There is another access point from Convent Hill Road through a gateway. Probably the most widely used entrance, it is the official entrance to the Convent of Mercy rather than to the school. From the gateway inwards there is a short length of pavement to where the driveway diverges. One part goes straight ahead to the front of the convent building. The other part veers to the left and loops right around the convent building to the front. Where the driveway diverges the pavement comes to an end. A pedestrian crossing was painted

in at this point a number of years ago. However, one is relying on drivers being vigilant and on students looking to their left and to their right before stepping onto the pedestrian crossing. For the remainder of their journey on this driveway they are sharing it with motor traffic, mainly cars. Repeated requests to parents not to bring their cars onto the school grounds have met with some limited success, a certain number still do. There remains the very real risk of a student being knocked down on this stretch of avenue. The third entrance to St. Mary's Secondary School is a short distance further on from the entrance described above. At the end of a road giving access to a housing estate lies the official main entrance to St. Mary's Secondary School. There is a large tarmacaded area here with car parking and basketball courts. This area is used by parents to drop off and collect students. From this area the school can be approached by a flight of steps fairly close to the entrance or by a roadway at the furthest point from the entrance. Both have to tackle a steep upward gradient. The roadway would be too narrow for anything larger than a car.

The Staffroom in St. Mary's Secondary School.

The school does not contain a staff kitchen as such. A fair number of staff use the canteen in the school for elevenses and at lunch time. Other staff make use of such facilities as are available in the staffroom.

The staffroom itself is a building of medium size but is cramped for the present numbers of teachers and ancillary staff. It would comfortably accommodate in the region of twenty to twenty five (20 - 25 no.) teachers. It is not adequate for the sixty odd (60+ no.) who currently use it.

The staffroom is on two levels with three steps leading from the lower to the upper level. The steps themselves could be considered a hazard as there is always the danger of a slip, trip or fall. The upper level contains rows of lockers for staff use and a photo-copier for staff use. There are a number of tables which have been put together to form one large, long table with chairs. This is used by staff for working at and for putting books on etc.

The lower level is more of a seating area used during break times and lunch times but is also sometimes used by staff for school work. Here again a number of fairly large tables have been put together to create three large tables with chairs.

In this lower level two sections of wall are taken up by a counter top with cupboards underneath and matching wall units. Integrated into this is a single sink and draining board. There is a wall-mounted 'always - on' water heater located above the sink. There are two micro-wave cookers and two fridges. There is also a 'Ballygowan' water dispenser.

The staffroom contains two (2 no.) entry/exit points. The main entry/exit door in the staffroom leads out to a small hallway housing a number of staff toilets and an office. To the left of this hallway a door leads directly outside. To the right of this hallway a door leads to a 'tunnel' leading directly to the central area of the school.

On the other side of the staffroom and directly opposite the main entry/exit door is another door.

This door leads to a long corridor past a computer room. At the end of this corridor and to the right there is a book room and an office. To the left a short flight of steps leads past a fire exit door and into the school canteen.

There are a number of potential hazards associated with the staffroom area.

- The steps leading from the lower level of the staffroom to the upper level of the staffroom are a potential hazard for slips, trips and falls.
- There is no direct exit from the upper level of the staffroom leading directly outside. In the event of an evacuation being necessary staff on the upper level would have to make their way to the lower level to exit.
- Regarding the exit leading down a corridor from the staffroom to the canteen. This corridor is so narrow that two people would have difficulty passing one another. Matters are not helped by the fact that material is stored in this hallway, presumably due to lack of storage space elsewhere in the school. This corridor is used by staff going from the staffroom to the canteen. It is also used by canteen staff going from the canteen to the staffroom and back again. It's also used by students to gain access to one of the doors to the computer room. At the end of this hallway there are two fire exit doors but in the event of an emergency evacuation the corridor is extremely narrow.
- Another area of concern is the main entry/exit door to the staffroom. Due to the amount of pedestrian traffic using it, it can become very crowded at times. This is particularly true of break times and change over of classes. Although it is close to a number of fire exit doors it is tight for the number of people using it and could pose a hazard in the event of an emergency evacuation being necessary.

The Science laboratories in St. Mary's Secondary School.

Two of the Science labs. in St. Mary's Secondary School, the Chemistry lab. and the Physics lab. are located in the 'New School/Senior School' while the Biology lab is located in 'St. Annes' building.

The labs are locked when they are not in use. Students are not allowed into the labs without supervision. Chemicals are stored in a special area which is locked and to which only staff have access. During Chemistry experiments goggles are worn by teachers and pupils. Pupils are instructed in the appropriate use of apparatus such as glassware and Bunsen burners.

Pupils are obliged to carry out a number of experiments as part of their coursework. These are completed under supervision. Other experiments are demonstrated for them by their teachers.

P.E. & Sport in St. Mary's Secondary School.

St. Mary's Secondary School has a busy and engaged P.E. Dept. providing classes in physical exercise and opportunities to represent the school in a variety of sports. The P.E. Dept. operates from the P.E. hall and classes in P.E. are provided to all groups in the school from First year up to and including Leaving Certificate students.

- Students are not allowed to enter the P.E. hall without a supervising teacher being there.

- A change of clothing is required if students are to be allowed to take part in P.E.. Usually students wear tracksuits for most P.E. activities. Suitable footwear is also required for students taking part in P.E. Students are not allowed to participate in P.E. activities wearing their school uniform. At present students are not able to shower after taking part in P.E. activities as no showering facilities are available.
- When not in use P.E. equipment is stored under lock and key in a room adjoining the P.E. hall.
- For gymnastics mats are provided.
- A first aid kit is located in the P.E. hall and this is taken to matches if the team are playing 'away'. Where a team is travelling to 'away' matches it is customary for two (2 no.) teachers to accompany them so that in the event of an injury to a player one teacher can remain with the team.
- Players are covered by personal accident insurance.
- Any injuries sustained during sporting activities are recorded in a file retained in the office of the school principal.
- Students are strictly obliged to co-operate fully and without question with P.E. teachers/other teachers involved in sport in the school/team mentors. Non-compliance with instructions/directions from the above mentioned people will result in students being dropped from the panel.

Security of school grounds and school buildings.

Due to the fact that there are, in total, three separate entrances to the school grounds they - and the school buildings - are not secure. Proof of this is that from time to time people use the school grounds as a shortcut. This does not happen on a daily basis but it happens often enough to illustrate the open nature of the school grounds. Over the years there have been a number of incidents of the paintwork of teachers cars being scratched with sharp objects. At the time of compiling this policy it is not possible to state with certainty if this vandalism has been perpetrated by trespassers. These acts of malicious damage to teachers cars are not ongoing on a regular basis.

As has been stated previously the school is located on the side of a fairly busy road leading to the town centre. While it has a peripheral location in relation to the town this has lessened in recent times as many housing estates have grown up around it.

The school buildings are likewise difficult to secure. While they are locked and alarmed each evening, during the day they have to remain open due to the movement of students between classrooms every forty minutes or so. Many of these buildings have multiple entrances and that is excluding fire exit door which could only be opened from inside. To date, the presence of intruders straying into individual buildings within the school have been rare. However, as stated previously, both the school grounds and the school buildings would be difficult to secure.

Some measures have been taken in an attempt to make the school grounds and buildings more secure. The offices of the Principal, deputy Principal and the school secretaries are accessed by one outer door. This is generally locked and can only be open from the outside by people in possession of a code which they key in to an external keypad. For people not in possession of this code access to these offices is controlled remotely by a switch located in the office of the school secretaries.

Externally a number of powerful lights have been installed which light up the grounds at night.

Most of the school grounds are now covered by C.C.T.V. cameras and there are signs informing people of the existence of these C.C.T.V. cameras. The school buildings inside are also monitored by C.C.T.V. cameras, that is to say hallways and public spaces in these buildings.

Cleaning of School Buildings.

Cleaning of school buildings takes place in the evening after classes finish for the day. The cleaning is carried out by a firm of outside cleaning contractors 'Garvin Cleaners'. Cleaning takes place five evenings per week, Monday to Friday inclusive. During a conversation with the owner of the firm Mr. Garvin I was informed that they will also provide a cleaning service on Saturday should that be necessary.

The areas cleaned by the company are the general purpose classrooms, hallways and toilets. According to Mr. Garvin cleaners are supplied with gloves for the execution of their cleaning duties. He informed me that cleaners had received training in the use of detergents and bleaches, 'chemical management' was the term used. Cleaners had also received training in the use of cleaning equipment such as vacuum cleaners. Further enquiries elicited the information that while some cleaners were aware of the correct procedures regarding manual handling not all were.

In reply to a question by me asking if his cleaning staff were familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines Mr. Garvin stated that they were. Regarding his cleaning staff having Garda clearance Mr. Garvin informed me that some did have Garda clearance, others currently did not.

Evacuation Procedures.

Evacuation procedures are in place in the school. As advised by the Health & Safety Authority there will be a minimum of two evacuation drills in the academic year.

On the door of each classroom, in the specialist rooms and in the toilets there are fire notices advising staff and students on the course of action to be taken in the event of an evacuation. With each of these notices there is a map showing the location of the relevant assembly point and how to get there.

There are two assembly points in the school grounds for teachers and students to assemble in the event of an evacuation.

One assembly point is in the lower car park/basketball courts area at the bottom of the 'New School'.

This location was chosen for a number of reasons.

- It is reasonably proximate to school buildings containing large numbers of students most of the time.
- Except for mornings and evenings few cars use this particular car park so teachers and students can assemble here in relative safety.
- It is a spacious area allowing students to line up in single file while their teachers take a roll call.
- It is fairly quiet so teachers should not have to shout above external noises to be heard.

The second assembly point is at the other extremity of the school. It is located in a tennis court and is known as the 'tennis courts'. As in the case of the first assembly point it was chosen for a number of reasons.

- It is a large area so students can be lined up in rows while their teachers take a roll call.
- It is quiet so teachers should not have to shout above external noises to be heard.
- It is reasonably proximate to a number of school buildings and while some students will have to cross the car park to get to it they may walk by the side of a wall bordering the car park.

In the event of an evacuation students will assemble at their designated assembly point based on their location at that time. Each teacher should have taken a roll call (paper roll preferably) at the start of class for their own reference. In the event of an evacuation they should call a roll at the assembly point checking to ensure that it tallies with their previous roll.

Duties and Responsibilities.

Notwithstanding what has already been written regarding health and safety, St. Mary's Secondary School is - as are all other schools - an institution primarily concerned with people.

Health and safety guidelines and procedures do not exist in a vacuum. They are devised and implemented for the wellbeing of all people in the school, whether staff, ancillary staff, outside contractors, students or visitors to the school in whatever capacity. Health and safety guidelines and procedures can only be effective if they are observed and adhered to. It therefore follows that it is incumbent on all persons on the premises of St. Mary's Secondary School to behave in a responsible fashion thus ensuring their own safety and the safety of others.

Teaching staff - duties and responsibilities.

- Teaching staff - whether teachers or S.N.A.'s - and regardless of whether they are employed in a permanent or temporary capacity, full or part-time have a responsibility to perform their duties in a manner which is safe for themselves and for others.
- To use appropriate tools and equipment for whatever task they are performing and to report any defects in same to the relevant personnel.
- To notify the Principal or Deputy-Principal of any accidents, dangerous occurrences, hazards or defects in plant, equipment, place of work or systems of work which might endanger safety, health or welfare of themselves or other occupants of the school.
- To use suitable protective clothing and equipment where necessary and ensure that students do likewise.
- To be familiar with fire drills and evacuation procedures and to ensure that students are familiar with same.
- To be familiar with the use and location of fire fighting equipment.
- To ensure that pupils carry out their routines in a safe manner and do not create danger for themselves or for others.
- To identify hazards specific to their own discipline(s) and/or place of work and to take protective action and ensure that students do likewise.
- To use suitable notices to identify potential hazards.
- To set an example for students by their own actions.
- To implement safe working practices in the classroom.
- To be conversant with all relevant Safety, Health and Welfare legislation.
- To comply with Safety, Health and Welfare at work legislation.

Responsibilities of the Deputy-Principal & Principal.

As well as the responsibilities which have been listed on the previous page (pg.18) for teaching staff the following additional responsibilities also attach to the Deputy-Principal and Principal.

- To record reports made by other staff of accidents, dangerous occurrences, hazards or defects in plant, equipment, place of work or systems of work which might endanger safety, health or welfare.
- To be conversant with the statutory requirements and ensure that they are observed.
- To ensure that safe working practices are followed.
- To ensure that safety precautions are followed when employing outside contractors.
- To institute proper reporting, recording, investigative and costing procedures.
- To comply with legislation relevant to the 2005 Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act.

Responsibilities of school secretaries.

- To work in a manner which is safe for themselves and others.
- To use equipment appropriate to their work and to report any defects in same to the relevant personnel.
- To bring to the attention of the Deputy-Principal or Principal any accidents, dangerous occurrences, hazards or defects in plant, equipment, place of work or system of work which could endanger safety, health or welfare of themselves or others.
- To report to the Deputy-Principal or Principal any defects in office equipment as soon as possible.
- To avoid creating hazards in the office i.e. leaving filing cabinet drawers open, trailing cables across the floor, build up of papers etc.
- To use proper protective clothing and equipment where necessary.
- To be familiar with the use and location of fire fighting equipment.
- To be familiar with fire drills and evacuation procedures.
- To maintain a list of emergency telephone numbers and addresses.
- To record visitors to the school and to notify the Principal/Deputy-Principal of persons visiting the school without a prior appointment.
- To comply with legislation relevant to the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act 2005.

Responsibilities of school caretakers.

- To work in a manner which is safe for themselves and others.
- To use appropriate tools and equipment and to report any defects in same to the relevant personnel.
- To notify the Deputy-Principal or Principal of any accidents, dangerous occurrences, hazards or defects in plant, equipment, place of work or system of work which might endanger safety, health or welfare of themselves or others.
- To use proper protective clothing and equipment where necessary.
- To ensure that access to areas which are hazardous by reason of work in progress, or for some other reason, is restricted.
- To prevent the build up of rubbish or of combustible material or any kind.
- To maintain heating and ventilation plant in proper working order.
- To repair light fittings as soon as they become faulty.
- To repair broken windows and doors at all times.
- To be familiar with the location and use of fire fighting equipment.
- To be familiar with fire drills and evacuation procedures.
- To ensure that access to all exits, entrances, fire alarm points and fire fighting equipment is not obstructed.
- To comply with legislation relevant to the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act 2005.

Responsibilities of students.

- It is the responsibility of all students in St. Mary's Secondary School, Ballina to behave in a responsible manner designed to promote a safe environment within the school buildings and on the school grounds.
- Students are not permitted to run along school corridors, at any time, in any building whatsoever.
- Students should avoid blocking entrances/exits to buildings by congregating around doorways.
- Students should ascend and descend stairs carefully. Where two separate staircases are used for ascending and descending, students should comply with whatever protocols are in place regarding the use of such stairs and with any amendments or changes which are subsequently introduced to that protocol.
- Students should move within and between buildings using the designated hallways or pathways. Taking shortcuts between buildings across areas of lawn or other unsurfaced surfaces is not allowed. Climbing over walls, walking on top of walls or jumping from walls on school grounds is strictly forbidden.
- Students are prohibited from ever pushing, jostling or in any other fashion physically propelling another student. This applies to all areas in the school, whether within buildings or on the school grounds.
- During a fire drill in the school students are expected to co-operate fully with the procedures pertaining to the fire drill.
- In relation to the point immediately above this includes:-
 - exiting the classroom/place of instruction when the alarm sounds or when requested to do so by their teacher/supervisor/other member of the teaching staff or member of the ancillary school staff
 - exiting the classroom/place of instruction in an orderly fashion
 - following the prescribed routes to the designated place of assembly
 - upon reaching their place of assembly standing in a single file
 - maintaining a level of quietness which allows a roll call to be taken by their teacher or supervisor
 - remaining in single file at their assembly point until they are notified by their teacher or supervisor that they may return to their classroom/place of instruction
 - obeying the instructions of their teacher/supervisor at all times during the progress of the evacuation.
- Students are expressly forbidden from returning to their classroom or other place of instruction for any purpose whatsoever while outside that classroom or place of instruction during the progress of a fire drill or evacuation for any other reason.

- Students are obliged to comply with whatever procedures are in place regarding evacuation of buildings in the event of a fire drill.
- Students are obliged to obey, without question or argument, whatever instructions are given to them by their teacher/supervisor during the progress of a fire drill. Any form of disobedience shown to the supervisory adult will be regarded as a very serious breach of school discipline.
- The previous five points relate to a fire drill, the occurrence of an actual fire or the occurrence of any other event within the school which would necessitate the evacuation of classrooms or other places of instruction in the school.
- Smoking of tobacco products is totally forbidden on the premises of St. Mary's Secondary School at all times during the school day and in all locations whether within buildings or on the grounds. This ban also applies to e-cigarettes.
- The consumption of alcohol by students while in school is expressly forbidden whether within buildings or on the school grounds.
- Students are prohibited from bring alcohol in to school for supply to others whether for reward or not.
- The use of drugs by students while on the premises of St. Mary's Secondary School is forbidden. Students are also forbidden from bringing drugs into school for supply to others whether for reward or not.
For the purposes of this health and safety statement the term 'use' is meant to cover injection, ingestion, inhalation, smoking or any combination thereof.
Also, for the purposes of this health and safety statement, the term 'drugs' applies to any substances, whether chemical, herbal or any combination thereof which could induce an altered state of mind or consciousness.
- Students bringing cars, motorcycles, motorbikes or any other form of motorised vehicle to school are forbidden from entering St. Mary's Secondary School with these vehicles by the main entrance to the former Convent of Mercy.
- Students referred to in the point directly above may enter the school grounds with their vehicle by the lower entrance to St. Mary's Secondary School in the Convent Hill Estate area, the official entrance to the school as has been stated elsewhere in this policy. They may park their vehicles in the lower car park. Students are forbidden from bringing vehicles into any other part of the school grounds and are also forbidden from parking anywhere else in the grounds of St. Mary's Secondary School except for the lower car park already alluded to.

Responsibilities of parents & other visitors to the school.

- Parents who enter the school grounds in a motorised vehicle for the purpose of depositing or collecting students, or indeed for any other purpose, are in breach of school management guidelines on this issue.
- Parents visiting the school for whatever purpose are requested to enter the school by the official school entrance close to the entrance to Convent Hill Estate. They are requested to avail of the parking facilities in the lower car park inside the entrance gates here and to approach the school buildings on foot.
- Where parents are obliged to bring a motor vehicle onto the grounds of St. Mary's Secondary School - and this is not a course of action that should be taken unless there is some urgent reason - they need to be aware that it is an area with a lot of pedestrian traffic. With that in mind they need to use extreme vigilance while driving in the grounds and to proceed with extreme caution.
- Parents coming to the school must, in the first instance, make themselves and the purpose for their visit known at the office of the school secretaries. It is not acceptable to turn up at the school and expect to be seen without a prior appointment. Where such an appointment has been arranged with prior agreement parents must still report to the school secretaries' office first of all.
- The four previous points also apply to visitors to the school as well as to parents.
- Where parents or visitors do bring motor vehicles onto the school grounds they need to be very cognisant that they are in a pedestrian heavy area and that great care is needed on their part. Vehicles should never be left at corners, in yellow boxes or in areas where they are likely to impede the flow of traffic, either pedestrian or motorised.
- Vehicles should be deposited in a designated parking bay with the engine turned off and the handbrake firmly applied. Upon leaving the vehicle the driver should ensure that it is locked. This point and the one previous to it applies whether the caller(s) expect to be in the school for some number of hours or for a shorter time, say ten or fifteen minutes. Parking carelessly/dangerously or leaving an engine running on the basis that one is only going to be gone for ten minutes or so is totally unacceptable and borders on being dangerously reckless.

Responsibilities of temporary/visiting workers and suppliers of goods, services.

Workers employed by St. Mary's Secondary School to carry out maintenance and/or other work are required to have public liability indemnity and to carry out their work in such a way that it complies fully with the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act 2005 and also with the schools Health & Safety Policy.

Suppliers of plant and equipment must provide training and instruction in it's correct use and operation and also Health & Safety training to any person(s) who will be using the equipment.

People on site in the school whether for the purposes of work or delivering materials are bound by the same obligations as staff, parents or other visitors. They must be cognisant of the fact that they are in a largely pedestrian environment with large scale movement of people every forty minutes or so. It behoves them to exercise extreme caution when driving vehicles or operating machinery on the school grounds. When it is feasible to do so crowd barriers should be erected to cordon of the area where work is being carried out and appropriate signage erected. Warning signs should also be placed at appropriate points around the school alerting staff, students and others to the presence of ongoing work.

Responsibilities of people using the school facilities.

Groups or individuals who wish to hire any school facility must, in the first instance, apply to the Board of Management of the school to do so. If their request is acceded to they are then obliged to furnish the Board of Management with an up to date copy of their insurance/indemnity policy prior to using the facilities.

While using the facilities and while being on school property they are obliged to comply fully with the Health & Safety Policy of the school.

Safety within the school buildings and grounds.

As has already been pointed out, schools by their nature are pedestrian heavy environments and St. Mary's Secondary School, Ballina is no exception to this. This is compounded by the diffuse nature of the school with eight (8 no.) separate buildings in total spread over a large site.

It behooves everyone, teaching staff, students, ancillary staff, parents and visitors to the school for whatever purpose, to exercise caution within school buildings and around the school grounds.

Students should not walk within or between buildings carrying sharp objects such as scissors, blades, knives or anything of a sharp or pointed nature. This is because the risk of students causing an injury to themselves or to a third party is very likely. Teachers undertaking any form of practical or project work in their own classroom or in another classroom should have all the equipment which they need in situ before beginning such work. It is not acceptable, under any circumstances whatsoever, for teachers to send students to the Art rooms or to any other specialist rooms in search of the type of items outlined above. Teachers engaging in such practices need to discontinue them immediately.

It is also unacceptable for teachers, for reasons of health and safety and for their own protection, to carry hot beverages from the staff room or from the canteen to their classrooms or to other locations around the school. The risk of a collision with another individual - particularly a student - is quite high. If a student were to be scalded with a hot liquid carried by a teacher it could have serious consequences for the teacher concerned. Therefore, it would be highly advisable for teachers to consume such beverages within the confines of the canteen or staffroom.

The same prohibition extends to students who should not carry hot beverages with them outside the confines of the school canteen.