



St. Patricks R.C Primary, Dipton

Health and Safety Policy

Revision History					
Name	Ver	Reason for change	Status	Date	Review Date
Mrs J Burgess Mrs C Charlton	1.7	Review	Final	March 2019	March 2021
Mrs J Burgess	1.6	Updated Governor responsibilities – added from Durham model policy/updated fire procedures	Final	Sept 2017	Sept 2018
Mike Shiels	1.5	Updates	Final	March 2016	
Mrs J Burgess	1.4	Update to fire procedures/child protection references	Final	22/2/15	
Mrs J Burgess	1.3	Updates to fire procedures	Final	24/4/15	
Mr M Shiels	1.2	Revised to incorporate/reference additional Durham County policies	Final	03/10/14	
Mr M Shiels	1.2	Revised to incorporate/reference additional Durham County policies	Final	03/10/14	
Mr M Shiels	1.1	Following review with Head Teacher	Draft	20/06/14	
Mr M Shiels	1.0	Initial draft for review, combining several previous documents into one	Final	27/03/14	

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1 Purpose

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for responding to Health and Safety in Saint Patrick's R.C. Primary School, Dipton.

This document has been compiled from several earlier documents that have been combined to provide a single point of reference for a range of topics.

2 Safeguarding

2.1 Child Protection

The school will adopt child protection guidance issued by Durham County, as documented in Keeping Children Safe in School Safeguarding our Children policy v1.3 and its combined appendices.

Should any duplication or discrepancy be found between this document and those listed above, it should be assumed that those documents over-ride.

2.2 Key Safeguarding Employment Standards

2.2.1 Introduction

The Key Employment Standards that follow are aimed at ensuring that children, young people and vulnerable adults, when placed in the care of others, are treated with respect, free from all forms of abuse or mistreatment.

It is vitally important that, as a school, we adopt safe recruitment and selection procedures which help to deter, reject or identify people who might abuse the vulnerable.

However, policies and procedures themselves are unlikely to offer the necessary levels of protection. They must be accompanied by the creation and maintenance of a safe working culture within our school so that every worker understands their duty of care as well as which behaviours constitute safe practice and which should be avoided.

These standards have been developed as a minimum to be attained to assist managers to reach safer levels of recruitment, training and the management of staff. A commitment to safeguarding is the central focus at every stage of the recruitment process from the planning stages through placing an advert (which will have a clear commitment to safeguarding prominent within it) short-listing, obtaining references, providing information for candidates, conducting the interview itself, making appropriate checks of identity and qualifications as well as undertaking appropriate vetting.

Best practice at the point of recruitment will help to dissuade some unsuitable people from accepting a post and it will also help to identify some unsuitable candidates. However, thorough and careful recruitment procedures consistently applied will not completely eliminate the risk of appointing an abuser who is determined to gain employment which will give them access to children, young people and the vulnerable. It is imperative, therefore, that we embed our aim to develop a challenging, engaging and safe environment for learning, with a respectful and open culture which is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of those we care for. The foundation of such a safe working environment is based on the development of clear, safe policies and procedures which make explicit the practice all employees are expected to adhere to. These are demonstrably embedded in our daily practice and all employees see the policies as “living and breathing” within each workplace.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY STATEMENT

St Patrick's R.C. Primary School, Dipton is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

2.2.2 Key Employment Safeguarding Standards Self-Evaluation Checklist

The following check list can be used to evaluate the extent to which your organisation is meeting the KESS.

Key Employment Safeguarding Standard	In Place	Not in Place	Working towards/Comments
Standard 1 - Recruitment			
Adverts and all other publicity material includes commitment to SG	✓		DBS referred to within advert. Future adverts will include St Patrick's School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment.
All correspondence sent to candidates includes SG statement	✓		As highlighted in advert
All managers receive guidance about the need to focus on SG throughout the recruitment process	✓		Through appropriate CPD
All managers received specific guidance about the need to undertake personal (warner) interviews	✓		Lesson observations Information discussions Interviews

Using rigorous and thorough recruitment and selection processes focused on making sure that only people who have appropriate knowledge and skills and who are suitable to provide associated services are allowed to enter the workforce.

Key Employment Safeguarding Standard	In Place	Not in Place	Working towards/Comments
Standard 2 - Interviewing			
a) All those involved in the recruitment and selection of staff have the relevant training	✓		
b) All interviews are face to face (even if there is only one candidate)	✓		
c) Notes are made and retained of the candidates' responses at interview (to be destroyed after 6 months; successful candidate's held indefinitely.	✓		
d) Interviews explore issues relating to the SG of children	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gaps in employment are checked 	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns and/or discrepancies in information provided by candidate and/or referee are explored thoroughly. 	✓		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Candidates are asked if they wish to declare anything in the light of the requirements for a DBS check 	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal interview questions form part of the interview. 	✓		Where felt appropriate

Checking criminal records, relevant registers and indexes and assessing whether people are capable of carrying out the duties of the job they have been selected for before confirming appointments.

Key Employment Safeguarding Standard	In Place	Not in Place	Working towards/Comments
Standard 3 – References			
a) References are sought directly from the referee (who is a former/ current employer and not a close relative)	✓		
b) Open-ended (“to whom it may concern” references) are never accepted	✓		
c) Written references are subject to verification (through email address check or followed up verbally)	✓		HT/DHT responsibility
d) Referees are asked specific questions in relation to:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The referee’s perception of the candidate’s suitability to work with children. 	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whether they have any concerns about the candidate working with the particular client group 	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whether they have any knowledge of the candidate having been personally investigated over safeguarding issues, even when the concerns may have not been evidenced 	✓		

Key Employment Safeguarding Standard	In Place	Not in Place	Working towards/Comments
Standard 4 - Employment			
a) Proof of identity is obtained by referring to original copies of appropriate documentation for DBS checking	✓		

b) The only documents used to evidence identity are: birth certificate, passport, driving licence and utility bill, marriage certificate are accepted.	✓		
c) Enhanced DBS checks are made on all staff and volunteers who work directly or indirectly with children and young people including those who may have access to sensitive information such as that contained in the child index, CAF etc.	✓		All Governors will also be DBS checked
d) Any additional necessary checks are made	✓		
e) If issues are highlighted during DBS process all issues are rigorously investigated and discussed with the employee or prospective employee and risk assessed	✓		

Giving staff clear information about their roles and responsibilities, relevant legislation and organisational policies and procedures they must follow in their work.

Key Employment Safeguarding Standard	In Place	Not in Place	Working towards/Comments
Standard 5 – Post employment			
a) Induction and probationary periods for employees are thoroughly utilised to develop employee understanding and grounding in the SG policies, ethos and culture.	✓		Induction days, Induction check lists
b) During the induction/probationary period the employee always works under supervision of a Line Manager	✓		Observations in place – Support staff monitoring

Key Employment Safeguarding Standard	In Place	Not in Place	Working towards/Comments
Standard 6 – Training			
a) Training re: SG and child protection is mandatory for all staff who work with children.	✓		Delivered appropriate to the level of responsibility
b) Additional training is provided for managers in relation to the recruitment of staff and is updated regularly	✓		
c) Records of individual training maintained	✓		

Using established processes/procedures to challenge and report dangerous, abusive, discriminatory or exploitative behaviour/practice.

Key Employment Safeguarding Standard	In Place	Not in Place	Working towards/Comments
Standard 7 – Safe Working Culture			
a) A positive obligation for SG children is placed on all employees via the dissemination of clear policies and overtly by managers in their day to day management of staff.	✓		
b) There is evidence that the needs of children are paramount, they are listened to and any concerns in relation to their welfare are acted upon promptly	✓		
c) All employees are monitored by their line managers both in the probationary period and beyond to ensure that all expected behaviours and attitudes are complied with in relation to SG	✓		
d) There is evidence of such monitoring embedded in performance management and appraisal systems.	✓		
e) The organisation has a clear policy and procedure regarding allegations against staff and volunteers which is compatible with LSCB procedure.	✓		

Bringing to the attention of employer or appropriate authority resource or operational difficulties that may get in the way of delivery of safe care.

Key Employment Safeguarding Standard	In Place	Not in Place	Working towards/Comments
Standard 8 – Whistle-blowing and Complaints			
a) A rigorous whistle-blowing policy is in place	✓		
b) All reports about staff conduct are acted upon in a timely manner	✓		
c) Evidence collected when concerns are raised to demonstrate that the whistle-blowing procedure is being used appropriately to improve outcomes	✓		
d) An accessible complaints procedure is in place for service-users to raise concerns.	✓		

e) There is evidence that complaints are fully investigated and outcomes are recorded accurately	✓		
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Key Employment Safeguarding Standard	In Place	Not in Place	Working towards/Comments
Standard 9 – Policies and Procedures			
a) Managers are accountable for assuring that all safe employment policies, procedures and practices are adhered to during the recruitment and selection of staff	✓		
b) All staff are provided with clear codes of conduct/safe working practice guidelines	✓		
c) Appropriate disciplinary procedures in line with HR policy are applied where SG measures are not strictly adhered to.	✓		Catholic Education Service procedures adopted

Key Employment Safeguarding Standard	In Place	Not in Place	Working towards/Comments
Standard 10 – Monitoring Systems			
a) Formal audits of sufficient quality and quantity are conducted regularly	✓		
b) Ample time is allowed post-audit for improvements to be made	✓		
c) Results of audits/action plans/outcomes are recorded and reported effectively	✓		
d) Managers monitor the day to day work environment to ensure that a protective environment is being maintained	✓		
e) Employees demonstrate their commitment to providing a protective environment for children:	✓		
• Children are appropriately supervised	✓		
• Physical contact with children complies with good practice	✓		
• When transporting children SG principles are adhered to and all relevant policies are rigorously enforced	✓		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managers ensure that drivers and escorts are appropriately vetted, including those provided under contract 	✓		Driving Licence/Insurance checks in place as appropriate when pupils taken by car to school events
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance on safe working practices/codes of conduct are provided for each member of staff relevant to your organisational practices in relation to children 	✓		

2.3 Missing Child Policy

In the event of a child becoming lost, whilst in the care of the school, staff will immediately put into place the procedures detailed below. These ensure that a systematic approach is taken to find the child and consideration is given to the levels of risk to the child. An individual risk assessment will be carried out for any child who is of concern.

2.3.1 Aim

Ensure a search is made for the child as soon as possible, parents and authorities are notified at the appropriate stage, and a high level of care is maintained for other children in the group while procedures are followed.

2.3.2 Procedures

- The search will be co-ordinated by the most senior member of staff present.
- The person in charge will carry out a thorough search of all the rooms in the building, outside perimeter and yard.
- The remaining children will be gathered into one large group, e.g. for a story, while the remaining staff search for the missing child. The register is checked to make sure no other child has also gone missing.
- The children will be sensitively asked whether they have seen the child who is missing, as will all adults, so that it can be established who was last to see the missing child, when and where.
- Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
- The person in charge talks to staff to establish what happened.
- If the child lives within walking distance of the group, one adult should travel by car to the likely destination and retrace the route on foot in order to catch up with the child if possible.
- If a child is lost while out of school on a trip, the person in charge will carry out the relevant search procedures as above. They will immediately inform the person in charge at the venue being visited. They will also inform school immediately.
- If the child is not found within a 'reasonable' time scale e.g. 10-15 minutes, the parent or carer is contacted (alarming them as little as possible) and the missing child is reported to the police.
- Any media enquiries will be directed to the H/T
- After the incident, a Missing Child Incident Log will be completed to help prevent any future incidents (see Appendix A for example Incident Log form)

2.4 Access Procedures

2.4.1 Context and scope

This policy is primarily concerned with visitors from non-statutory groups rather than from agencies such as the Careers Service or the Learning Support Service. This policy is linked to our Keeping Children Safe in School Safeguarding our Children policy v1.3.

2.4.2 Principles and procedures.

1. The activities of any adult visitors on the school site must comply with the terms of any current legislation that relates to this area of work, for example the Children Act of 1989.
2. The school retains the ultimate responsibility for pupils on the school site. External groups work in partnership with the school's staff. The aim of such activity is to support the school in its efforts to help pupils to reach their full social and academic potential. Any such activity must be appropriate to the age and needs of the pupils. It must be consistent with the stated aims and vision statement of St. Patrick's School. It should be seen as an integral part of what the school offers to pupils through the curriculum and through PSHE.
3. On occasions adults other than staff will have access to pupils during various activities off the school premises. On the school site, adults other than staff will be in contact with pupils when assisting with certain activities; visiting speakers for example. Such activities can continue to be organised and supervised by staff, as long as the necessary checks have been undertaken.
4. Visitors are allowed to tour the site unsupervised by a member of staff only if appropriate checks have been carried out and that those involved are competent and appropriately qualified and experienced.
5. Police officers who request interviews with individual pupils to assist them with Police enquiries will be granted access once parental permission has been obtained. The only exception to this will be in Child Protection cases when Police and Social Care and Health personnel may be granted access by the Head Teacher without parental consent being sought.
6. The school will continue to provide pupils with information on sources of help available from appropriate external agencies such as Childline. Such information will be available through the school Nurse, displays around school, Assemblies and through PSHE activities.

2.5 Visitors' Policy

The health, safety and welfare of all the people that work or learn at our school are of fundamental importance. We aim to provide a safe, secure and pleasant environment for everyone where people are supported to fulfil their potential. The governing body, as an employer, takes responsibility for the health & safety of all our pupils, members of staff and others who visit our premises.

2.5.1 Visitors to Schools

This guidance relates to people who need to visit schools in the course of their work. Some will be professional who need to work directly with young people others will be visiting the school in order to deal with matters that relate to the school buildings rather than pupils.

- The key issue for anyone visiting a school as part of their work is to ensure that their identity is checked on each visit as everyone visiting should carry identity documentation. Any school staff who are not provided with this, or are not satisfied with what is provided, should contact the person's organisation before allowing them access.
- The entrance to St Patrick's RCVA Primary School is access controlled to prevent unauthorised access. All visitors are sign-posted to the Main Reception.

- All visitors will sign the visitors' electronic log on entering St Patrick's RCVA Primary School and wear a visitor's printed sticker, or other appropriate form of identification, at all times.
- Staff should inform the main office or Head Teacher of any visitors due into school, prior to the visit, in order for pre-visit checks to be undertaken/confirmed.
- Staff organising a visit must never assume that someone has DBS clearance.
- The main office will keep a log of all DBS checks which have been carried out for visitors. DBS certificates will not be kept in school: e-mail confirmation sent from Durham County Hall will be retained. All DBS information will be stored in a hard copy format and stored securely within the Main Reception.
- Once DBS clearance has been confirmed, then a visitor's badge can be given, which should have the visitor's name on. This visitor can then be left unaccompanied in school.
- If DBS clearance is not required, then the visitor must never be left alone in school and the responsibility for this lies with the member of staff who has arranged the visit.
- Staff should report any potentially unauthorised visitors to the Head Teacher as soon as possible. Staff should not put themselves at risk challenging intruders but should ensure pupils are moved to a place of safety.

2.5.2 Is a DBS disclosure necessary for everyone that visits or works in school?

It is not necessary to obtain a DBS disclosure for visitors who will only have contact with children on an a one off or irregular basis for short periods of time with school staff present, or when secondary pupils undertake voluntary work or work experience. However, it is good practice to ensure that visitors sign in and out and are escorted while on the premises by a member of staff or an appropriately vetted volunteer.

Examples of people who do not need to apply for a DBS disclosure include:

- Visitors who have business with the Head Teacher or other staff or have brief contact with children with a member of staff present;
- Visitors or contractors who come on site only to carry out emergency repairs or service equipment and who would not be expected to be left unsupervised on school premises;
- Secondary pupils on key stage 4 work experience in other schools, colleges, nursery classes;
- People who are on site before or after school hours and when children are not present, e.g., local groups that hire premises for community or leisure activities, school cleaners who only come in after children have gone home or before they arrive.

2.5.3 Contractors

Contractors and maintenance personnel will not always have been DBS checked, as they should not have unsupervised access to children. They will therefore be controlled as follows:

- All will be given school badges and be expected to wear them.
- They will only park where authorised to do so.
- They will only carry out work agreed at the start of the contract and at the times agreed.
- They will be supervised at all times by school staff. This does not mean watched continuously but in a way proportionate to their location and proximity to unsupervised children.
- Children should not be allowed in areas where builders are working for health and safety reasons, so these workers should have no contact with children.

- The school will ensure that arrangements are in place, via the contract where possible, to make sure that any contract staff that come into contact with children, undergo appropriate checks.
- The school will undertake to ensure that regular non-LA contractors are DBS cleared.

2.5.4 Other contractors – staff on site under a contract for service

For example, catering staff must be checked by the contractor in the same way as school employees (i.e., including a DBS disclosure) and such requirements form part of the contract. The outcome of such checks must be notified to the Local Authority. The contractor is also responsible for ensuring the same procedures are followed by any sub-contractors.

2.5.5 Checks on other public sector staff

Individuals such as psychologists, nurses, dentist, centrally employed teachers and other public sector staff will have been checked by their employing organisation, whether Local Authority, Primary Health Trust or Strategic Health Authority. It is not necessary to see their DBS disclosure as appropriate checks will have been carried out. Schools will however want to check identity when an individual arrives to ensure impostors do not gain access to children. Such colleagues should wear their identity badge at all times.

2.6 Volunteering Policy

2.6.1 Aims

Volunteers help and support pupils and staff in the excellent work they do. The time and skills of volunteers is much appreciated. Volunteers have an opportunity to work with children and staff, who should treat them with courtesy and respect at all times and, in return, expect volunteers to show all members of our school community the same consideration.

St. Patrick's is a school with high expectations. Children will see a volunteer helper in school and view him/her as an authority figure, as they would any member of staff. It is therefore essential that a code of behaviour is established. The protocol in this section aims to ensure that everyone is clear of expectations, to make time spent by volunteers as beneficial as possible.

The school policy regarding volunteering aims to:

- Give clear guidelines on the ways in which volunteers can help in school.
- Ensure good communication between school and volunteer support helpers.
- Provide a framework for the operation of our volunteer system.

This policy should be read alongside Child Protection policy for Volunteers, which is documented in Appendix 3 of the school's Child Protection policy document Keeping Children Safe in School Safeguarding our Children policy v1.3.

2.6.2 Guidelines

An up to date DBS check is essential before volunteers are able to work with children in the school.

Any matter that is of concern should be discussed with the Head Teacher immediately, in order that any misunderstandings or difficulties can be addressed as a matter of urgency.

The following guidelines are in no particular order and are intended to help volunteers feel comfortable and informed of expectations:

- Children may sometimes “push the boundaries” when with a volunteer. If a gentle reminder does not elicit an immediate response, volunteers should refer the matter to the Head Teacher.
- Volunteers should never shout at a child or tell a child off. The school has a code of conduct which children are expected to follow. Volunteers are not expected to discipline children. If there is a problem, volunteers should tell the teacher immediately. The matter will be dealt with promptly.

- The school has very careful guidelines on aspects of physical contact with children. Volunteers should not initiate contact with children and discourage over-familiarity.
- The school has well-defined procedures for informing parents of what has happened whilst the children are in school and will be the first to discuss any issues where there are concerns. Volunteers should not be tempted to relay anything seen or heard in a classroom to parents or others. Volunteers must exercise total discretion in all respects when helping in school.
- Volunteer should never get into an argument with children or adults. Teachers are trained to deal with a range of situations, and they are paid to take responsibility.
- If a volunteer has any concerns at any time about the way a child has been treated, or something they have witnessed, they should raise the issue immediately with the safeguarding team – Mrs J Burgess, Mrs L Gardner or Mrs C Charlton. If there is a concern with the headteacher the Mrs K Plunkett, chair of governors should be informed.
- Volunteers must exercise the utmost discretion regarding all information heard in school. Any breaches of confidentiality will mean termination of volunteering from that individual.

As part of induction, volunteers will be given information regarding safeguarding and will be expected to access policies through our school website. They will also be expected to keep up-to-date as policies change from time to time, in particular, to read the Volunteer Appendix in the current Keeping Children Safe in School Safeguarding our Children policy v1.3 document.

All volunteers should sign a letter indicating acceptance of these policies, a template for which is included in Appendix B of this document.

2.7 Confidential Reporting Code

The Governing Body is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment, we expect those who manage, govern and work in the School and others that we deal with, who have serious concerns about any aspect of the School's work, to come forward and voice those concerns. It is recognised that most cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis.

The school has adopted the Durham County Council "Confidential Reporting Code", a copy of which is held alongside other school policies. Where reference is made to "The Council" within that document, it should be interpreted to include "the School" (i.e., St Patrick's).

Anyone wishing to make a confidential report should use the standard form, which is found in document "Confidential Reporting Code Form.doc".

3 Health and Safety

3.1 What is Health and Safety?

Some key definitions are:

"Health" The prevention of work related disease, illness or serious discomfort which could harm the physical/mental well-being of its employees

"Safety" The prevention of accidents in order to avoid injuries, damage to equipment, premises or environment.

"Accident" An "accident" occurs when an unplanned event happens, whether or not injury or damage results.

Under the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, it is the duty of the Governing Body to conduct their business in such a way as to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that persons are not exposed to risks to their health and safety. It therefore has a responsibility to take all reasonably practicable steps to secure the health and safety of children, staff and others using the St Patrick's RC Primary School premises or participating in school-sponsored activities. The Governing Body believes that the prevention of accidents, injury or loss is essential to the efficient operation of the school and is part of the education of its children.

3.2 Aims

- To provide a safe and healthy working and learning environment for staff, children and other people who come onto the premises
- For management at all levels to display a positive attitude towards health and safety and to take all reasonably practicable steps to fulfil their responsibilities.
- To set up arrangements to cover health and safety legal requirements, produce written statements of the arrangements and bring statements to the attention of all staff and subsequently to monitor implementation of the arrangements.

3.3 Principles of Health and Safety

Arrangements outlined in statements and various safety provisions cannot prevent accidents or ensure safe and healthy working conditions. Only by the adoption of safe methods of work and good practice by every individual in the school can we ensure everyone's personal health and safety. Section 7 of the Act imposes duties on employees to take reasonable care to ensure that their acts or omissions at work do not adversely affect the health and safety of themselves or other persons.

All reasonable steps will be taken to identify and reduce hazards to a minimum and to ensure that all areas of St Patrick's R.C. Primary School, Dipton, are inspected once a term.

To have established a system for the reporting, recording and investigation of accidents and to provide opportunities for staff to discuss and resolve any perceived health and safety problems.

Ensure effective arrangements are in force to facilitate the ready evacuation of the buildings in case of fire or other emergency and that firefighting equipment is available and maintained.

So far as is reasonably practicable, arrangements will be made for all staff, including temporary and voluntary staff and helpers, to receive comprehensive information on all health and safety matters including instruction and training that may be given to staff so that they may carry out their duties in a safe manner without placing themselves or others at risk.

Ensure that any defects in the premises or its equipment which relate to or may affect the health and safety of staff, children and others are made safe without delay.

3.4 Basic Safety Rules for Children

- Children should walk round the school quietly.
- Children should not go onto the playground or field without permission
- Children must ask permission to come into school at playtimes
- Children must wait, with staff, for their parents at the end of the day, unless they have permission to walk home (Y5 and Y6).
- Children should behave in a sensible manner in the porch area and put coats and bags away tidily.
- Children should only access playground equipment during playtimes and lunchtimes, under supervision of school staff.

3.5 Strategies for the Implementation of Health and Safety

3.5.1 Governing Body

The Governing Body has the delegated responsibility for the adoption and implementation of the health and safety management systems that comply with the principles set out in the Corporate Health & Safety Policy and Schools Health & Safety Procedures Manual. In order to fulfil this responsibility, the Governing Body will, as far as reasonably practicable, ensure that:

- Health & Safety management procedures and systems are incorporated as an integral part of their overall school management system, and are adequately given a level of consideration equal to other school issues;
- the School Health & Safety Policy and Procedures Manual, as it relates to areas, activities and persons under the school's control is understood, implemented, maintained and monitored;
- pro-active health and safety risk management is implemented, and reviewed to meet statutory, best practice and County Council requirements;
- where health, safety and welfare duties and responsibilities are delegated to school staff, appropriate and sufficient information, instruction and /or training is identified and organised;
- communication and liaison is maintained with all those who may need to be aware of the requirements of this policy and its procedures;
- when requested the County Council is provided with information on the operation of the health & safety management system sufficient to fulfil its responsibilities,
- a review of the policy and its implementation is carried out at suitable intervals; and that,
- any problems or constraints in meeting these duties and responsibilities are brought, without delay, to the attention of the County Council.

3.5.2 The Duties of the Head Teacher

As well as the general duties that all members of staff have, the Head Teacher has responsibility for the day-to-day maintenance and development of safe working practices and conditions for teaching staff, non-teaching staff, ancillary staff, children, visitors and any person using the premises or engaged in activities sponsored by the school and will take all reasonable practicable steps to achieve this end through the school management team, teachers and others as appropriate.

The Head Teacher is required to take all necessary and appropriate action to ensure that the requirement of all relevant legislation, codes of practice and guidelines are met in full at all times.

In particular, the Head Teacher will:

- Be aware of the basic requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act and ensure safe working conditions for the health, safety and welfare of staff, children and others using the school premises and facilities.
- Consult with members of staff on health and safety issues and arrange systems of risk assessment to allow the prompt identification of potential hazards.
- Carry out periodic reviews and safety audits on the findings of the risk assessment.
- Identify the training needs of staff and children and ensure, within the financial resources available, that all members of staff and children who have identified training needs receive adequate and appropriate training and instruction in health and safety matters.
- Encourage staff, children and others to promote health and safety and further urge all staff to suggest ways and means of reducing risks.
- Collate accidents and incident information and, when necessary, carry out accident and incident investigations with an established structure.
- Monitor the standard of health and safety throughout St Patrick's RC Primary School and encourage staff; children and others to achieve the highest possible standards monitor first aid and welfare provision.
- Offer guidelines to staff so as to inform staff as to what is expected of them and what they should do in foreseeable situations such as fire, etc.

3.5.3 The Duties of All Members of Staff

All staff will make themselves familiar with the requirements for Health and Safety as defined in the school policy statement.

As regards any duty or requirements imposed on the school by statutory provision, staff are required to co-operate with the Head Teacher so far as necessary to enable that duty or requirement to be performed or complied with.

All staff are expected to familiarise themselves with the health and safety aspects of their work and to avoid conduct which would put them or anyone else at risk. In particular they will:

- Ensure that health and safety regulations, rules, routines and procedures are applied effectively by themselves and the children. Staff will be aware that in curriculum planning certain health and safety related regulations have been identified that are subject-specific.
- Use correct equipment and tools for the job and any protective equipment or safety devices which may be supplied. Ensure that toxic, hazardous and highly flammable substances are correctly used, stored and labelled.
- Report any defects in the premises, equipment and facilities which they observe
- Ensure all outdoor areas are fit to be used by staff/pupils e.g. FS yard – staff will make a visual check over the area and equipment contained within it. Any concerns will be reported to the Head Teacher.
- Take an active interest in promoting health and safety and suggest ways of reducing risks.

3.6 Codes of Practice and Safety Rules

From time to time the Department for Education, the Health and Safety Executive and other regulatory or advisory bodies will issue codes of practice on particular topics for the guidance

of Head Teachers and others who are in control of educational premises, who will normally incorporate such codes into their health and safety policy and procedures. If the Head Teacher considers the inclusion of all or any such documents into this policy to be inappropriate, he/she will be required to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Governing Body that he/she has already introduced codes of practice and methods of working which achieve a similar or higher standard of health and safety.

3.7 Risk Assessments

The Head Teacher will ensure that a risk assessment survey of the premises, methods or work and all school-sponsored activities is conducted annually or as they occur. This survey will identify all defects and deficiencies, together with the necessary remedial action or risk control measures. The results of all such surveys will be reported to the Governing Body.

3.8 Fire Precautions

Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order 2005) requires schools to set up and put into effect appropriate arrangements for the evacuation of premises in emergencies such as fire.

The current arrangements for evacuation are summarised in Appendix C of this document, which will be reviewed prior to the start of each school year, and revised as necessary.

St Patrick's R.C. Primary School, Dipton, has a fire alarm system which can be heard throughout the building. The system will be tested periodically by the Caretaker and annually by Swift, and any defect reported to the Head Teacher.

In the event of a fire, the school will be evacuated and a count and roll call made of the children. The children will assemble in the school yard having left the building in the manner outlined on posters located in every class room. In the event of an emergency closure, e.g., a gas leak, the children will assemble in the church having left the building in the manner outlined on posters located in every class room.

Practice fire drills/evacuations will be held termly. The first drill should be held as soon as possible after the start of the academic year. Except for the first drill of the year, all drills should be held without warning and staff and children should not know that it is a drill until roll calls are completed. Drills should be held at different times so that problems that arise during assemblies and break times can be identified and countered as necessary. For each fire drill, a notional area for the fire should be determined and the "danger area" closed to people leaving the building. This will train staff and children to use alternative routes as circumstances dictate. Catering staff will also be involved in arrangements for emergency evacuation.

The Head Teacher shall keep a record of all drills held, with details of the time taken to vacate the premises and any difficulties experienced.

3.8.1 Fire Fighting Equipment

Equipment appropriate for the type of fire risk in each area is provided for in emergency situations and is maintained annually. Training will take place regularly to ensure staff have up to date knowledge.

Staff should not put themselves at risk in attempting to fight a fire.

3.8.2 Escape Lighting

Exits are marked by emergency lighting which should provide sufficient illumination to allow people to evacuate the premises safely in the event of a power failure - a situation which may well arise in the event of a fire.

3.8.3 People with Disabilities

Should any members or staff, or children, need assistance when exiting the school building or be unable to leave the premises on foot, a 'Personal Evacuation Plan' would be put in place. If a person with disabilities was on site, a member of staff would be allocated to

ensure the safety of that person. Members of staff with hearing/visual impairments would have an evacuation 'buddy' as a further means of ensuring personal safety.

3.8.4 Basic Fire Safety Rules

- Combustible materials, such as cardboard boxes and packaging materials, should not be kept about the school unless required, and only then in an appropriate area.
- Corridors, entrances and exits should be kept clear. Classroom displays and work displayed in corridors are part of an engaging school environment but should be set up with care.
- Decorations can be a fire risk if they are hung near sources of heat. Therefore hanging displays should be kept clear of light fittings.
- Recycling bins should be used so that waste paper is not left lying around. Rubbish should not be allowed to collect in hidden places and particular attention should be paid to general tidiness and cleanliness, especially around electrical appliances.
- Electrical equipment must be used properly and kept in a safe working order. Any equipment which has failed the annual electrical inspection will not be used.
- Electrical points should never be overloaded.
- Smoking is not permitted in the school building or grounds.
- The boiler room must be kept clean, clear and locked.
- Cleaning fluids and materials must be kept in a secured cupboard.

3.9 Accidents

Most accidents are preventable, or their effects minimised, by taking reasonable precautions. It is necessary to have some appreciation of the causes of accidents if appropriate measures are to be devised and applied. It is therefore important to try to establish the precise cause of an accident and it will often be found that there are several contributing causes.

Information required could be:

- the name of the injured person and the nature of the injury
- when, where and how it occurred
- who was supervising and what treatment was given

All accidents should be reported to the Head Teacher, or Deputy Head, whether or not they result in injury, so that consideration can be given by Senior Management to remedial measures. Where major injuries are involved the Health and Safety Executive may wish to visit school to carry out an investigation.

Regulations require employers to report immediately the following incidents:

- Major injury or condition or death of an employee while at work or death of an employee within a year as a result of a work incident
- Major injury or condition or death of a visitor, pupil, etc. While at a workplace or as a result of workplace activities
- An employee suffering one of the scheduled notifiable diseases
- Injuries to an employee resulting in absence from work for three or more days after the day of the incident
- Certain scheduled dangerous occurrences, whether or not injury is caused.

As a means of accident prevention, pupils are not allowed glass bottles or hot drinks/liquids.

The school will report all such incidents, with the principle that if any doubt exists, then the incident should be reported. A standard Accident report form will be used for this purpose (see "Form - Accident Form V6.pdf"). The school will also maintain a school accident log.

The Health and Safety Executive does not require reports in respect of children's injuries arising from collisions, clips and falls in the playgrounds unless they are caused by

- the condition of the premises, e.g., potholes, worn steps, etc., or
- by plant or equipment being on the premises, e.g., contractor's machinery, or
- by a lack of proper supervision.

It is school policy to inform the parents, if a child receives a bump/blow to the head, as soon as possible after the event either by telephone or information slip giving relevant details.

3.10 First Aid

It is the Head Teacher's responsibility to nominate members of staff as trained First Aiders who will be responsible for major first aid. A trained first aider will always be on site in school, as well as accompanying children on a school trip. In the event of serious injury or illness, their main task is to take charge of a situation and ensure that an ambulance is summoned and that a responsible person is sent to direct any medical staff to the casualty. Such a person should also direct other children away from the area, obtain from the ambulance crew details of where the casualty is being taken, and subsequently ensure that parents are notified and that the appropriate L.E.A. accident reporting procedures are put into action.

A list of current trained First Aiders will be displayed prominently in the school. All queries regarding first aid treatment should be addressed to one of these First Aiders.

3.10.1 Ambulances

Whilst it is not essential that a responsible adult accompanies a child who is taken from the school by ambulance, it is school policy that a teacher will accompany the child so that the child's name, address and details of the accident/illness can be given when needed.

On no account should provision of urgently needed medical treatment be delayed pending the arrival at school of parents.

3.10.2 First Aid Boxes

The regulations require that first aid materials are readily available to all employees. The permitted contents of first aid boxes are restricted to those items that can be used by an untrained person to treat themselves and others without risk of exacerbating injuries.

"Statutory" first aid boxes may contain only the following items:

- Individually wrapped sterile dressings
- Sterile eye pads with attachment
- Triangular bandages (sterile or, if not, with suitable sterile coverings for serious wounds)
- Safety pins
- Selection of medium, large and extra-large sterile un-medicated dressings
- Where mains tap water is not immediately available, at least 900 ml of sterile water, or sterile normal saline solution, should be provided.

First aid boxes should be constructed so as to ensure that the contents are kept clean and dry and labelled with a white cross on a green background so as to be easily identifiable. They will be held at various locations throughout the school. Disposable plastic gloves should be stored near the first aid boxes.

Adequate and appropriate first aid provision will form part of the arrangements for all out-of-school activities.

3.10.3 First Aid Room

The school does not have a First Aid room. As a temporary measure, a staff room or classroom, as appropriate, will be used by children as a resting place whilst arrangements are made to respond to medical needs. Arrangements for contacting parents will be the responsibility of the Head Teacher/secretary using the information provided on the child's Admission Form.

3.11 Hygiene Precautions

In any situation where there are large numbers of people working in close proximity there is a risk of outbreaks of infectious diseases. The possibility of outbreaks of disease can be minimised by the application of sensible hygiene precautions:

- A high standard of personal hygiene must be encouraged. Failure of children to wash their hands after using the toilet is the usual cause of outbreaks of bacillary dysentery and gastro-enteritis, while similar lapses by kitchen staff can cause food poisoning cases. Soap, warm water and paper towels are available in the toilet areas and children must be encouraged to use them.
- A small proportion of the population are carriers of infectious diseases. Many such carriers are unaware of their condition and the only sensible approach we can take as a school is to make sure that all the school population follow adequate hygiene routines.
- Staff should ensure that any cuts or broken skin are covered with waterproof or other suitable dressings while at work.

Particular care must be taken when dealing with bleeding or other cases of spillage of body fluid:

- Plastic gloves (and if necessary disposable aprons) should be worn.
- Ordinary household bleach, diluted one to 10 parts water, should be used for cleaning/ disinfecting purposes (N.B.: Do not allow this solution to come into contact with skin or eyes. Flush with cold water if accidental contact occurs).
- Keep children away from the area until the spillage is dealt with.
- If the position of the spillage allows, carefully pour the diluted bleach over the area, cover with paper towels and leave for 30 minutes. If this is not an option, contaminated surfaces should be cleaned with liberal quantities of the above liquid.
- Individual contaminated paper towels should be disposed of carefully, but if a quantity have been used they, together with gloves and aprons, must be treated as infected waste. This waste must not be placed in the bins or the skip but placed in a plastic bag and sent to the Caretaker who will arrange for its disposal.
- On completion of work involving the cleaning of body fluids, hands should be thoroughly washed.

3.11.1 Head Lice

Head lice are more of a nuisance than a health risk, but they can cause much distress to parents, children and staff. We regard it as the parents' responsibility to detect head lice and we will advise all parents to check their child's hair regularly. The best precautionary measure is thorough brushing and combing of the hair last thing at night. Where infestation is suspected or confirmed advice will be sent from school and treatment can be obtained from the local chemist.

We should advise parents against regularly treating their children with insecticidal preparations, as a precautionary measure, as there is a risk of lice developing a resistance to the chemicals. School therefore promotes the 'wet combing' method to dispose of head lice.

3.11.2 Dermatitis

Cleaners and kitchen staff are the main groups at risk from dermatitis, which is a disease caused by the direct action on the skin by chemicals, physical or biological agents. Persons who suffer from asthma, hay fever or other allergies need to exercise particular care when handling substances known to be sensitising agents.

Prevention of dermatitis requires:

- Where there is a choice, we will only purchase those substances which have been approved by the L.E.A. as having the least potential for causing harm

- Careful observation of personal hygiene by staff using substances
- Where necessary, the use of gloves and/ or barrier creams to help maintain the integrity of the skin
- The use of proprietary hand cleaning products to remove heavy soiling, rather than pumice, hard soap or hard nail brushes
- The regular use of conditioning cream on skin that may have become defatted by exposure to substances, drying winds, or thorough repeated washing.

3.12 Administration of Medication

Written authority must be received from parents/guardians before prescribed medication will be administered.

All medicines should be brought to school and handed to the nominated staff representative.

The following checks will be made:

- That only a suitable amount for administration during school hours is supplied.
- The container is securely sealed.
- The labelling confirms the pupil's name; dosage, frequency and duration of treatment course; date prescribed and expiry date.
- That appropriate measuring devices supplied by the dispensing chemist have been provided.

Inhalers should be easily accessible to pupils and should always be taken by school staff on trips in case of need.

There is a lockable facility where medicines can be stored, however, most medicines need to be kept at a cooler temperature and are therefore stored in the fridge.

Prior to administration of medication the named member of staff will check with the pupil his/her age and name against the information on the container label.

Oral tablet or liquid medication will be administered in accordance with the instructions provided on the container/label as directed by the medical practitioner. Only individual measuring spoons supplied to the parents/guardians by dispensing chemists should be used.

Ear and eye drops should be administered by dropper in accordance with the instructions provided on the container/label as directed by the medical practitioner.

The parents/guardians of asthmatic pupils who require medication and who can take responsibility for self-administration should:

- Notify the Headteacher of such a requirement
- Supply details of the type of medication, prescribed/expected dosage and frequency and manner of use.

After the administration of medication the nominated member of staff must ensure that the pupil's medical record is entered and updated.

On completion of the course of medical treatment, or on termination of the treatment arrangement, any unused medications should be returned to the parents/guardians.

The administration of non-prescribed medicines and treatment should in no circumstances be undertaken or issued by staff. This ranges from the taking of paracetamol tablets, doses of 'cough mixture', to homeopathic tablets and creams.

The nominated staff representatives are Mrs. Huddleston.

3.13 Intimate Care and Toileting

It is expected that children will be toilet trained before they begin Reception. It is inevitable however that, from time to time, some children will have accidents and will need to be given attention.

In our school, intimate care is defined as any care which involves washing or changing pupils.

We recognise that there is a need for children and young people to be treated with respect when intimate care is given. No child shall be attended to in a way that causes distress, embarrassment or pain.

In order to help the children to become aware of their bodily needs and respond to them in time, those who wish to go to the toilet are always allowed to go, although they are encouraged, as they progress through the school, to use the toilet during break times.

Where a child has continuing incontinence problems, parents are expected to continue to provide a complete set of spare clothes and 'baby-wipes'. The school also keeps a stock of spare clothes in various sizes. Staff have access to a private toilet area with washing facilities. There is also a stock of baby wipes, plastic bags and disposable protective gloves for staff to use, which they must do. If a child soils him/herself during school time, a member of staff will support the child:

- Remove their soiled clothes
- Clean skin (this usually includes bottom, genitalia, legs, feet)
- Dress the child in their own clothes or those provided by the school
- Double-wrap soiled clothes in plastic bags and give to parents to take home.

Parents/carers will always be contacted.

Our intention is that the child will never be left in soiled clothing. As soon as the member of staff responsible for him/her is aware of the situation, the child will be cleaned.

3.13.1 Intimate care needs (over and above accidents)

- The management of any child with intimate care needs due to a specific medical condition will be carefully planned and recorded in a care plan.
- Careful consideration will be given to individual situations to determine how many adults should be present during intimate care procedures. Where possible, one pupil will be cared for by one adult, unless there is a sound reason for having more adults present. In such a case, the reasons will be documented.
- The needs and wishes of children and parents will be taken into account, wherever possible, within the constraints of staffing and equal opportunities legislation.

3.14 Infectious Diseases

Please refer to the Health Protection website at hpa.org.uk for guidelines on medical conditions and recommended exclusion periods.

For further information staff can consult the Community Health file which is kept in the Office. This file gives a brief description of the various infections and advice as to their treatment. Please return the file to the Office when you are finished with it.

3.15 Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment)

Under the above regulations only the School Secretary and Mrs. Huddleston can be constituted as a "user" with regard to VDU's. As policy, they will ensure their work is so planned that tasks involving screen equipment is periodically interrupted by spells of non-display work or formal breaks, to prevent fatigue and to vary visual and mental demands.

The school must ensure that the workstation meets the requirements of the act in respect of the equipment, the desk, the chair, the working space, lighting, noise, etc. and the software.

Where a person is a user they can request an eye and eyesight test, which must be arranged as soon as practicable and at the school's expense. Further eye tests are to be made available at regular intervals.

It must be emphasised that working with display screen equipment does not cause eye defects or make worse existing defects. However, an uncorrected defect, of which the user may previously have been unaware, is likely to cause quite severe, if temporary, problems when such visually demanding work is undertaken.

Further information can be found in the Health and Safety Executive booklet: Display Screen

3.16 Security

As a matter of policy no money should be left in classrooms, especially at those times when school photographs are being sold, money is being raised through sponsored events, etc. All money should be sent to the office as soon as possible.

Adults and children should develop good practice of ensuring the door at the main entrance is securely shut behind them.

All entrances to the school are secured and access is by invitation only.

3.17 Electrical Safety

In recent years, there has been an increasing use of electricity in school due to the use of computers, televisions, and audio visual aid equipment in curricular areas. Whilst electricity makes a considerable contribution to most aspects of our school life it also has the potential to kill and to cause fires. To enjoy the benefits without risks requires that both the school's electrical supply installation and the equipment are well designed and constructed, carefully maintained and sensibly used. Under no circumstances should adapters or 'home made' wiring be used.

Particular care must be exercised when privately owned electrical equipment is used on the school premises.

All electrical equipment belonging to the school will be annually tested to ensure that there is no danger to any potential user. A register will be maintained of all such electrical equipment and each item of equipment will carry an identification tag which relates to its entry on the register.

4 Appendix A – Incident Log to be Completed for Missing Child

Incident Log for Missing Child	
Date:	Time:
Missing child:	
Staff member responsible for overseeing search:	
Areas to be searched within school (see floor plan):	
Description of incident:	
Parents informed:	
Police informed:	
Outcome:	

5 Appendix B: Letter to be given to Volunteers



St. Patricks R.C Primary, Dipton

Volunteer Policy

To be given to any person who is involved in work experience/training

***Aims: To give clear guidelines on the ways in which volunteers can help in school.
To ensure good communication between school and volunteer support helpers.
To provide a framework for the operation of our volunteer system.***

Thank you for expressing an interest in helping in our school, either as part of a course you are undertaking or simply because you wish to support pupils and staff in the excellent work they do. Your willingness to share your time and skills is much appreciated.

We hope to make your time in school as enjoyable and effective as possible. We can offer you an opportunity to work with children and staff, who will treat you with courtesy and respect at all times and, in return, we expect you to show all members of our school community the same consideration.

St. Patrick's is a school with high expectations. As a volunteer helper, children will see you in school and view you as an authority figure, as they would any member of staff. It is therefore essential that a code of behaviour is established. We have devised a protocol to ensure that everyone is clear of expectations, as we wish to make the time you are able to spend with us as beneficial as possible.

An up to date DBS check is essential before you are able to work with children in our school. Any matter that is of concern should be discussed with the Head Teacher immediately, in order that any misunderstandings or difficulties can be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Guidelines for volunteers in the classroom

Volunteers are always welcomed into school and your help is valued very highly. The following guidelines are in no particular order and are intended to help you feel comfortable and informed of expectations.

- Children may sometimes “push the boundaries” when with a volunteer. If a gentle reminder does not elicit an immediate response, please refer to the Head teacher. Never shout at a child or tell a child off. The school has a code of conduct which children are expected to follow. As a volunteer you are not expected to discipline children. If there is a problem — tell the teacher immediately. The matter will be dealt with promptly.
- We have to follow very careful guidelines on aspects of physical contact with children - please remember not to initiate contact with children, and discourage over familiarity.
- We have well defined procedures for informing parents of what has happened whilst the children are in school and we will be the first to discuss any issues where we have concerns. Please do not be tempted to relay anything you have seen or heard in a classroom to other parents. We need to be assured that you will exercise total discretion in all respects when you are helping in school.
- Never get into an argument with children or adults. Teachers are trained to deal with a range of situations and they are paid to take responsibility.

- If you have any concerns at any time about the way a child has been treated, or something you have witnessed, please raise the issue immediately with the Head Teacher or Chair of Governors.
- Please exercise the utmost discretion regarding all information you hear in school. Any breaches of confidentiality will mean we are unable to benefit from your help in the future.

Having read the above information, if you feel you are able to work with us, we would value your commitment to our school and be grateful of any support you are willing to give.

As part of your induction, you will be given information regarding safeguarding and you will be expected to access policies through our school website.

I have also read the relevant section of the school's Keeping Children Safe in School Safeguarding our Children v1.3 document.

I am clear on the guidelines and will abide by these at all times.

Name of volunteer (please print).....

Signature.....

Date.....

6 Appendix C - Fire Procedure 2018 - 2019

IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE OR AN EMERGENCY CLOSURE, FOR EXAMPLE A GAS LEAK, RAISE THE ALARM IMMEDIATELY. There are 9 fire points situated around school, which are activated by pressing.

Although school is connected directly to the Fire Service, 999 must still be called.

Your main responsibility is to guide your pupils to safety. On hearing the alarm bell ringing continuously, all children will stop whatever they are doing and, in an **orderly** and **speedy** fashion, **vacate the building.** **Your class will leave the building as indicated below unless the source of fire prevents safe exit.**

FIRE EXITS

EXIT	YEAR GROUP				
BACK DOOR	Year 6	Year 5	Year 4		
FRONT DOOR	Year 2	Year R	Group Room	Year 3	Year 1

As the above exits may be "danger areas", and could be closed, staff and children will be trained to use alternative routes as circumstances dictate.

In the event of a Year group being taught in the hall, or in the event of a fire over lunch time, exit should be made through the nearest hall fire door. All children/adults will be assembled in the main yard. Children will line up in class groups.

The Head teacher and secretary will ensure that the building is cleared of all personnel.

Please make sure that you close all fire doors behind you in order to check the spread of fire and smoke. All staff have keys to exterior gates.

The children will assemble in class lines in the school playground, well away from areas where firefighting appliances may be placed.

A head count, followed by a roll call, will be called by each teacher and any shortfall reported immediately to the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or Mrs Charlton.

NO-ONE will return to the building until they have been told to do so by the fire marshals – Mrs Burgess, Mrs Charlton or Mr March

If we are unable to return to the school building, we will proceed to the church where the children will remain.

Parents will be notified via our texting service if we are unable to return to the school building and collection of pupils is necessary.

Arrangements for fighting fire

Staff are given the following instruction:

- Do not attempt to fight the fire unless there are exceptional circumstances such as in order to escape, e.g., if the fire is already contained, such as a small amount of burning material in a waste bin, use of a fire blanket for a cooking or clothing fire.

Instructions for use of fire extinguisher are as follows:

- Use upright
- Pull out clip
- Aim nozzle at fire (not nearer than 1 metre)
- Squeeze handles