



What are the legal responsibilities for duty holders in relation to managing occupational health and safety in primary schools?

In a school, the Board of Management or Education and Training Board (ETB) is responsible, as employer, for ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health, and welfare at work of its employees and of those directly affected by the work activities of the school.

Every Board of Management and ETB is required by law to have a safety statement for its school. The safety statement is a live, written document that contains details about how safety, health, and welfare are managed in a school. The Safety Statement will also contain the school's policy and risk assessments and the controls required to minimise the risks arising from any hazards identified.

What is a risk assessment, and how is it undertaken?

The aim of Risk Assessment is to reduce the risk of injury and illness associated with work.

Risk assessment involves a three-step process:

1. Identifying the hazards in the workplace(s) under your control.
2. Assessing the risks presented by these hazards.
3. Putting control measures in place to reduce the risk of these hazards causing harm.

The findings of the risk assessment should be documented.

Further, once a control measure has been implemented, its effectiveness should be monitored. It is essential to check that risk controls are working and that there are no new hazards.

What is a safety statement?

A safety statement is your school's written commitment to managing safety and health in your business and how you are going to do this. It should state how the employer will ensure their safety and health and state the resources necessary to maintain and review safety and health laws and standards. Risk assessments should also be included in the safety statement.

The safety statement should be formally reviewed every year or

- where there has been a significant change relating to workplace hazards, or
- when there is reason to believe that it is no longer adequate, e.g. changes to health and safety arrangements and resources, or an incident (including a near-miss incident).

The employer must ensure that the contents of the Safety Statement, which includes the Risk Assessments, is brought to the attention of all employees and others at the workplace who may be exposed to any risks covered by the Safety Statement. All new employees must be made aware of the Safety Statement when they start work. Further, if there is an amendment to the Safety Statement, it should be brought to the attention of all employees. The Safety Statement must be in a form and language that all employees understand.

What tools and resources are available for schools to create safety statements?

- Guidelines on Managing Safety, Health and Welfare in Primary Schools https://www.hsa.ie/eng/education/managing_safety_and_health_in_schools/primary_schools_guidelines/.
- BeSMART.ie www.besmart.ie.

What are the ‘Guidelines on Managing Safety, Health and Welfare in Primary Schools’?

The Guidelines are a management tool intended to offer guidance and practical advice to assist schools in planning, organising and managing a safe and healthy school environment. The guidelines include example risk assessment templates for different hazards identified in the primary school setting.

The Guidelines do not place any additional responsibility on schools that does not already exist in legislation, and schools are not obligated to use the Guideline templates; they may use another method to manage safety and health.

What is BeSMART.ie?

BeSMART.ie is a free online safety statement and risk assessment tool that can be completed in 4 simple steps. The HSA does not have access to the end user’s information (i.e., risk assessments and safety information). The Primary School business type is the latest addition to the 300+ business types available. Schools are not required to develop safety statements/risk assessments using BeSMART.ie but may do so if they wish. Alternatively they may use the risk assessment templates provided with the Guidelines or another method.

How does the business type for primary schools available on BeSMART.ie link to the Guidelines on Managing Safety, Health and Welfare in Primary Schools?

The Primary School business type on BeSMART.ie was developed in line with the templates contained within the 'Guidelines on Managing Safety, Health, and Welfare in Primary Schools'. That is, all hazard content and controls related to occupational safety and health contained within the Guideline templates have been integrated and restructured into BeSMART.ie risk assessments.

Do I need to register an account on BeSMART.ie to create my safety statement?

You do not need to register an account on BeSMART.ie to create a safety statement; you can do so as a guest. However, registered users benefit from the ability to save progress, complete and review safety statements later, and manage action lists online.

How can a safety statement be updated on BeSMART.ie?

Registered users can log in to BeSMART.ie to edit their risk assessments. From the management screen, they can also browse and add additional hazards to their safety statements.

Who do I contact for further information or support?

The HSA Contact Centre is a helpdesk resource for employers, employees and members of the public. The HSA Contact Centre is the primary point of contact for our customers.

You can contact the HSA Contact Centre through any of the following means:

- LoCall: 0818 289 389 (Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm), or
- email contactus@hsa.ie

Further information:



HSA

An tÚdarás Sláinte agus Sábháilteachta
Health and Safety Authority

