

# *Safety @ School*



## *A Guidance Note*

*Prepared for*

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# Safety @ School

## A Guidance Note

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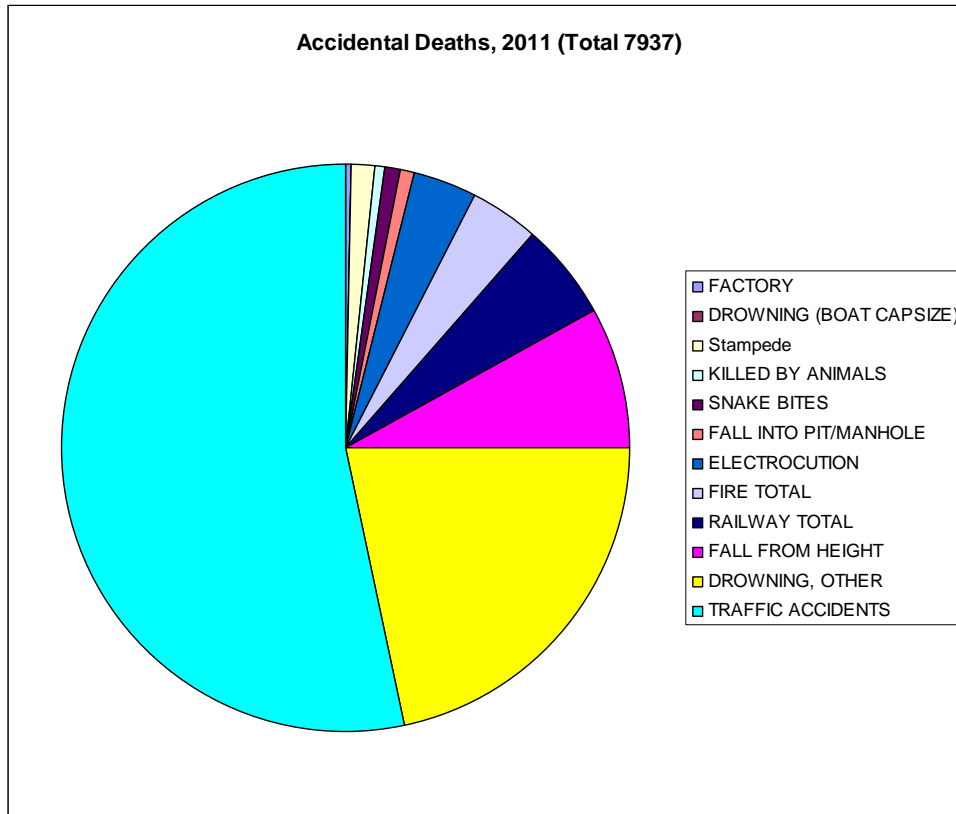
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# *Safety @ School*

## *A Guidance Note*

### Introduction to School Safety – Why is it important?

The achievements of Kerala in conventional factors of human development, such as infant mortality, literacy, and longevity, are well known. Our educational system, which provides free and universal education for all children in the state, has played a significant role in achieving this.



However, when it comes to matters of safety, our track record is not very good and is, in fact, getting worse. More than 4000 people die every year on the roads; close 1800 people die due to drowning and with all accidents put together, Kerala loses about 8000 people every year to safety accidents. Figure 1 shows the key reasons for safety related deaths in Kerala. But what is more alarming is that this trend is

continuing and the growth in safety related deaths is outstripping the population growth.

While the above information is regarding the entire population of the state, there are specific incidents involving school children which caused fatalities in the school, on the way to school or school related activities. Few of these are presented in box.

- Recent Fatal Safety Incidents Involving School Students or Teachers**
- School bus falling into river – Trivandrum
  - Boat mishap with students – Malappuram
  - NCC Cadet drown in Periyar – Ernakulam
  - Teacher attacked by elephant – Idukki
  - Student electrocuted during practicals – Kollam
  -

Death, of course, is the most tragic consequence of an accident but that is not the only one. While there are four thousand traffic-related deaths, there are more than forty thousand accidents. For every death from a safety incident, there are possibly three people who suffer injuries which has lifelong consequences. Statistics indicate that for every death, at least ten people are affected due to the accident with injuries, mental trauma, legal troubles and financial losses. So the society, as whole, pays a heavy price for the growing trend of safety accidents in Kerala.

The Government of Kerala is aware of the rising trend in safety incidents and is taking significant initiatives to prevent them. There is increased attention on road safety by way of enforcing seat belts, helmets, more checking of drunken driving and similar measures. After major accidents that have been taking place at firework factories and water bodies, enforcement attention is also turned to other potential dangers. However, if Kerala has to break out of this trend and achieve sustainable reduction in safety incidents, a cultural change in our attitude to safety should take place. Such a change cannot come from enforcement alone, but also due to better awareness in the society about safety.

Introducing safety lessons in school have three distinct, but complementary objectives:

1. The children are safe during their school-related activities (during their journey to school, at schools and school-related activities including excursions)
2. The children learn lessons about safety which they can use in their personal and professional life
3. The children are able to transmit these lessons to others in their family and workplace in future

It is in this context that this guidance note is prepared.

### **Objective and Scope of the Guidance Note**

The objective of this guidance note is to provide teachers in the schools in Kerala with a basic understanding of safety-related issues in the school so that they can make the school safer and communicate safety messages in the school. This guidance note will cover the basic elements of safety regarding the school and its operations and provide a simple checklist to assess school safety during its operation. This book also gives simple tips which the teachers can communicate to the students to increase their safety and awareness about safety issues.

School safety is a very broad subject and all elements of school safety, from site selection of schools, school construction and school activities cannot be covered with a basic guideline. Also considering that the current status of understanding of school safety within our system is somewhat limited, introducing too many technical details in one note will be counterproductive. However, this guidance will give adequate links to other resources which deal with the topic in a more systematic manner.

Disaster management for schools deals with responding to natural or manmade disasters which could have negative impacts on schools and school children. While there are interfaces between school safety and disaster impacts, they are not identical. Disaster management preparation focuses on major incidents, such as earthquakes, floods, fires, tsunamis or landslides, any of which could happen, but with a very low frequency. Safety preparation, on the other hand, deals with day-to-day issues such as traffic safety, safety within classrooms and play grounds, safety

issues while dealing with chemicals in the laboratory and safety concerns during school excursions or other special events. The focus of this book will be on safety issues, which are more routine and is relevant to all schools but it will broadly cover the interfaces with disaster management issues.

Internationally, other issues in the schools, such as bullying and violence, are also getting increased attention. However, they are issues dealing more with security than safety and therefore are not covered in this guidance note. Security issues differ from safety in the sense that there is a malicious intent behind security incidents whereas in safety issues, there is no deliberate intention to do harm. So a student falling down the stairs will be a safety issue while child being pushed down the stairs making him to fall down will be a security incident. While the physical health aspects of both incidents may be identical, the root causes and emotional impacts are different. The incident investigation, in these cases, needs to be different and so will be the corrective actions that are required. This book will not deal with security issues at all though they are also important issues that need attention. That is not the domain of a safety guidance note.

### **Why a school safety initiative?**

In order to ensure safety of school children, one of the fundamental requirements is that the school itself be a safe place for the children. This is important for three reasons:

1. Unsafe schools can lead to safety incidents which can cause injury or even death of its pupil(s)
2. In the modern “whole of school” learning concept, teaching safety lessons to children sitting in unsafe classrooms will be hypocritical and cannot lead to effective learning
3. Schools are often used as relief centers during disasters and are therefore considered “lifeline” buildings; therefore, having unsafe schools, which will be damaged during disasters or are unsafe will exacerbate the impacts of the original disaster

### **Preparing for School Safety**

Kerala has a long tradition of schooling and our Governments have been investing in school systems for decades. Our high levels of literacy and record of people pursuing higher education which enabled people from Kerala to take advantage of the employment opportunities all over the world is a direct consequence of our investments in the school.

There is, therefore, no doubt in anybody’s mind that our children are our future and investing in good schooling systems is a foundation for sustainable development. As the Government, teachers and parents have student safety paramount in their minds, it is fair to assume that the Government will be prepared to do whatever it takes to keep our children safe. It must be added that while we do hear about occasional accidents leading to major injury or death of school children, such incidents are few and far in between. However, as a society we must do whatever is possible to prevent all preventable accidents, causing injury or death. At the same time, investing in safety of school children not just ensure their safety during school years but help to put a foundation of safety for them in their future and our society.

Three enabling actions are needed from the Government to initiate a programme on school safety:

1. Make an explicit commitment to build safer schools by way of a policy or statement so that the issue gets attention of all stakeholders, teachers, children and parents.
2. Establish a system whereby at least one teacher (two in the case of mixed schools) in a school has a basic understanding of school safety and is professionally trained in first aid.
3. Ensure that a basic safety audit is conducted in the school and a safety plan is prepared for every school.

### **Safe School Policy**

The safe school policy should be a simple statement, no more than one page, which is approved by the Government and is displayed in all the schools. The basic elements of a safe school policy are:

- A commitment from the Government to a safe learning environment for all children
- A commitment from the Government to make available the resources needed to make the schools safe
- A commitment to the parents to inform them about any safety incident relating to the school children, be it inside the school or outside
- A commitment to investigate any safety incident relating to the safety of the school children (be it inside the school or outside) and take the required corrective action
- A call for all concerned to contribute to the safe school policy

The copy of the Safe School Policy is given in the Appendix of this guidance note. This may be printed out in big posters and displayed prominently in the school.

### **Safety Organization in the School**

There are multiple parties who have an influence or interest in school safety. The key stakeholders are:

- School Children
- Teachers
- School Employees
- Head Master/Principal
- Parents
- School Management

The Head Master or Principal of the school will be primarily responsible for implementation of the school safety policy. In order to discharge their responsibility, they should appoint a safety focal point for the school who is trained in basic safety issues dealing with schools and also professionally trained in first aid. In schools having both boys and girls, there should be one male and one female focal points to deal with safety.

The school safety points identified should be given the required training on basics of school safety as well as in first aid. In addition, they should be provided with the required resources and facilities for first aid.

In case of schools which have a school safety club, the members of the safety club shall be given basic training on how to identify safety hazards and report them in advance. They should also be

empowered to assist other students who may be injured during school activities. In schools where there are no school safety clubs, such a responsibility may be given to the class representatives.

### **School Safety Plan**

Every school should have a documented school safety plan. This plan should have the following basic elements:

- The name and contact details of the head master of the school
- The name(s) and contact details of the safety focal points of the school
- A map of the school and its surroundings showing any safety concerns (road, railway, river, high tension wires, factories, etc.)
- A layout of the school showing fences, entrances (open and locked), assembly area, location of the first aid box
- Key identified safety risks within the school
- Phone number of the nearest hospital, fire station and police station

### **Assessing School Safety**

School safety is a function of three separate elements and all these need to be systematically reviewed in the context of school safety:

- Location of the school
- Construction and layout of the school
- Activities in the school (both in the classroom and outside)

In addition, weather conditions, such as rain, wind or heat, bring in additional risks that need to be factored in.

Furthermore, school children are also exposed to safety situations during their travel to school on foot, or by automobiles or boats. Whereas these situations are not directly within the control of the school authorities (except when school arranges for transportation), a school safety programme should address these issues and also work to maximize its impact.

### **Auditing School Safety**

In order to identify the safety concerns relevant to school children, a systematic assessment of safety hazards should be undertaken. While this can be a very elaborate exercise with professional safety teams spending many days, a very useful basic safety audit can be conducted by the safety focal points in the school using a simple checklist. A basic checklist is presented at the end of this guidance note. The key elements are elaborated here.

**School Location:** The location of a school has significant impacts on the safety at school. A school on a hill slope or on the edge of a river, for example, is vulnerable to the consequences of natural hazards. A road very close to a highway or railway brings closer manmade hazards into the school. Schools close to industrial facilities add yet another dimension to safety at school.

At the time of choosing the location for the school, all possible hazards, both natural and man-made must be considered. As schools have to be necessarily close to the community and natural or manmade hazards of some kind is always present, the idea is not to look for an “ideal” location which is not affected by either natural or manmade hazards. Instead, the key is to be cognizant of the potential hazards, keep the buildings away from serious hazards that



pose obvious threats and also incorporate sufficient safety aspects in both construction and operation of the school. Within the context of Kerala, as majority of the schools already have been built, there is not much that we can do now regarding location unless there are imminent threats. The focus should therefore be on assessing the potential natural and manmade threats and see if there are enough controls taken in operation of the school to minimize safety threat to the children.

School Site Selection and Approval Guide, from the California Department of Education is a good reference document. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/fa/sf/schoolsiteguide.asp>

**School Construction:** We often hear stories of injuries and death of school children associated with every major natural disaster. Schools collapse during earthquakes, are impacted by cyclones and washed out in Tsunamies. Schools also catch fire or are hit by lightning, leading to damage to buildings and injuries to pupils.

Schools must be constructed taking all major natural hazards in the area into account. However, in addition, there are factors which must be kept in mind in every school during its construction, considering that the occupants of the building are youngsters. This includes aspects such as avoiding open windows in second floor onwards, having protected stairways, safe electrical switches and plugs.

While majority of our schools have already been built and only limited construction happens every year of new school buildings, it will be important to establish guidelines for safe schools. Guidance Notes on Safer School Construction by the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery is a good reference document. <https://www.gfdrr.org/node/777>

**School Operations:** While location and construction of school buildings is a given parameter in most schools in Kerala, safety of schools can still be improved dramatically by changing operational practices. This will include identifying the key safety hazards related to the school, in its location, construction and activities, taking preventive measures to minimize the risks and creating awareness among all parties (children, teachers and parents) on the risks and risk reduction measures and continuously working to improve school safety by learning from lessons of safety incidents or practices in the school or elsewhere.



In the following pages, we will cover how to assess the safety of a school and how best to design a school safety management system to keep children safe.

### Typical Hazards in a School Environment

The typical hazards in a school environment is similar to those in an office environment. However, the risk is magnified because the majority of the occupants are children who are not risk conscious and are not continuously supervised. Some of the typical risk factors are:

1. Slips and trips – Children slipping on the floor of the building or tripping on wires and cables left loose is a cause of small injuries at school.
2. Fall from heights – In school buildings that are multi-storied, falls from heights through classroom windows, verandas and stairwells is a risk to be considered.
3. Electrical hazards – Many classrooms have electrical points and implements that cause electrical hazards.
4. Falling objects – Falling objects, such as cupboards in class rooms, or loose materials from roof and upper stories are yet another cause of hazards. This hazard is magnified in areas with heavy wind/rain.

### Computers and Visual Display Units

Use of computers and other visual display units (VDUs, e.g., televisions, laboratory display terminals) create their own safety impacts which are of significance to the new generation as they are exposed to it at school and home every day. There are short-term issues, such as causing neck pain and strain to the eye due to the positioning of the VDU and long-term impact due to posturing and positioning of the hands while typing on computers. Children should be made aware of these risks and taught appropriate work practices to avoid long-term health impacts.

### Risk Hotspots in Schools

While classrooms have the hazards listed above, there are certain areas within the school which pose more risk than classrooms and hence need special attention. The typical risk hotspots in school building are listed in Table 1.

Risk Hotspots	Typical Risks
Laboratories	Chemicals, fire hazard from LPG, electrical hazards, falling objects
Computer rooms	Slips and trips, electrical hazards, falling objects, chocking hazard
Swimming pools	Drowning, falling from heights
Cafeteria and kitchen	Slips and trips, fire, falling objects, chocking hazard
Playgrounds	Slips and trips, falling objects, sports injuries, sunstroke, falling from heights
Stairwells	Slips and trips, fall from heights

Function Rooms/Auditoriums	Slips and trips, electrical hazards, falling objects
Open wells/pits	Fall from heights, drowning



**Safety during Special Events;** While day-to-day activities of the school pose a set of risks, there are additional risks associated with special events, such as sports festivals or excursions. The risk is magnified during such events as pupils are generally (a) working in unfamiliar environments (b) less supervised and (c) in a more excited state of mind. Therefore, additional attention needs to be given to safety of the pupil during such special events. Typical special events associated with the school activities and the associated hazards are given in Table 2.

Special Events	Typical Hazards
Sporting events	Slips and trips, falling objects, falling from heights, electrical hazards, sunstroke, lightning, drowning, sporting injuries, fire, etc.
Excursions	Traffic related hazards, falling from height, drowning, animal bites, sun stroke, falling objects, slips and trips, food poisoning
Exhibitions	Slips and trips, chemical hazards, electrical hazards, fall from height, falling objects, fire
Anniversaries and youth festivals	Electrical hazards, fall from heights, falling objects, fire



### Risk Aggravating Factors

In addition to risks during routine operation of the school, one should also consider natural and manmade events which bring in additional risk factors or aggravate the existing risks. For example, heavy rain may increase the risk of slipping in the playground or construction activities in the school may increase electrical hazards. Table 3 lists typical risk aggravating factors and the hazards that they bring or increase.

Risk Aggravating Factors	Typical Hazards
Construction activities in the school	Electrical hazards, falling objects, slips and trips, vehicle maneuvering, fire hazards, fall from heights
Seasonal risks (summer, rain, winter)	Sunstroke, cold spells, fire hazards, electrical hazards, slips and trips
Weather events (flood, lightning, wind/cyclone)	Electrical hazards, drowning, falling objects
Natural Hazards (tsunamis, floods)	Drowning, slips and trips, electrical hazards
Trees in and around the school	Falling objects

### Risks during Journey to School

In addition to the various risks that are present in the school and during school activities, the act of coming to the school also poses significant safety risks with serious potential for injury and death. This is all the more so because a majority of the children are on their own, not supervised by anyone during this period. The typical travel situations and associated hazards are presented in Table 4 .

Travel Method	Typical Hazards
Walking	Slips and trips, falling objects, falls from heights, drowning, electrical hazards, road traffic, animal attack, snake bites, lightning
Travel by vehicle	Road traffic-related hazards
Travel by boat	Slips and trips, drowning



### Issues needing special considerations

While all the above risks are applicable, depending on the geographical locations, to all schools and pupils therein, there are special cases needing additional considerations. The three typical situations are listed in Table 5.

Situation Needing Special Considerations	Issues to be Considered
Schools with boarding facilities	Additional risks of fire, slips and trips, falling from heights, drowning, lightning, sports injuries, food poisoning, falling objects, animal/snake bites
Schools with children having special needs (blind, deaf, dumb, mentally retarded, etc.)	These children need increased supervision as their risk perception may not be adequate and cannot often pick up the early warning signals
Gender-specific issues	Girls have been found to be particularly vulnerable to drowning as (a) their dress does not facilitate swimming and (b) less percentage of girls are familiar with swimming than boys

**Audit follow-up:** Based on the field data gathered, the audit should prepare a list identifying the key hazards, their significance and possible measures of mitigating them.

Every audit will identify a number of potential safety hazards which need to be addressed. It is important that these hazards are classified based on their risk. All high-risk hazards should be immediately brought to the attention of the management and addressed immediately. In some cases risk mitigation may not be immediately possible but other risk management strategies, such as risk isolation, should be done. An action plan should be made to address the medium and low-risk activities on a time bound fashion.

### Risk Mitigation Measures

A good audit of the safety situation in the school will identify the typical risks specific to that institution, those which depend on the school location, construction, geography, climate, nature of students, facilities and activities. Whereas the list of hazards in the school, or in any school for that matter, will be long, making the school appear to be a very “dangerous” place, in reality, most pupils are already aware of most of the risks. The audit will only facilitate to verbalize those risks and ensure that possible precautions are taken to minimize these risks. Risk mitigation measures to be undertaken in the school will consist of (a) creating risk awareness, (b) reducing risks by physical actions, (c) personal protective equipment, (d) early warning and signage, (e) emergency drills, (f) first aid, (g) and learning from incidents. These are elaborated in the following sections.

**Creating Risk Awareness:** Once the key risks are identified and major risks are eliminated, the findings of the School Safety Audit need to be communicated to all the students, teachers and parents. This should be done in multiple ways. For the children it could be done by series of posters and photographs illustrating the risks and risk mitigation measures. For the teachers and parents, this could be done through an interactive session.

Audience	Risk Communication Tool
Students	Posters, photographs, videos and lectures
Teachers	Audit reports and lectures
Parents	Audit report and lectures

In addition to the generic presentation that is conducted annually on safety issues, additional presentations on safety should be held for the students on the following occasions:

- Prior to any special events at the school (sports event, exhibitions, annual day, etc.)
- Prior to any planned outing from the school (excursions, sports competitions outside the school, etc.)
- Prior to any major construction activity being initiated within the school compound
- After any safety incident in the school which caused injury or could have resulted in major harm to children
- After a major safety accident in the state which has relevant lessons for the school children

Depending on the gravity of the issue, you could either have a special session on safety or include that as part of the routine briefings in the school during assembly.

**Reducing Risks by Physical Actions:** A number of risks identified during the school safety audit can be reduced by physical interventions. This includes fencing open wells, putting grills on open windows in first floor and above and having a lightning arrestor in those schools that have increased risks of being struck by lightning. Typical risks and physical interventions are listed in Table 5.

Typical Hazards in Schools	Hardware Intervention
Electrical hazards	Close all open connectors, cover electrical cables with insulating tubes
Trips	Attach all loose cables to ground with packing tape or similar
Falling objects	Remove potential falling objects from heights, remove cupboards from school room, tie back trees and similar risky objects
Fire hazards	Fire extinguishers, fire blankets, fire alarms, fire exits
Chemical hazards	Eye wash arrangements, first aid for burn
Sun stroke	Provide shade, adequate supply of water
Open wells	Create fences
Open windows, verandas on second floor and above	Provide adequate grills to prevent accidental fall, but also ensure safety exits
Stair wells	Provide railings on stairs
Leaning trees, coconut trees	Take appropriate remedial actions, including removing the trees with compensatory planting elsewhere
Lightning	Provide lightning arrestors, instruct students to take safety precautions during thunderstorms, such as not working on electrical objects
Falls from heights	Provide physical obstructions
Ongoing construction in the school	Secure the construction area
Vehicle traffic inside the school compound	Clearly mark vehicle traffic areas in the school



### **Personal Protective Equipment**

A number of the risks in the school are inherent to the activity, such as chemical hazards in the laboratories or hazards associated with sports. Therefore, there are limits to minimizing the hazards themselves. The appropriate action here is to have the correct personal protective equipment while undertaking such activities. Use of gloves and masks in the laboratory, helmets and guards in the appropriate sports are all typical examples of personal protective equipment.

### **Early Warning and Signage**

Providing signage around hazards and hazardous areas will reduce the number of injuries. All areas of potential danger, such as entry to public roads, open wells, pits, fire hazards and construction areas should be properly marked with familiar signs.

In addition, there should be a system for early warning in case of natural hazards, such as lightning, floods, tsunamis and children and parents should be made familiar with the appropriate response in the event of such a situation.

### **Emergency Drills**

All schools should have a standard arrangement for emergency drills for typical situations, such as fire, floods, lightning or whatever is appropriate in the context of the school. This should be planned and implemented at least once during the school year. There must be recognized safe areas for children to assemble during such drills.

### **First Aid:**

Every school should have facilities for first aid and should employ at least one teacher who is familiar with basic first aid. In case of mixed schools, there must be two teachers (one male and one female) who are trained in first aid. All children should know where the first aid facilities are and who the teacher in charge of first aid is. Typical contents of the first aid box are provided in Appendix. However, the size of the first aid kit should depend on factors such as the number of students, location of the school, age of pupils, are there both boys and girls in the students, etc. In addition, schools should also have portable first aid kits which could be taken by the teachers while on excursion or sports trips. The first aid box should be inspected every month to ensure that it has adequate supply of required material and they are within their expiry dates.

### **Learning from incidents**

In spite of all the precautions taken, accidents will happen, often due to human error. Whenever such an accident happens, four things are important:

1. Ensure that the injured persons are given appropriate first aid and professional medical attention as soon as possible
2. All children and their parents are informed of the accident and children provided counseling if needed
3. The incident is investigated with a view to identify the root causes
4. Once the investigation is over, communicate the result to all children and their parents, including the remedial measures being put in place in the school to prevent repetition of the accidents

While the chances of a serious accident occurring in any of the close to ten thousand schools in Kerala are small, schools should also learn from incidents which happen in other schools. So, every time there is a reported incident involving school children in any part of Kerala (or elsewhere), it could be discussed in the school assembly so as to prevent such incidents from repeating anywhere else.

### **Annual Review of School Safety**

Once the safety assessment of the school is completed, it should be reviewed annually with a view to identify if there has been a new risk element which has been introduced (e.g., a new bus route in the area, new factory/airport that has come up, etc). The implementation of the corrective actions which were suggested during the safety audit also should be reviewed and recorded. Any safety incident which occurred in the school and the results of the investigations done should be part of the review. Finally, the review team may consider any serious safety incident which occurred anywhere which has possible lessons for the school also as part of review.

The review should be undertaken jointly by the Head Master, representative of the Government, representative of the parents' and teachers' association and representative of the school



management (in case of private or aided schools). The school safety focal point should be the secretary of the meeting who makes relevant documents available to the review team and makes presentations about the school safety in the preceding year.

Conclusions of the meeting should be recorded and the recommendations should be implemented in the following year. The key outcomes of the annual safety review should be presented to the teachers and parents in a structured format. Finally, and most importantly, resources must be raised and the suggested improvements should be undertaken in a timely manner so that the safety policy and initiative have credibility and lead to sustainable improvement in school safety.

### **Mainstreaming Safety within the Curriculum**

The guidance provided in this note mainly focuses on introducing safety as an external element into the school. Ideally, however, safety should be mainstreamed into the school curriculum so that it is taught in an integrated manner. UNESCO recently published a guide to facilitate this aspect.

However, till the curriculum is modified to make that a reality, safety issues can still be incorporated into the school learning by promoting student involvement in safety issues. This can be done in some of the following ways:

1. Conduct a poster competition about school safety
2. Introduce school safety as a topic for essay or elocution competition
3. Ask students to present newspaper reports about safety incidents in the class or common assembly

It is hoped that with focused attention from the teachers and involvement of the students, our schools will be a safer place for all.

## Additional Reading

1. Towards a learning culture of safety and resilience: technical guidance for integrating disaster risk reduction in the school curriculum, UNESCO Publication  
([http://unesdoc.unesco.org/Ulis/cgi-bin/ulis.pl?catno=219412&set=51331973\\_1\\_427&gp=0&lin=1&ll=s](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/Ulis/cgi-bin/ulis.pl?catno=219412&set=51331973_1_427&gp=0&lin=1&ll=s))
2. School safety baseline study, International Strategy for Disaster Reduction  
([http://www.unisdr.org/files/23587\\_doc18766contenido.pdf](http://www.unisdr.org/files/23587_doc18766contenido.pdf))
3. Guidance note on safer school construction  
([http://gfdrr.org/docs/Guidance\\_Notes\\_Safe\\_Schools.pdf](http://gfdrr.org/docs/Guidance_Notes_Safe_Schools.pdf))
4. School Bus Safety Rules, National Safety Council  
([http://www.nsc.org/news\\_resources/Resources/Documents/School\\_Bus\\_Safety\\_Rules.pdf](http://www.nsc.org/news_resources/Resources/Documents/School_Bus_Safety_Rules.pdf))
5. Playground Injuries, Center for Disease Control and Prevention  
(<http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Playground-Injuries/index.html>)
6. Pedestrian Safety, Safe Kids Network (<http://www.safekids.org/safety-basics/safety-resources-by-risk-area/pedestrian/>)
7. Water Safety for children and young people, Royal Society for Prevention of Accidents  
(<http://www.rospa.com/leisuresafety/adviceandinformation/watersafety/watersafety-children-young-people.aspx>)
8. Health and Safety Checklist for Classrooms, Health and Safety Executive, UK  
(<http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/classroom-checklist.pdf>)
9. Laboratory Safety in Schools  
([http://carnegiescience.edu/first\\_light\\_case/horn/labsafety.html](http://carnegiescience.edu/first_light_case/horn/labsafety.html))
10. Managing Health and Safety in Swimming Pools, UK Health and Safety Executive  
(<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg179.htm>)
11. Lightning safety in schools, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, US  
([www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov/resources/LSSchools.ppt](http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov/resources/LSSchools.ppt))
12. *Good journey, Lessons from UK Trackoff for safe train journeys*  
(<http://www.trackoff.org/Documents/LessonPlan-AGoodJourney.pdf>)
13. School Site Selection and Approval Guide, from California Department of Education.  
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/fa/sf/schoolsiteguide.asp>
14. Guidance Notes on Safer School Construction by the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery. <https://www.gfdrr.org/node/777>  
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001590/159072eo.pdf>
15. Safe Chemical Management in Schools, US EPA Guidelines  
(<http://www.epa.gov/schools/chemicals.html>)
17. Road Safety for School Transport, European Commission Report  
([http://ec.europa.eu/transport/roadsafety\\_library/publications/rsst\\_final\\_report\\_v1.3.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/transport/roadsafety_library/publications/rsst_final_report_v1.3.pdf))
18. Water Safety Advice for Schools, Royal Life Saving Society  
(<http://www.lifesavers.org.uk/index.php/water-safety/water-safety-advice-for-schools>)
19. Safe Computer Use, Guidance from University of California Berkeley  
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([http://www.kerala.gov.in/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=77&Itemid=341](http://www.kerala.gov.in/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=77&Itemid=341))
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## Safe School Policy

***The Government of Kerala is committed to the safety of school children and considers it of utmost importance to provide a safe learning environment for the children.***

***The Government is committed to making the learning environment safer by conducting a systematic assessment of the risks associated with the school and its activities.***

***The Government will make available the required resources to deal with identified risk factors within a school or on issues relating to the safety of school children.***

***The Government will require that the school establishes a to deal with safety precautions, training, first aid and investigation***

***Parents will be kept informed of any safety incident relating to the school children.***

***Any safety incident involving school children will be investigated and corrective actions will be taken. Parents will be kept informed of the results of the investigations and the corrective actions taken.***

***Results of safety incident investigations, involving fatality of school children, will be shared with all schools in the state so that corrective measures can be taken all over the state.***

***The primary approach to safety will be not to find fault with anybody, including students, teachers or the management, but to identify the root causes which lead to the safety incident and learn from it to prevent such incidents in future.***

## Appendix II

### Background Information to be Collected Before the Audit

1. A map of the area showing the location of the school and, typically, about 5 kilometers' diameter around it. (If not available, can be prepared from Google earth.)
2. A detailed layout of the school building and its surrounding, showing various facilities within and outside the school
  - a. Number of floors
  - b. Number of rooms
  - c. Laboratories
  - d. Kitchens
  - e. Play areas (indoor and outdoor)
  - f. Similar information about hostel/boarding, if any
3. Information on the school building
  - a. Age
  - b. Materials of construction
4. Basic information about the school
  - a. Total number of students
  - b. The age group and gender of students
  - c. Number of teachers
  - d. Key extra-curricular activities
  - e. Details of transport facilities, if any
5. Basic Information about the Emergency Support Systems around the school
  - a. Local fire station (location, contacts, capacity)
  - b. Local police station (location and contacts)
  - c. Local hospitals (location, contacts and capacity)
  - d. Local civil administration (location, contacts)
6. Safety related incidents in the past
  - a. Did any natural disaster impact the school (flood, landslides, tsunamis, etc.)?
  - b. Did any manmade disasters impact the school (fire, chemical release, etc.)?
  - c. Was the school used as an evacuation center in any instance?
  - d. Did any safety incidence occur in the school?
  - e. Were the students or teachers involved in any road accident?
  - f. Did any water-related incident impact the students or teachers?

- g. Did any train-related incident impact the students or teachers?
7. Details of any hazardous activities, such as a factory, located next to the school.
  8. School's current emergency response plans.

## Appendix III

### Checklist for School Safety Inspection

<b>Name of school</b>	
<b>Name of head teacher</b>	
<b>Name of safety focal point</b>	
<b>Date of inspection</b>	
<b>Pupil umbers</b>	
<b>School tele. no.</b>	

<b>Hazards due to school location</b>	<b>Action if required (✓ if no action)</b>
Is the school located next to a sea coast?	
Was it impacted by Tsunami in 2004?	
Is the school located on a slope or valley ?	
Has it ever been impacted by a landslide/rockfall?	
Is the school located on a river bank?	
Has the school ever been impacted by a flood?	
Is the school located close to a factory?	
Has the school ever been impacted in the past from industrial accident/gas emissions or fire?	

<b>Hazards in the immediate vicinity of the school</b>	<b>Action if Required (✓ if no action)</b>
Is there a public road going past the school?	
Are there tall trees around the school, outside the fence?	
Are there electric wires (LT or HT) that lie close to the school perimeter?	
Are there water bodies next to the school (sea, canal, river, lake or pond)?	
Are there railway tracks next to the school?	
Does the school have a fence all around the campus?	
Are there bushes around the schools from which snakes can enter the premises?	

Is there a forest around the school from which wild animals can gain entry to the school premises?	
Is the school secured from entry of dogs and other domestic animals?	
Are there signboards put up along the nearest road indicating the presence of a school?	
Is there sufficient visibility for the drivers outside the school to observe children leaving the school?	

<b>Hazards around the school building, in the campus</b>	<b>Action if Required (✓ if no action)</b>
Are there electric wires going through the campus?	
Are there any other cables (telephone, cable TV) going through the campus?	
Are there tall trees within the campus?	
Is there more than one entry gate to the campus?	
Are the gates secured?	
Is there a road for vehicles to enter into the campus?	
Is there visibility for the drivers leaving the school to observe the traffic?	
Is there a parking area for the vehicles arriving in the school?	
Is there visibility for drivers entering the school to observe pedestrians?	
Is there any construction ongoing in the campus?	
Is the construction site isolated?	
Is the construction site marked?	
Are there any major level difference between different areas in the campus?	
Is there a water body within the campus or going through the campus?	
Are there open wells or pits within the campus?	

<b>Fire safety and emergency response</b>	<b>Action if required (✓ if no action)</b>
Safety rules and evacuation routes are prominently displayed	
The area has an audible evacuation alarm	
Doorways, walkways and evacuation exits are kept clear and at least 600 mm wide	
External exit doors can be opened from the inside without a key and emergency fire exits are signed	



Fire control equipment is easily accessible, signed, regularly tested and of the appropriate type	
First aid kit easily accessible, well stocked, regularly tested and of the appropriate type	
Is there a marked assembly area for the pupil in case of an incident?	

<b>Management procedures</b>	<b>Action if required (✓ if no action)</b>
Is there a school emergency plan?	
Is the faculty familiar with the emergency plan?	
Are the students familiar with the emergency plan?	
Are the parents aware of the emergency plan?	
Are the authorities aware of the plan?	
Is the school aware of the emergency management plan for the region, if any?	
Is there any teacher who has been trained in first aid?	
Does the school have contact number of the local emergency services?	
Does the school have the contact numbers of all parents or next of kin of students?	
Has the headmaster of the school ever faced a safety related incident or emergency?	
Is there a budget available to cover the emergency expenditure?	
Are the students informed of any safety precautions to be taken?	
Will the students know where to report a safety incident?	
Will the students know where to assemble in case there is a safety incident?	
Is there a system to assist students to board the bus safely?	
Is there a system to assist students to enter and cross the road safely?	
Is there an emergency phone number in the school?	
Does the parents know the emergency phone number?	

<b>Rooms (class/ laboratory/workshop/computers/library/cafeteria)</b> <i>(one checklist to be completed per room)</i>	<b>Action if required (✓ if no action)</b>
The room is clean and tidy	

There is sufficient space for each person to work and move safely	
Floor surfaces are maintained in a safe condition and are they suitable for the type of activities being conducted	
Walls and ceilings are safe and in good condition	
Steps/stairs/ramps are in a safe condition with non-slip surfaces, and secure handrails where needed	
Doors, windows, locks and latches are in good condition and in working order	
Guarding ( <i>mesh</i> ) is fitted or signage in place for any fragile roof area(s)	
There is adequate ventilation	
The lighting is adequate to work safely in	

<b>Furniture, fixtures and fittings</b>	<b>Action if required (✓ if no action)</b>
All furniture is safe and in good condition	
Light fittings/fixtures and ceiling fans are in good condition and working order	
Hanging displays are not hazardous	

<b>Storage</b>	<b>Action if required (✓ if no action)</b>
Flammable material is stored and handled in a safe manner	
Required resources and equipment are stored safely	
Free standing shelves/cupboards are secured to ensure stability	
Storage methods are used that will eliminate or minimize accidents (heavy objects stored between mid-thigh and shoulder height)	

<b>Hazardous substances</b>	<b>Action if required (✓ if no action)</b>
Current (within 5 years) material safety data sheets are readily available for hazardous substances	
Hazardous substances are stored and labeled appropriately	
Is there an eye wash facility in the laboratory?	

<b>Electrical</b>	<b>Action if required (✓ if no action)</b>
Electrical equipment is in good condition and is tested and tagged as required	
All new power boards purchased will have an overload switch	
All areas have Residual Current Device (RCD) protection	

<b>Pump room, electrical room, lift room, etc,</b>	<b>Action if required (✓ if no action)</b>
Can children get access to the rooms?	
Are there marking outside indicating the hazard?	

<b>Safety planning for school outings (excursions, picnics, sports participation)</b>	<b>Action if required (✓ if no action)</b>
Have the safety issues relating to the outings been reviewed and identified?	
Are children briefed about safety precautions during school outings?	
Is there a teacher familiar with first aid in the team?	
Is there a first aid kit with the tour group?	
Is the vehicle for the tour adequate and have right permits to carry children?	
If using a boat, does it have life jacket for all?	
Are life jackets worn before children entering the boat?	
Does the tour leader have the list of all the students?	
Does the tour leader have the telephone number of all parents?	
Does the school administration have a detailed journey plan of the outing?	

<b>Safety planning for sports events</b>	<b>Action if required (✓ if no action)</b>
Are the children briefed on safety issues during sports events?	
is the area for sports events clearly marked?	

Are special precautions taken during events with potential hazard (e.g., javelin throw)?	
Are there any children with health issues taking part in the sports events?	
Is there enough shade available for children?	
Is there enough potable water available for children?	
Are there enough first aid facilities and instructors available?	

<b>Safety planning for sports events</b>	<b>Action if required (✓ if no action)</b>
Are police authorities informed of additional traffic?	
Is there any temporary electrical arrangements made?	
Are there new tripping hazards created?	
Are there new falling hazards created?	
Will the children know where to assemble in case of an emergency?	
Is there a system to check entry and return of students?	
Are there arrangements for orderly movement of traffic?	

<b>Night-time events at school</b>	<b>Action if required (✓ if no action)</b>
Are all areas well lit?	
Is there any temporary electrical arrangement that has been made?	
Are there new tripping hazards created?	
Are there new falling hazards created?	
Is there an emergency power back up?	
Will the children know where to assemble in case of emergency?	
Is there a system to check entry and return of students?	
Are there arrangements for orderly movement of traffic?	

<b>General</b>	<b>Action if required (✓ if no action)</b>
Other hazards such as sharps, glare or fumes have been identified	
Noise is not a hazard	
Animal cages are clean and in good condition.	
Sink areas are clean and in good working order (i.e., no leaks) where required.	
<b>Other issues</b>	<b>Action if required (✓ if no action)</b>