

HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

Policy Title	Health & Safety Policy
Prepared By	Heena Sharma
Approved By	Inderjot Singh
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Health And Safety Policy

1. Introduction

At Small Steps, the health and safety of all our students is of paramount importance. This policy outlines our commitment to creating a safe, healthy, and supportive environment for all students, staff, and visitors. This policy outlines our procedures for managing health records, handling medical emergencies, conducting risk assessments, and maintaining safety standards to ensure the well-being of everyone at the center.

2. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear guidelines and procedures to protect the health and safety of all students, particularly those with specialized needs. It aims to ensure that all health records are accurately maintained, medical emergencies are efficiently managed, and the school environment is safe and conducive to learning. This policy serves as a framework for promoting best practices in health and safety and nurturing a culture of safety and responsibility within the Small Steps and school community.

3. Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of this policy are to:

- Ensure the safety and well-being of all students at Small Steps Center.
- Provide clear procedures for managing health records and administering medications.
- Establish protocols for responding to medical emergencies efficiently and effectively.
- Conduct regular risk assessments to identify and mitigate potential hazards.
- Promote a safe and healthy environment through hygiene practices, emergency drills, and first aid training.
- Maintain clear communication between the school, parents, and healthcare providers to address health and safety concerns promptly.
- Ensure all staff are adequately trained and prepared to handle health and safety issues.

4. Responsibility

The responsibility for implementing and maintaining the health and safety standards outlined in this policy lies with the entire Small Steps community, including parents, administration, the clinical team (BCBAs, therapist, paraprofessionals), and the host school staff members. Specific responsibilities include:

- Small Steps: Ensuring that all health and safety protocols are in place and adhered to, conducting regular training sessions, and overseeing emergency preparedness. Staff members should follow health and safety guidelines, practice good hygiene, participate in training, supervise students requiring support, and promptly report any safety concerns to supervisors, the school clinic, and parents.

- Small Steps: Ensuring all staff members are trained in emergency procedures and basic first aid.
- Parents: Providing accurate and up-to-date health records, informing the school of any new medical conditions or diagnoses, and supporting Small Steps' and the School's health and safety measures.
- Small Steps and School: Keeping accurate and confidential health records for all students and ensuring these records are accessible to authorized personnel when needed. The school clinic should also provide first aid and medical assistance as needed, including administering medication with proper consent and documentation.
- The classrooms and School: Implementing and enforcing food allergy protocols to ensure the classroom and school environment are safe for students with allergies.

Policy Components and Implementation

5.1 1:1 Policy for Student Handover

- Small Steps adheres to a strict 1:1 policy where each child is picked up and handed over to an adult. No child will be left unaccompanied unless specified in their program or if they are capable of transitioning to the classroom independently.
- Children will only be picked up and handed over to identified personnel or family members. If someone else is picking up the child, the guardian must provide photo identity proof of the authorized person in advance.

5.2 Health Screening and Check at Pick-Up Time

- Upon arrival at school, all therapists will conduct a thorough scan and check each student for injuries or visible marks.
- Any injuries or visible marks discovered will be promptly documented on the body map form by the therapist.
- The case supervisor or administration team will communicate with the parents to gather information about the injury or mark.
- At the end of the day, the information will be shared with parents during dispersal time. They will be asked to acknowledge and sign off on the form to confirm their awareness of the injury.
- If injuries, marks, or bruises occur repeatedly, the case supervisor will initiate a thorough investigation to ascertain the cause. This process may include:
 - Conducting a detailed review of the student's daily activities and interactions.
 - Scheduling a meeting with the parents to discuss concerns and gather additional context.
 - Collaborating with the school SEN team, school clinic, and possibly involving external professionals if necessary to ensure the child's safety and well-being.
 - Implementing additional safety measures or interventions as needed to prevent future injuries.

5.3 Health Records and Medications

- All health records, including medical histories and current medications, must be provided by parents at the time of enrollment. This includes any reports, diagnoses, and relevant medical information as per school protocols.
- Any new diagnosis or medical condition must be reported with full disclosure to the Small Steps case supervisor and the school clinic to ensure that appropriate medical help can be provided when needed.

5.4 Medical Emergencies

- If a child becomes seriously ill or sustains an injury requiring immediate treatment, supervising staff will directly call the school clinic and seek assistance from the school doctor. Efforts will be made to establish contact with parents by the school clinic before any procedures or emergency treatments are administered.
- For minor injuries and illnesses, Small Steps staff will take the student to the clinic. If the student is unable to visit the clinic due to transition issues, the Small Steps operations team or supervising class teacher will contact the clinic to send a nurse to assess the child and advise on treatment options. The clinic will call the parents to seek necessary permission before administering any medication or treatment, considering any allergies.

5.3 Risk Assessments

- Risk assessment forms are filled out for each child to ensure adequate safety procedures and environmental changes are made to make the environment suitable to their needs.
- Regular risk assessments will be conducted to identify and mitigate potential hazards within the Small Steps classroom, inclusion classrooms and during activities involving students.

5.4 Emergency Closures

- On rare occasions, Small Steps and GEMS Schools may need to close due to uncontrollable emergency circumstances, such as floods or storms. If the facility cannot open due to such an emergency, parents may be asked to pick up their children or keep them at home.
- If an early closure is necessary due to an emergency, Small Steps will make every effort to contact parents promptly. Parents will be requested to pick up their child early or arrange for individuals listed on the emergency form to do so. As these closures are beyond our control, we regret that we cannot offer refunds for missed days.

5.4 Food Allergies

- Food allergies must be listed, and the school is a nut-free area. All protocols will be exercised to minimize the risk of contamination.

5.5 Contagious Diseases

- Avoid sending children to school in case of contagious diseases or conditions to prevent contamination.
- If the use of masks is necessary, all attempts will be made to train our students to practice safe control measures.

5.6 Safety Responsibilities

- Safety is everyone's responsibility. All staff, students, and parents must adhere to the health and safety protocols outlined in this policy.
- Field trips will be accompanied by known therapists and risk assessments will be performed ahead of the trips to ensure student safety.

5.7 Additional Health and Safety Measures

- Environmental Safety: Regular inspections will be conducted by SEN Team, School Operations and Small Steps Clinical team to ensure that all facilities, including classrooms, playgrounds, and therapy rooms, are safe and free from hazards.
- Hygiene Practices: Staff and students will be trained in proper hygiene practices, including regular handwashing and sanitizing, to prevent the spread of illnesses.
- Emergency Drills: Small Steps staff and students will participate in regular emergency drills, including fire and lockdown drills, to ensure that students and staff are prepared to respond effectively in case of an emergency.
- First Aid Training: All staff members will receive first aid training to ensure they are equipped to support in managing minor injuries and medical situations until the school clinic and doctors are able to report onsite.
- Medication Administration: Clear protocols will be established for the administration of medication to students, including secure storage, accurate record-keeping, and parental consent.
- Communication: Effective communication channels will be maintained between the school, parents, and healthcare providers to ensure that all health and safety concerns are promptly addressed through emails, body map forms, phone calls, and incident reports.
- Visitor Management: All visitors to the Small Steps classrooms will be required to book prior appointments, sign in, and wear identification badges to ensure the safety of students and staff. Outsiders' visits to Small Steps classrooms must be approved by the case supervisor or center manager and will be limited to selected times or activities.

By adhering to this Health and Safety Policy, Small Steps aims to create a secure and supportive environment where students can thrive and achieve their full potential.

Monitoring and Review

The Program Director, School Doctor, and Assistant Head Teacher will be responsible for monitoring and reviewing this policy annually, ensuring it remains aligned with the goals of Small Steps and GEMS Education Schools. This process includes evaluating the effectiveness of health and safety protocols, reviewing incident reports and responses, and identifying areas for improvement. Regular meetings will be conducted to discuss any updates or changes in health regulations and to ensure that all staff members are informed and compliant with the latest standards. Feedback from parents, staff, and external health professionals will also be sought to continuously refine and enhance the health and safety practices at Small Steps.