**HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDANCE NOTE**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Document No: | Issue No:  Issue 3 | Issue Date:  March, 2018 | Responsibility / owner:  Mrs Sarah Gill  23.3.18 |
| Review Date:  March, 2019 |
| Title:  **Office Safety** | | | |

Contents

1. **INTRODUCTION 2**
2. **safe place of work 2**
3. **fire 3**
4. **electrical safety 4**
5. **machinery and other tools 4**
6. **manual handling 5**
7. **office chemcals 5**
8. **work height 6**
9. **EVALUATION AND REVIEW 6**
10. **APPENDIX ONE – office checklist form 7**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Prepared by:  Mrs Sarah Gill | Approved for Issue by:  Mr Jon Stubbs  (on behalf of the Governing Body) |

Revision table

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Issue Number | Date issued | Revision / change |
| 2 | August, 2013 |  |
| 3 | March, 2018 | Reviewed and updated |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

1. **INTRODUCTION**
   1. Every year in the UK, thousands of serious injuries are sustained by office staff. Falls are the most common cause of injury in offices, accounting for almost half of all office accidents. Next comes the lifting and handling of goods, materials and equipment, followed by stepping on and striking against things; falling objects; machinery; transport; the use of hand tools; fire and electricity.
   2. Over the past few years, an increasing amount of attention has been focused on the Health & Safety of office workers, especially in relation to display screen equipment. A separate guidance note called ‘**Display Screen Equipment (DSE)** giving advice and guidance has been produced by the department and copies can be obtained via the Corporate Health and Safety CEntranet site.
   3. The general duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 apply to work in an office. The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 lay down standards for room dimensions, work space, temperature, ventilation, lightning, cleanliness and toilet and washing provision.
   4. The following parts of this guidance note describe some of the ways in which safety can be achieved in the office.
2. **SAFE PLACE OF WORK**
   1. As in other working environments, a well-planned layout and a tidy office are basic requirements for both efficiency and safety. Overcrowding is often the underlying cause of office accidents. Good housekeeping and constant vigilance are the keys to success.
   2. A safe place of work can be achieved by removing the common causes of people falling, bumping into objects and stepping on things in offices. Some of these are:

Conditions of floors and stairs

* Worn stair treads
* Missing or damaged hand rails
* Worn or unsecured floor covering e.g. carpet
* Slippery surface e.g. caused by spills or highly polished floors.

**Obstructions in corridors**

* Furniture, boxes, trolleys.

**Poor lighting, badly sited switches**

* Particularly on stairs or in storerooms.

**Swing Doors**

* Obstructed vision panels

**Badly sited furniture or equipment**

* Colliding with sharp corners or desks and cabinets
* Trailing telephone and electrical leads

**Protruding drawers of filing cabinets and desks**

* Opening more than one drawer at a time can cause a cabinet to tip

**Insecure means of working above head height**

* Insecure step ladders
* Dangerous methods of climbing, e.g. standing on chairs

**Storage**

* Items should be stacked neatly inside cabinets – not on top
* Frequently used items should be kept within easy reach
* Cabinets and shelves should not be overloaded
* Heavy or breakable items should be stored on lower shelves.

1. **FIRE**
   1. Many fires in offices occur ‘out of hours’ but they are often the result of human error during working hours. It is therefore important to observe a few simple rules to minimise the risk of fire.

* The Corporate Smoke – Free Policy should be known to all staff.
* Combustible material such as waste paper should be put in the waste bins and regularly disposed of. Packaging material for computers etc. is particularly dangerous. This must not be allowed to accumulate – it should be stored correctly in a safe place or disposed of.
* Electrical equipment must be inspected regularly and faults reported for repair. Faults in installation and wiring can cause overheating and result in fire. (See separate Electrical Safety Guidance Note)

If portable electrical heaters are provided, these must be used properly e.g. nothing must be put on top of them.

Ensure that any flammable materials are correctly stored and used. Many liquids in common office use are solvent-based and flammable. Always read the labels and follow the advice given.

* The building fire instructions should be well publicised and be communicated to members of staff by, for example, forming part of the departmental safety policy or by providing individuals with their own copies. The instructions should include arrangements for the evacuation of visitors and disabled people.
* There should be a procedure for making sure that joining staff are instructed in these matters so that they know what to do and where to go in the event of fire.
* All escape routes should be clearly indicated by Fire Exit signs, and be free from obstruction. All of the exit doors along escape routes must be open-able without a key in the event of an emergency. The utilisation of seldom used, and therefore unfamiliar, escape routes should be encouraged during fire drills.
* The fire alarm should be audible throughout the office, including in workrooms with machinery and toilets. Members of staff should be asked to report any areas where this is not the case after a fire drill. Where an alarm system is thought to be inadequate, requests for remedial action should be made to the Headteacher/Manager.
  1. All members of staff should be trained in Fire Safety. In particular, the regular holding of fire drills allows for the practice of formal instructions, and can help to identify areas in need of improvement. The importance of fire drills should be emphasised to staff, any failure to take part, such as refusal to leave the building when alarms are sounded, should be treated as a serious matter.

1. **ELECTRICAL SAFETY**

**(Please see separate Electrical Safety Guidance Note for more information)**

* 1. Cheshire East Council’s policy for electrical equipment applies to equipment used in offices. Amongst other things, this requires all portable electrical appliances to be tested regularly and to have an in-date label attached. Any equipment not having such a label should not be used.
  2. Electrical equipment that is properly installed and maintained is perfectly safe to use, but tinkering by amateurs might have very serious consequences and should not be permitted. The unauthorised use of appliances, e.g. kettles brought from home, is dangerous and should not be allowed.
  3. Some electrical hazards that might be encountered in the office are listed below. Make sure, by regular scrutiny that none of the equipment in use, including communal items such as copiers, show any of these faults:
* Loose connections
* Damaged cables
* Defective Insulation
* Overloaded circuits-incorrect use of multi point adapters
* Broken switches and plug tops
* Worn or damaged appliances
* Trailing leads
* Equipment untested or outside retest dates.
  1. Any equipment found to be defective should be disconnected. It should be taken out of use either by removal from the workplace, or have a clear, unambiguous label attached to prevent it being used. Suitable repair should be arranged as soon as possible.
  2. As with all electrical equipment, care should be taken whenever there are liquids in close proximity. Do not sit plants or flower vases on top of or adjacent to electrical appliances. Take care with tea and coffee. Not only will a spillage into a piece of equipment cause damage to the equipment, it might result in a fire or possibly an electric shock.

1. **MACHINERY AND OTHER TOOLS**
   1. Anyone using machinery must be properly trained, know where to find any operating instructions and be aware of potential danger. New operators must be supervised until confident.
   2. Dangerous parts of machinery must by law be guarded. This applies to manually operated equipment such as guillotines as well as powered equipment. The internal parts of copiers etc. should switch off when opening to isolate any dangerous parts.
   3. The appropriate tool for the job should always be used. Stanley knives and razor blades should not be necessary in the office. There are other, safer, cutting tools available. Other sharp items should not be used for jobs for which they are not designed e.g. the use of scissors to prise off the lids of tins.
2. **MANUAL HANDLING**
   1. Most members of office staff are not required to move furniture or heavy equipment, but such things as boxes and packets of paper need care in lifting. Where members of staff are required to lift heavy items, they must be adequately trained in the correct technique.
   2. All manual-handling jobs should be assessed before they are undertaken. Some of the items which should be considered are listed below. In the case of an everyday manual-handling task, the assessment is likely to consist of nothing more than some initial thoughts and planning. For more complex or heavy work a manual handling risk assessment will need to be carried out. Further details on manual handling assessments can be found on the Corporate Health & Safety CEntranet site.
   3. Some points to consider when assessing a manual handling task are listed below:

* When lifting heavy items from low down, there is less risk of strain if the legs are bent and the back kept straight.
* A burden is halved if two people share it.
* Two journeys might be better than one.
* Anyone carrying a load should be able to see over the top.
* When trolleys are provided, or can be borrowed, they should be used.
* Opening doors is not compatible with carrying things. Members of staff should be encouraged to help one another.
* Plan the office layout with lifting in mind. Heavy items should not be stored above shoulder height.
* Think about each carrying job beforehand e.g. has a space been created in the place where the item is to be placed?

1. **OFFICE CHEMICALS**
   1. For some chemical products in the office, the Control of Substance Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 govern how they can be used. Guidance on COSHH is available from the Corporate Health & Safety CEntranet site.
   2. The basic requirement of COSHH is that before any chemical product is used, an assessment of the risks to health that it might pose is carried out. For most substances encountered in the office, the dangers are not great and quantities involved are small. In such cases it is sufficient to read the container labels and follow the advice on them and on any accompanying literature. This would apply, for example to some forms of correcting fluid.
   3. However, in some office environments, such as printing units, chemicals may be used on a far greater scale. In these cases a written assessment should be carried out. Information about the use of the chemicals can be obtained from the manufacturers and suppliers as they are required by law to provide users with adequate health and safety information.
   4. There have been some reports, in the press and other places, about emissions of ozone from office machines such as photocopiers and lasers. Ozone is a colourless gas which is created in the workplace whenever high voltage electrical discharges occur.
   5. Human sensitivity to the smell of ozone is very acute; most people can detect it at levels well below those considered to be harmful. However, to ensure that ozone levels are not allowed to build up when equipment is extensively used, adequate ventilation of the work areas should be provided. In many cases this can be achieved by opening windows. In other cases forced ventilation may be required.
   6. Care should also be taken with the siting of equipment. In particular, exhaust vents should be directed away from any permanent workstation. Any equipment containing an ozone filter should have this changed in accordance with the manufacturer’s advice.
2. **WORK AT HEIGHT**
   1. The Work at Height regulations 2005 state that suitable precautions must be

taken when the risk of falling is likely to cause personal injury. No specific height is mentioned and can apply to standing on a chair to retrieve items from high shelving.

* 1. Where any work at height is undertaken, stepladders or other proprietary

platforms should be used. Chairs or other items of office furniture must never be used to gain access to height. Further information regarding Working at Height can be found on the Corporate Health and Safety teams Centranet site.

**9 EVALUATION AND REVIEW**

This document shall be monitored, and reviewed biennially (or more frequently as necessary) to evaluate its effectiveness. The review will ensure that the documents comply with statutory requirements and corporate policy. After this review, the document’s issue and next review dates will be amended.



Office Safety Checklist

Establishment: Ivy bank primary school

**STAFF MEMBER:**

**ROOM BASED IN**:

This checklist may be used to formulate suitable and sufficient Risk Assessments

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **POTENTIAL HAZARDS** | | | **Are Control Measures in Place** |
| **1.**  **Management issues**  *Incompetence*  *Unsafe practices*  *Inadequate support* | **TRAINING**   * Health and safety included in office staff induction training * Training records maintained   **WELFARE/ACCIDENTS**   * Hot and cold water and hand cleaning materials available nearby * Access to first aid provision and supplies provided. * All minor accidents to be reported on the appropriate accident forms and the PRIME electronic accident system completed where appropriate |  | | YES /NO  YES /NO  YES /NO  YES /NO  YES /NO |
| **2. EnvironmeNT & Services** *Excessive noise**Inadequate or excessive heating and ventilation* *Fire*  *Slipping and tripping* | **FIRE / EVACUATION / Emergency arrangements**   * Office staff are familiar with emergency procedures, including evacuation, dealing with bomb threats and the location of emergency equipment (i.e., fire extinguisher, alarm) * Fire evacuation notices displayed in each office * All emergency exits unlocked whilst rooms in use * Fire fighting equipment available and checked annually   SERVICES   * Electrical sockets regularly checked and any cracked casing replaced   **Housekeeping/ ENVIRONMENT**   * Good housekeeping is maintained to minimise accidents. * Regular and suitable cleaning carried out * Waste disposed of in secure bins. Broken glass and other sharp waste placed in separate and appropriate containers. |  | YES /NO  YES /NO  YES /NO  YES /NO  YES /NO  YES /NO  YES /NO  YES /NO | | |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **3.**  **Substances**  *Burns,*  *fire, skin irritants, inhalation,*  *Inadequate storage* | **Substances**   * All hazardous substances stored and used only in accordance with manufacture’s recommendations. * Data sheets available for all substances classed as hazardous under COSHH (this would also apply for some forms of correcting fluids). |  | YES /NO  YES /NO |
| **4.**  **GENERAL issues**  *Electrocution,*  *Tripping*  *Traps*  *Impacts, Fire, Cuts* | **Office Furniture and Equipment**   * Office furniture, equipment and electrical appliances are arranged to obtain maximum safety and use of installed facilities, such as overhead lighting, wall outlets, telephones, and other services. * Desks, file cabinets, etc are arranged so that drawers do not open into aisles or walkways. Desk and file drawers are closed after use. * Weight is distributed in file cabinets so that upper drawer contents do not create a top-heavy condition. * Where necessary, cabinets, bookcases, and shelves are secured to walls to prevent their falling over. * Faulty desks, chairs, or other office equipment are repaired or taken out of service. * Adequate and sufficient lighting is provided in all working areas.   **Aisles and Floors**   * Aisle clearance is adequate for two-way traffic and for unobstructed access to all parts of the office and building and in an arrangement that allows easy egress under emergency conditions. * Wastebaskets, briefcases, or other objects are placed where they are not a tripping hazard. * Floors are clear of loose objects. * Tripping hazards from electrical cables phone outlets, or other protrusions on the floor are prevented by arrangement of furniture or cable covers. * Floors are free of loose tiles and projections that create a tripping hazard. * Carpeting is in good condition and not badly worn or torn.   **Electrical Equipment**   * Cables and plugs are in good condition. Extension cables are not plugged into other extension cables. * Portable blow fan heaters are plugged directly into a wall socket and not into an extension cable. Located and used away from combustible materials * All portable electrical equipment to have been tested by a competent person * Visual checks to electrical hand tools, etc by user before use.   **Workstation Arrangements**   * Display screen equipment assessments carried out on all main users * Heights of each office staff chair’s seat adjusted so that the thighs are horizontal while the feet are flat on the floor. * Seat pan depth adjusted such that backs are supported by the chair back rest while the back of the knee is comfortable relative to the front of the seat. * Back rest adjusted vertically so that is supports/fits the curvature of the back. * With the arms at their sides and the elbow joint approximately 90 degrees, the height/position of the chair armrests adjusted to support the forearms. * Heights of the keyboard adjusted such that the fingers rest on the keyboard home row when the arm is to the side, elbow at 90 degrees, and the wrist straight. * Mouse, trackball, or special keypads, position next to the keyboard tray, with the wrist kept in a neutral position with the arm and hand close to the body. * Heights of the monitors adjusted such that the top of the screen is at eye level. If bifocals/trifocals are used, place the monitor at a height that allows easy viewing without tipping the head back. * Reference documents placed on a document holder close to the screen and at the same distance from the eye. * A footrest provided where the operator cannot rest his/her feet comfortably on the floor.   **Material Storage**   * Steps are provided for reaching materials on shelves and are kept in safe serviceable condition * Boxes, papers, and other materials should not be stored on top of lockers or file cabinets. Material always stacked in such a way that it will not fall over. * Heavy objects stored on lower shelves * Office equipment such as monitors, index files or lights should not be placed on the edges of a desk, filing cabinet, or table. * Aisles, corners, and passageways must remain unobstructed, with no stacking of materials in these areas. |  | YES /NO  YES /NO  YES /NO  YES /NO  YES /NO  YES /NO  YES /NO  YES /NO  YES /NO  YES /NO  YES /NO  YES /NO  YES /NO  YES /NO  YES /NO  YES /NO  YES /NO  YES /NO  YES /NO  YES /NO  YES /NO  YES /NO  YES /NO  YES /NO  YES /NO  YES /NO  YES /NO  YES /NO  YES /NO  YES /NO  YES /NO |