

Health and safety responsibilities in school

Staff meeting 21/11/2022





Introduction



Employers, school leaders and school staff all have responsibilities with regard to health and safety, and a duty to take care of pupils in the same way a sensible parent would.

Children should be able to experience a wide range of activities and the school's health and safety measures should not hinder this.



Children should be taught to understand and manage the risks that are a normal part of life.

Risks should be assessed and managed with common sense, and health and safety procedures should always be proportionate to the risks of an activity.

Staff should be given appropriate training to ensure they can keep themselves and children safe, and manage risks effectively.



Employers' responsibilities



The school employer, such as the LA or proprietor, is responsible for ensuring that risks to staff and pupils are managed in a way that is reasonably practicable.

The overall legal accountability for the health and safety of all employees and others belongs to the employer; however, some health and safety functions can be delegated to members of staff in the school.



The employer should ensure that policies are in place to manage health and safety – these include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Fire Safety Policy
- Working at Heights Policy
- COSHH Policy

These policies are put in place, and should be adhered to at all times, to guarantee the safety of yourselves and others.



The employer is also responsible for:

- Implementing arrangements that manage the risks to staff, pupils and visitors who may be affected by the school's activities.
- Informing employees about the significant risks in school and precautions they can take to mitigate them.
- Ensuring employees have the relevant information and training to manage risks on a daily basis, including access to competent health and safety advice.
- Checking that the control measures have been implemented and remain appropriate and effective.



The responsibilities of the governing board



The governing board may have control over the premises during and after the school day, and may also oversee a delegated budget for some maintenance activities.

If the governing board is also the trustee of the charity that runs a school, and/or directors of the company responsible for the school, its role is identical to that of the employer.



The governing board must:

- Take reasonable steps to ensure the school is following the employer's policy and procedures, e.g. through regular discussion at governance meetings.
- Ensure staff receive adequate training that allows them to carry out their responsibilities.
- Promote a sensible approach to health and safety.
- Work closely with the headteacher and SLT to support sensible health and safety management.



Leaders' responsibilities



The headteacher and SLT must manage risks sensibly, rather than try to eliminate them altogether. Visible leadership should be provided to the whole school so that staff feel motivated, supported and empowered to focus on the things that matter.

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School leaders must:

- Ensure the school is following the employer's health and safety policy, and has effective arrangements for managing health and safety risks.
- Maintain effective communications with employers, governors and school staff, and give clear information regarding significant risks to all pupils, parents, contractors and other visitors to the site.
- Confirm that staff have the appropriate training to deal with risks in their areas of responsibility, and ensure that staff understand their responsibilities, how to access support and how to manage risks responsibly.
- Work with the school's safety representatives and safety committees to ensure health and safety is managed appropriately.



- Manage and monitor the school's purchasing and contracting procedures to ensure associated risks are managed.
- Advise contractors of specific risks, and oversee their activities whilst on site.
- Make sure that all staff and visitors are aware of the on-site procedures and precautions to follow.
- Oversee the implementation, monitoring and review of training procedures.
- Prepare reports and returns.
- Lead in accident and incident reporting.



Due to their expertise in topic areas, subject leaders are best placed to advise on the arrangements for assessing and managing risk in their department. Schools should appoint nominated safety leads in each department to take a primary role in providing support across the school's range of activities.

Nominated health and safety leads will have:

- Sufficient authority to take the lead responsibility for health and safety.
- Time, resources and the ability to fulfil their role.



Staff responsibilities



All staff have a duty to protect their own health and safety, and that of others around them; it is a priority to maintain and protect the safety of the pupils in their classroom.

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Staff must:

- Work in compliance with the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.
- Use or wear any safety equipment, protective devices and/or clothing when required, e.g. when conducting science experiments.
- Use the right equipment, such as a stepladder instead of standing on a desk.
- Not remove, or make ineffective, any protective devices required by their employer.
- Lift and carry equipment in line with any instructions.
- Report to their employer on any violation of the Act and regulations.
- Report hazards, such as breakages, spillages or unsafe equipment.
- Maintain a safe environment and mitigate risks as much as possible.

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HSE

Health and Safety

Health and safety checklist for classrooms

How this checklist can help you

School premises are a valuable resource for local the school can decide how best to use the checklist in communities and are increasingly being used for their school. It can be used as required, for example at extended services.

Health and safety in a school is about taking a sensible and proportionate approach to ensure the premises provide a healthy and safe place for all who use them, including the school workforce, visitors and pupils.

Because written risk assessments are not required for every classroom activity, this checklist is being made available for use as required. It is not mandatory, but is intended as a helpful tool. Schools may choose other ways to comply with health and safety legislation and ensure staff and children are safe.

School-wide measures should be in place to deal with the real risks, so that teachers and support staff do not need to produce written assessments for an ordinary classroom – unless new activities lead to additional risks.

ordinary classrooms meet minimum health and safety standards. However, the results and findings from completed checklists will provide a useful resource to the school management team when reviewing their whole-school risk assessments.

The checklist is a tool for school staff to raise awareness of areas of concern in a classroom. Employers in the education sector, whether they are a local authority, governing body, trust or proprietor, have The Health and Safety Executive has developed wider responsibilities under health and safety law (see www.hse.gov.uk/services/education for further advice).

Using the checklist

This checklist covers the most common areas of concern/risk in ordinary classrooms, but is not exhaustive. It does not cover drama and sports facilities or specialist classrooms, including laboratories, art, IT, design and technology facilities or pupil referral rooms.

Health and safety checklist for classrooms

It can be used by class teachers, teaching assistants, premises staff or department heads - those running the start of a term to provide reassurance to teaching staff that the most common areas of risk in the classroom are being adequately controlled.

It is designed to be helpful and quick and easy to use but there is no obligation on staff to use it. If an issue is not relevant to a classroom, simply mark it as 'N/A' (not applicable) and move to the next question. There is space at the end to list any additional issues.

Further information

HSE's homepage (www.hse.gov.uk/) has information on general topics to help employers and teaching staff comply with health and safety law. We have specific web pages for education, which provide guidance on the common types of risks within the sector (www.hse.gov.uk/services/education).

The Department for Education, Welsh Assembly Members of staff can use this checklist to help ensure Government and Scottish Government have guidance for schools on health and safety:

- England: www.education.gov.uk/schools/ adminandfinance/healthandsafety
- Wales: www.wales.gov.uk/topics/ educationandskills/allsectorpolicies/healthandsafety
- Scotland:
- www.scotland.gov.uk/topics/education/schools

this checklist, through a public consultation, to help schools comply with health and safety law. It has been produced in consultation with:

- Department for Education (DfE), England; Department for Children, Education, Lifelong
- Learning and Skills (DCELLS), Welsh Government;

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- Learning Directorate, People and Places (LDSG), Scottish Government;
- Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), England;
- trade unions.

	Are procedures in place to deal with spillages, eg water, blood from cuts?						
	For stand-alone classrooms:			1			
	Are access steps or ramps properly maintained?						
	Are access stairs or ramps provided with handrails?						
	Do you have an 'elephant-foot' stepstool or stepladder available for use where			1			
	necessary?						
	Is a window-opener provided for opening high-level windows?			1			
_	Are permanent fixtures in good condition and securely fastened, eg cupboards, display		-	1			
	boards, shelving?						
	Is furniture in good repair and suitable for the size of the user, whether adult or child?			1			
	Is portable equipment stable, eq a TV set on a suitable trolley?		-	1			
	Where window restrictors are fitted to upper-floor windows, are they in good working		+	1			
	order?						
	Are hot surfaces of radiators etc protected where necessary to prevent the risk of burns		-	1			
	to vulnerable young people?						
	Have trolleys been provided for moving heavy objects, eg computers?			1			
	If you use computers as part of your job, has a workstation assessment been completed?			1			
t	Have pupils been advised about good practice when using computers?			1			
	Are fixed electrical switches and plug sockets in good repair?			1			
	Are all plugs and cables in good repair?			1	HSE		
	Has portable electrical equipment, eg laminators, been visually checked and, where		+		H SE		
	necessary, tested at suitable intervals to ensure that it's safe to use? (There may be a						
	sticker to show it has been tested.)						
	Has any damaged electrical equipment been taken out of service or replaced?			1			
	If the school contains asbestos, have details of the location and its condition in the		-	1			
	classroom been provided and explained to you?				Additional is	sues	
	Have you been provided with guidance on securing pieces of work to walls/cellings that			1			
	may contain asbestos?						
	If there are fire exit doors in the classroom, are they:]	—		
	 unobstructed; 		1				
	kept unlocked; and		1				
	easy to open from the inside?		-		L		
	Is fire-fighting equipment in place in the classroom?		-				
	Are fire evacuation procedures clearly displayed?		-				
	Are you aware of the evacuation drill, including arrangements for any vulnerable adults or						
	children?						
	Does the room have natural ventilation?						
	Can a reasonable room temperature be maintained during use of the classroom?						
	Are measures in place, for example blinds, to protect from place and heat from the sun?			1		1	

Health and Safety

action

eded N/A

Health and Safety

Further

idditional issues	Yes	action needed	N/#

Further action needed

Hazards noted:	Action taken and when:		

Name (and position):	Signature:	Date:
Location/name of classroom:		

For information about health and safety, or to report inconsistencies or inaccuracies in this guidance, visit www.hse.gov.uk/. You can view HSE guidance online and order priced publications from the website. HSE priced publications are also available from bookshops.

This checklist can be found online at: www.hse.gov.uk/risk/classroom-checklist.htm.

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www.theschoolbus.net

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the classroom

(slips and trips)

Work at height Furniture and

lanual handling Computers and similar equipmen

Workplace (ventilation and heating)

Questions you should ask: Movement around Is the internal flooring in a good condition?

Are gangways between desks kept clear? Are trailing electrical leads/cables prevented wherever possible?

Is lighting bright enough to allow safe access and exit

Are there any changes in floor level or type of flooring that need to be highlighted?



Getting the balance right



Health and safety rules should never hinder pupils' learning – hands-on lessons are an essential part of learning. These can include science experiments and classroom demonstrations which can help pupils learn about managing risks and taking precautions.

It is impossible to prevent pupils from ever encountering harm. Well-managed risks are good for them; it engages their imagination, helps them learn and teaches them to manage risks in the future. If pupils understand risks they will be aware of what is happening around them and will be prepared for life outside of school.



Sensible health and safety management means that:

- The SLT understands the health and safety policy and applies it practically to the real risks in the school.
- Staff have clearly established roles and responsibilities with regard to health and safety.
- Paperwork is kept to a minimum: all risks and hazards are clearly documented and kept under control.
- Leaders are regularly consulting with staff when seeking practical solutions to health and safety issues.



Training



The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 requires employers to provide adequate information, training and supervision to enable work to be carried out safely.

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Teachers must be provided with proper training and equipment to do their job. This training should cover:

- Emergency procedures, e.g. fire or first aid
- Safe use of equipment
- Electrical safety
- Manual handling
- Safe use of display screen equipment
- Possible exposure to asbestos this is mapped where there is non in classrooms
- Stress management
- Personal safety
- Control of substances hazardous to health (COSHH)



All members of staff and contractors must be given an appropriate level of information on the risks they may face, the measures that are in place to mitigate these, and how to follow emergency procedures.

Training should be provided in a form that is easy to understand, and will take place during working hours.



What's next?

- Reinforce your knowledge of the health and safety responsibilities by reviewing the documents and videos on the school H&S website page.
- Know who the nominated safety leads are within the school: Sarah Gill and Kevin Fryer.