

Unity College Blackpool

Health and Safety Policy

The legal requirement for a written safety policy is contained in Section 2(3) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 which states –

"except in such cases as may be prescribed (fewer than 5 employees) it shall be the duty of every employer to prepare and as often as may be appropriate revise a written statement of his general policy with respect to the health and safety at work of his employees and the organisation and arrangements for the time being in force for carrying out the policy and to bring the statement and any revision of it to the notice of all his employees."

Blackpool Council has approved a written statement of general policy signed by the Chief Executive. This general policy statement is then reinforced by a number of expanded Departmental policies and Divisional policy supplements drafted to meet this statutory requirement.

The LEA retains the primary responsibility as the employer under Health and Safety legislation. However, the Governing Bodies of individual schools have a statutory duty to comply with the LEA safety policy which requires them to prepare a written safety policy relating to their own particular establishment. This document details Unity College Health and Safety Policy.

Safety policy statement

'The Unity College policy is produced to supplement the LEA policy, is reviewed regularly and brought to the attention of all employees.

The Governors of Unity College Blackpool are fully committed to the establishment and maintenance of appropriate health and safety standards which will protect the staff and the pupils in their charge whilst at school.

The Governors recognise the need to identify and control work-related risks to safeguard all persons from work related activities and while on the school premises.

To this end particular attention will be paid to meeting statutory requirements in respect of:

The safety of plant equipment, buildings and safe systems of work;

A safe workplace and safe access;

Procedures for fire evacuation, first aid cover and other emergency situations;

A healthy working environment

Safe arrangements for the use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances;

Appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision to assist all employees, pupils and visitors to avoid hazards and contribute positively to their own health and safety whilst on school premises;

Adequate welfare facilities and suitable protective clothing and equipment;

Arrangements for the safe introduction of new plant, machinery, substances and procedures.'

The Local Education Authority's Safety Policy and codes of practice are fully implemented.

The school staffing structure appropriately reflects the delegated responsibilities for carrying out the arrangements for Health and Safety.

A Health and Safety Committee is established comprising representatives from the Governing Body, School Management Staff and Trade Union Safety representatives.

A named person on the Governing Body is designated with Health and Safety Responsibilities.

The school has examined its responsibilities for Health and Safety and has made the necessary provisions in terms of resources for meeting these obligations.

Regular Health and Safety reports including the results of accident investigations and statistical analysis are provided by the School Health and Safety Advisor as part of an on-going monitoring system.

Staff training in Health and Safety subjects is accorded a high priority and will include induction, role related and specific topic training as necessary.

Full use is made of the specialist services provided by Blackpool Council in the form of the Occupational Health and Safety Team.

The Head Teacher and School Health and Safety Advisor are regularly assessed in competence.

No policy can be completely effective without the full co-operation of all concerned with the safe operation of Unity College Blackpool. The Governing Body will therefore strive to gain this degree of commitment from the staff through participation encouragement and support.

Signed

Signed

Chair of Governors

Head Teacher

The organisation

The ultimate responsibility for Health and Safety performance in each school rests with the LEA. However, the requirement to carry out certain functions will be delegated to head teachers and their staff. The duty to achieve compliance with statutory requirements remains firmly with the LEA.

The following section of Unity College Safety Policy is to define exactly what the delegated duties and responsibilities are so that staff can understand what is expected of them.

Each significant staff category should therefore be considered and the key responsibilities and duties described.

The ultimate responsibility for all individual school safety organisation and activity rests with the head teacher.

Strategic Business Manager

The Strategic Business Manager is responsible for overseeing all Unity College Health and Safety policies (including Fire and Buildings) and reports directly to the Head Teacher and School Governors.

Health and Safety Adviser

The School Health and Safety Adviser reports to the Head Teacher, Strategic Business Manager and School Governors.

This role is:

- To keep the school's Health and Safety policy up to date.
- To monitor the implementation of the school's Health & Safety policy, drawing any concerns to the attention of the Strategic Business Manager and head teacher.
- To be a point of contact for dealing with identified hazards in the school.
- To establish and implement a system for reporting hazards.
- To liaise regularly with site management staff over identified hazards within their area of responsibility.
- To undertake regular inspections of the school premises to identify in conjunction with the Head teacher any potential hazards.
- To conduct investigations into accidents to staff and pupils reporting to the HSE and Blackpool Occupational Health and Safety.
- To keep up to date with new legislation and maintaining a working knowledge of legislation and any developments from the HSE through training and personal development.
- To establish and conduct a risk assessment procedure and co-ordinate risk assessments throughout the school including Pupil Risk Assessments and to attend meetings.
- To prepare, with the head teacher, health and safety strategies and developing internal policy.
- To be responsible for the Health and Safety Budget.
- Prepare reports for school governors as required.
- To liaise on a regular basis with Blackpool Occupational Health and Safety Team.

The School Manager / Site Manager

Day-to-day responsibility for on-site Health and Safety matters at Unity College rests with the School Manager and/or Site Manager. He or she will liaise with the, Head teacher, Health and Safety Advisor, Union Safety Representatives and Safety Committees to enable him/her to:

- Be the focal point for day-to-day references on safety and give advice or indicate sources of advice;
- Maintain contact with outside agencies able to offer expert advice;
- Report all known hazards immediately to the Health and Safety Advisor and appropriate authorities and to stop any practices or the use of any plant, tools, equipment, machinery, substances etc. he/she considers to be unsafe until satisfied as to their safety;
- Make recommendations to the Authority for additions to or improvement to plant, tools, equipment, machinery etc. which are dangerous or potentially so;
- Make or arrange for inspection of premises, places of work and working practices on a regular basis.
- Ensure that he/she is kept informed of accidents and hazardous situations;
- Conduct periodic reviews of the provision of First Aid in the School;
- Review the School Emergency Plan and arrangements and coordinate training as required.
- Conduct periodic reviews of the arrangements for the dissemination of safety information concerning the school.

Teacher holding a post of responsibility (specified in current job description)

He / She has a general responsibility for the application of the Council's Safety Policy in his/her own department or area of work and is directly responsible to the School Manager and Health and Safety Adviser for the application of exiting safety measures and procedures within the department etc.

Instructions specified by the local Authority and Blackpool Occupational Health and Safety;

- Shall, where necessary, establish and maintain safe working procedures to ensure the safe handling, storage and transportation of articles and substances (e.g., chemicals, guillotines);
- Shall ensure members of staff for whom they are responsible are fully aware and understand departmental, institutional and authority policies on Health and Safety;
- Shall review any Health and Safety problems raised by a member of staff under their purview and refer to the School Manager and Health and Safety Adviser any situation which cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of both parties;
- Shall encourage members of staff to raise concerns regarding matters of Health and Safety, so that policy and practice are kept under constant review'
- Shall report any areas of concern (e.g. level of personnel training, maintenance or equipment) to the School Manager;
- Shall, where appropriate, seek the advice and guidance of the relevant officers of the Authority keeping the School Manager informed.

Responsibility of class/Subject teachers

The safety of pupils in classrooms, laboratories and workshops is the responsibility of the class/subject teacher. The teacher has traditionally carried responsibility for the safety of pupils/students when they are in his/her charge.

If, for any reason, e.g. the condition or location of equipment, the physical state of the room or the splitting of a class for practical work, a teacher considers he cannot accept this responsibility, he/she should discuss the matter with the School Manager/School Safety Adviser before allowing practical work to take place.

A Class teacher is expected:

- to exercise effective supervision of the pupils and to know the emergency procedures in respect of fire, bomb scare, first aid and to carry them out;
- to know the special safety measures to be adopted in his/her own special teaching areas and to ensure that they are applied;

- to give clear instructions and warning as often as necessary (notices, poster, hand-outs, are not enough);
- to integrate all relevant aspects of safety into the teaching process and, if necessary, give special lessons on safety,
- to follow safe working procedures personally,
- to request for protective clothing, guards, special safe working procedures etc. where necessary,
- to bring to the attention of the appropriate senior member of staff and the School Manager concerns over matters affecting Health and Safety.
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Non-teaching Supervisory Staff

have a general responsibility for the application of the Council's Safety Policy to his/her area of work and is directly responsible to the School Manager/Health and Safety Adviser for the application of existing safety measures and procedures within that area of work, and shall, where necessary, establish and maintain safe working procedures including the arrangements for ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, safety and absence of risks to health in connection with the use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances (e.g. chemicals, boiling water, duplicating fluid, guillotines)

Obligations of all Employees

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

In order that the law be observed and responsibilities to pupils and other visitors to the school are carried out, all employees - APT&C staff, education psychologists, site supervisors, cleaners, GTAs, caterers/kitchen staff, Pastoral managers are expected to know the special safety measures and arrangements to be adopted in his/her own working area and to ensure they are applied.

Fire Safety

(Fire Precautions Act 1971, Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997)

The staff handbook describes the fire evacuation procedure. All classrooms must have a copy of the policy for fire drills. This notice contains the evacuation route. All of the corridors in school have the "European" green signs showing the exit routes.

Fire extinguishers are available in all classrooms. Further advice from the fire brigade is that we should sound the alarm and evacuate the building in the event of a fire. We should leave fire fighting to the professionals.

The fire alarm is activated by breaking a glass panel on the alarm circuit. There are alarm activators on every corridor. All staff should be familiar with the nearest alarm point. In addition, the link corridors are fitted with smoke/heat detectors and ceiling level and these are linked into the alarm system.

The school will conduct practice fire drills every term. These are recorded in the fire risk assessment log held by the School Office Manager. There will be a practice at the commencement of each School year to familiarise new pupils and staff with procedures.

There are fire doors on every corridor. Fire doors must not be wedged or fixed open.

The fire brigade carries out a fire risk assessment at regular intervals. A written report is issued and the Health and Safety Committee acts on the matters raised.

First Aid

First Aid kits are available in these locations:

School Office

First Aid room Science Department PE Department

A treatment record for all instances of first aid administered is kept and recorded. This is regularly inspected by the School Health and Safety Adviser. It is important that reports of all such incidents are recorded in the accident book.

In addition, SLT and Gary Fletcher hold records of all personnel qualified in First Aid and coordinate the provision of external training in First Aid.

Parents must be informed of any treatment administered within school. This is particularly important in the case of head injuries and a letter to parents must be sent with the pupil and the duplicate copy in the accident book is kept. Staff must remember that Designated First Aid personnel can administer first aid. Any serious or suspected serious injury should be dealt with by professionals. First Aid personnel should keep a record of treatments given.

Accidents

All accidents, incidents, dangerous occurrences and cases of work-related ill health must be recorded. All details should be documented on the accident report form and the completed form forwarded to the Education Occupational Health and Safety Officer. Cases of contagious or dangerous disease should be reported to the local health trust.

Smoking Policy

Unity College Blackpool Premises and Grounds are a NO SMOKING ZONE.

Electrical Safety

(Electricity at Work Regulations 1989)

All electrical equipment is checked annually by qualified contractors appointed by the LEA. Any concerns over the safety of electrical equipment must be brought to the attention of the School Health and Safety Adviser and / or Site Manager.

Chemicals Safety

(Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1994)

Technicians in Science and Technology have received the appropriate training. COSHH regulations are followed and the documentation is regularly updated. Appropriate records are maintained. All equipment in the workshops and laboratories are regularly tested.

General Risks

(Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992)

A full review of risk assessments and a Health and Safety inspection takes place each year.

A written report is completed.

Office Computers

(Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992)

Advice is available from LEA IT team and also from Westfield Centre.

Staffs who work on computers should be aware of the associated dangers. There is a requirement for anyone identified as a 'user' to have a display screen assessment.

Lifting

(Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992)

All heavy lifting should be handled by the Site Supervisors, who have received the necessary training and have the appropriate equipment.

Use of school premises by Outside Organisations

All of the school policy applies to any outside organisation using these premises.

These organisations must be informed of our policy and must be prepared to abide by them. In most cases the site supervisor will be the liaison with external organisations.

Site Security

In the event of any emergency the school will be evacuated by the fire alarm and in the first instance the school will assemble on the school playground at the marked points.

The on-duty site supervisor is responsible for site security outside of normal school hours.

Each night a security patrol from BBC will visit the premises.

During the school day all staff are urged to be vigilant regarding security. Staff should inform the office of any un-official visitors. The office staff will give all official visitors a badge. All external doors should be kept locked from the outside.

Personal Security

All staff should be particularly vigilant after normal school hours as the school is open for cleaning purposes and it is comparatively easy for uninvited guests to gain access

School visits

A risk assessment must be undertaken in the planning of all trips. The nature of the trip will determine the element of risk.

All trip organisers must produce documentation about the trip for the Head teacher and School Governors. Documentation should include a section on Health and Safety. The school Health and Safety Adviser is available to advise on this aspect.

Contractors on site

The contractor must meet with the School Manager / Site Manager to discuss all safety aspects prior to any work commencing.

Work areas must be secured to prevent access to pupils and other unauthorised personnel. Vehicle access must also be separated from areas of the school where pupils have free access.

Induction

An induction programme for all new staff is in place and, specific to the individual's type of employment (e.g. teaching or non teaching etc). In addition, all new staff will receive basic Health and Safety information as part of their induction. It is on the staff checklist.

Medicines

All medicines and medications must be left with the appropriate qualified first aider who will secure them. If a pupil needs to take medication in the school day they should do so under the supervision of the First aider. The school does not maintain any supply of medicines.

Minibus

The school handbook contains a section on the minibus. A first aid kit should be kept in the minibus. Two drivers will be required for any journey of over 1 hour duration. All passengers must wear seat belts. In the event of a breakdown call out the recovery team, instructions on the windscreen. Report

all problems to Mr Wood. Annual maintenance and servicing routinely takes place in the summer holiday.

Restraint

Sometimes it is necessary to restrain pupils so that they do not harm themselves or other people. It may also be necessary to restrain pupils if they refuse to follow clear reasonable instructions. It is advisable to have your restraining actions witnessed by a colleague and only to use them as a last resort. Please log any incidents of restraint in the restraint log kept in the office.

Monitoring, Audit and Review

The School Has a Health and Safety Committee will meet periodically under the chairmanship of the Head Teacher. The membership is as follows:

The Head teacher
Health and Safety Advisor (Mr G Fletcher)
The School Site Manager (Mr Steve Hall)
Strategic Business Manager (Nicola Hall)

The Governors Representative
The NASUWT Union Representative (Mr C Groves)
The ATL Union Representative (Mr G Fletcher)
An agenda is produced and minutes are kept. A report goes to the full Governing body.

Mr Fletcher, Nicola Hall and Steve Hall carry out regular Health and Safety inspections each year. A full written report is produced which is discussed by the Health and Safety Committee and Governors' Fabric Committee.

The Fire Brigade carry out regular safety checks and liaise with the School manager as required. In addition, the School Manager has regular meetings with the Borough Councils Health and Safety Officers. The LEA will appoint contractors to check all electrical equipment annually and the last check was carried out in January 2010. All COSHH and SHEF inspections and paperwork are kept on file.

DATA

All data is hard copied and All Health and Safety information (including all policies and Risk Assessments) is available on Group Drive.

SNOW / INCLEMENT WEATHER PLAN

It is our aim to ensure that Unity College remains open whenever possible so that:

- Our students are learning
- Our students are safe
- Our students do not cause disruption in the local community
- Parents at work do not have to make alternative childcare arrangements
- School attendance data is not affected

Therefore, in the event of an emergency which threatens the business continuity of the school, key criteria are:

- “Business as usual for as long as possible”
- “Return to normal as quickly as possible”.

Procedures for managing business continuity during snow or severe adverse weather conditions are detailed below. These procedures outline roles for all staff. Please read the full document so that you are aware of all staff roles and responsibilities.

- Assume the school is open unless you hear otherwise. This means all staff are expected to come into work.
- You will be informed as close to 7.30am as possible via telephone network and/or school email if the school is closed. Information should also be available on the school website and via Radio Wave.
- If the Headteacher makes the decision to close the school, this will not be done lightly and will be done in consultation with key staff, taking into account, health and safety, travel arrangements, TV and radio news, and the weather forecast.

- If the decision is made to keep the school open, please take every step to ensure your own safety. Please wear appropriate clothing and footwear, adjust your setting out time, your journey and your mode of transport, if necessary.

All Staff should:

- Check school email and website: plan to come into work.
- Come in if they can do so safely, but not if there is a health and safety risk, even if school is closed to students.
- Sign in on arrival and remain in school until their line manager or a member of the SLT gives permission for them to leave.
- Complete appropriate tasks as assigned by a member of the SLT.
- Assist with various tasks such as supervising students on school grounds to prevent snowball fights and ensuring students return home safely.
- Continue with their normal duties, although classroom based staff may choose to work from home if the school is closed to students.
- Keep mobile phones switched on and with you. Please ensure the school office has your up to date mobile/home telephone number.
- Take part in the phone message cascade. If you cannot contact or need to leave a message with one of your designated colleagues, please phone all the people they would have contacted. Please do not assume a message will be picked up. If you have not been able to contact one of your designated colleagues, please inform a member of SLT.

ROLES – SNOW ON ARRIVAL OR AT THE BEGINNING OF THE DAY

Site Supervisor (first member of staff to arrive):

- On arrival contact the Head teacher or her Deputy
- Open gates.
- Clear/grit car parks and paths.

Head teacher:

- Makes decision regarding closure by 7.30am, if possible.
- Contacts Local Authority: 476104 stating whether school is open or closed.
- Specifies wording to be used in all messages.
- Initiates all Unity College Blackpool communication.

- If decision to close, activates phone message cascade, web site message and contacts Radio Wave.
- Calls meeting of the 'Emergency team': Head teacher, Deputy Head teacher, Assistant Head teacher, Advanced Skills teacher, Pupil Services Manager, Health & Safety Advisor and PCSO to initiate emergency plan.

Emergency Team:

- Meets to consider:
 - Early closure of school.
 - Temporary amendments to school timetable.
 - Restrictions on students leaving the buildings.
 - Assignment of additional tasks to other members of staff, e.g. duty rota to cover external doors during lesson changeover time.

Deputy Head teacher:

- Leads the emergency plan from within the school.
- Deploys staff who have arrived at work.
- Liaises with Pupil Services Manager regarding notice on school website and message on school voicemail.
- Liaises with catering staff regarding changes to break/lunch arrangements

Site Manager:

- Liaises with Head teacher, Deputy Head teacher, Health & Safety rep, and Site Supervisors regarding health and safety issues.
- Contacts Grounds Maintenance contractors regarding assistance with snow clearance and gritting.

Assistant Head teacher:

- Oversees contact with parents for students who arrive at school.

Pupil Services Manager:

- Liaises with Cover Manager regarding telephone calls from staff.
- Ensures message on school voicemail states whether school is open or closed.
- Initiates text alert.

Reception/Admin/Secretarial Staff:

- Keep a list of names of students who arrive at school and are not turned away.
- Keep a list of staff in the building.
- If/when school closed ensure telephone queries are dealt with. At all times the message should be that the school will be open the next day and staff and parents should check the website updates.

THE FOLLOWING ADDED JULY 2011 REVIEW DATE SUMMER 2010

HEALTH & SAFETY DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION ADVICE ON LEGAL DUTIES AND POWERS FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES, HEAD TEACHERS, STAFF AND GOVERNING BODIES

About this advice

The Government is determined to reduce burdens on schools. We want to simplify health and safety requirements and explain them better. The Government is making it easier for schools to take pupils on trips, removing paperwork and taking steps to reduce teachers' fears of legal action. Teachers should be confident that they know best how to look after pupils and keep them safe.

This document summarises the existing health and safety law relevant to schools and explains how it affects local authorities, governing bodies, head teachers and other school staff. It covers activities that take place on or off school premises, including school trips.

This advice document replaces a number of guidance documents on health, safety and security in schools, including *Health and Safety: Responsibilities and Powers* (2001) and *Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits* (HASPEV 1998). You should also read a new document from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) *School trips and outdoor learning activities: Tackling the health and safety myths*.

Expiry/review date

The document will be reviewed in Summer 2012.

The advice in this document is based on the law as it stands. The Government are reviewing health and safety laws to simplify them further.

Who is this advice for?

School employers
Head teachers and other school staff

Key Points

General

Children should be able to experience a wide range of activities. Health and safety measures should help them to do this safely, not stop them,

It is important that children learn to understand and manage the risks that are a normal part of life,

Commonsense should be used in assessing and managing the risks of any activity. Health and safety procedures should always be

proportionate to the risks of an activity,

Staff should be given the training they need so they can keep themselves and children safe and manage risks effectively.

The Law

The main legislation covering this area is the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and regulations made under that Act¹;

The employer (the local authority, governing body or proprietor) is responsible for health and safety, though tasks may be delegated to staff;

Employees also have a duty to look after their own and others' health and safety;

It is very rare for school staff to be prosecuted under criminal law with regard to accidents involving children.

Employers, school staff and others also have a duty under the common law to take care of pupils in the same way that a prudent parent would do so.

Most claims for negligence are brought against the employer (who has public liability insurance) and not individual members of staff.

What does assessing and managing risks mean?

Health and safety law often refers to risk assessment and risk management. These are the terms used to describe the process of thinking about the risks of any activity and taking steps to counter them. A written assessment is not required for every activity. Teachers should assume they only need to carry out a written risk assessment in exceptional circumstances. Where a risk assessment is carried out the employer must record the significant findings of the assessment².

Some activities, especially those happening away from school such as mountaineering, canoeing and sailing, involve higher levels of risk. In these cases an assessment of significant risks should be carried out. Head teachers should ensure that the person assessing the risks understands the risks and is familiar with the activity that is planned. However, a risk assessment is certainly not needed every time a school takes pupils to a local venue such as a swimming pool, parks or museums.

School employers should always take a commonsense and proportionate approach, remembering that in schools the purpose of risk assessment and management is to help children to undertake activities safely, not to prevent

¹ In particular, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

² Note that this does not apply if the employer employs less than five employees.

activities from taking place. They cannot remove risk altogether and they should not require needless or unhelpful paperwork.

Tackling myths about legal action

We know that some schools and teachers worry about being prosecuted if an accident occurs. The *HSE policy statement School trips and outdoor learning activities: Tackling the health and safety myths* explains that HSE's main interest is in real risks arising from serious breaches of the law, such as a trip leader taking pupils canoeing but not ensuring they were all wearing buoyancy equipment. The HSE case study on the tragic events at Glenridding Beck, where a ten year old boy drowned in 2002, highlights some of the issues (www.hse.gov.uk/aala/index.htm).

The Statement makes clear that HSE wants to encourage all schools and local authorities to remove wasteful bureaucracy – so that they focus only on real risks and not on paperwork. It also explains what HSE takes into account when deciding whether to prosecute following an accident. This might include the severity of the injury, how far good practice was followed, the seriousness of the breach of the law and whether it is in the public interest to prosecute. More details can be found at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/enforce/enforcepolicy.htm>. Criminal cases relating to accidents in schools are very rare.

Sometimes civil proceedings in negligence can be taken against an employer or an individual member of staff. However, legal action for negligence against schools is only likely to be successful if:

- the school has not taken care of a child in a way that a prudent parent would have done;
- as a result, the child has been injured; and
- the injury was a foreseeable consequence.

Duties as an employer

Under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, the employer in a school must take reasonable steps to ensure that staff and pupils are not exposed to risks to their health and safety. This applies to activities on or off school premises.

Regulations made under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 set out in more detail what actions employers are required to take. For example, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require employers to:

- assess the risks to staff and others affected by school activities in order to identify the health and safety measures that are necessary and, in certain circumstances, keep a record of the significant findings of that assessment;
- introduce measures to manage those risks (risk management);
- tell their employees about the risks and measures to be taken to

manage the risks;

- ensure that adequate training is given to employees on health and safety matters.

Schools must set out health and safety arrangements in a written health and safety policy. The HSE's website contains useful information and a simple two page template that any employer can use to create a health and safety policy— see <http://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/write.htm>.

Although employers retain responsibility for the health and safety of pupils, they can delegate tasks to head teachers or other school staff. What a school employer will need to consider in its policy will vary depending on the size of the school and the risks associated with the school's activities. For example, the policy for a small infant school may be very brief, whereas that for a large secondary school with a range of laboratories and workshops may be more detailed. Annex A contains information on what *may* need to be included in health and safety policies for schools. This list should not be treated as a requirement.

Duties as an employee

The law requires employees to:

- take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by what they do at work;
- co-operate with their employers on health and safety matters;
- do their work in accordance with training and instructions;
- inform the employer of any work situation representing a serious and immediate danger, so that remedial action can be taken.

In addition, teachers and other staff in schools have a common law duty to act as any prudent parent would do when in charge of pupils.

Employees should follow any health and safety procedures put in place by their employer. However if they feel that the procedure is inappropriate (e.g. it is too bureaucratic) they should discuss this with their employer and request that it is reviewed. Usually the head teacher will work with the employer to ensure that the procedures at the school are proportionate, effective and appropriate.

Training

Employers must ensure that staff are given the health and safety training they need for their job. This certainly doesn't mean that all employees have to attend a training course. It may simply mean providing them with basic instructions or information about health and safety in the school. Staff who do work which involves a greater element of risk, such as using woodworking machines, will need more training. There is more information available at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/provide.htm>

Trips abroad

Schools in England, Wales and Scotland will need to comply with their duties under health and safety law when planning trips abroad.

Any injury to or death of a member of staff or a child outside Great Britain may be subject to the law of the land in which the injury/death occurred.

A school could still be liable under civil law for injuries to children that happen abroad as a result of negligence on the part of the school or its staff.

Reporting injuries and accidents

Serious work-related injuries to a member of staff or a child must, by law, be recorded and reported. The employer is responsible for this, but staff may be asked to prepare the report. What, how, where and when to report is explained on the HSE website at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/index.htm>. Employers must

report:

deaths

major injuries

over-3-day injuries – where an employee is away from work or unable to perform their normal work duties for more than 3 consecutive days

where there is an accident connected to the work activity which causes injury to pupils, members of the public or other people not at work and they are taken from the scene of an accident to hospital

specified dangerous occurrences – where something happens that does not result in an injury, but could have done;

The requirements are found in the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR).

Adventure activities using licensed providers

When planning an activity that will involve caving, climbing, trekking, skiing or watersports schools must currently check that the provider holds a licence as required by the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004. These regulations apply to adventure activities that take place in England, Scotland and Wales but these arrangements may be subject to change in the future.

School staff driving the school minibus

School staff can drive the school minibus without any special licence, as long as their employer agrees and as long as the following conditions are met.

- The staff member obtained their car driving licence before January 1997; OR
- The staff member obtained their car driving licence later, but has held it for at least two years, AND
 - is not being paid to drive the minibus (because exemption

- depends on no consideration being received by the driver); AND
- the minibus weighs no more than 3.5 tonnes and is used not for hire or reward

Parental consent to off-site activities

Written consent from parents is not required for pupils to take part in the majority of off-site activities organised by a school (with the exception of nursery age children) as most of these activities take place during school hours and are a normal part of a child's education at school. However, parents should be told where their child will be at all times and of any extra safety measures required. Written consent is usually only requested for activities that need a higher level of risk management or those that take place outside school hours. The Department has prepared a "one-off" consent form which schools can ask parents to sign when a child enrolls at the school. This will cover a child's participation in any of these types of activities throughout their time at the school. These include adventure activities, off-site sporting fixtures outside the school day, residential visits and all off-site activities for nursery schools which take place at any time (including during school holidays or at the weekend). The form is available at <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/adminandfinance/healthandsafety>. Parents must be told in advance of each activity and must be given the opportunity to withdraw their child from any particular school trip or activity covered by the form.

Local Authority Powers

Where the local authority is the employer (community, voluntary controlled, community special schools and maintained nursery schools), it may give a direction concerning the health and safety of persons (including pupils) on the school's premises or taking part in any school activities elsewhere. Under section 29(5) of the Education Act 2002, governing bodies of such schools must comply with any such direction from the local authority.

Role of the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)

There is no requirement to have an EVC. The EVC typically liaises with the local authority's outdoor education adviser and helps colleagues in schools to manage risks.

More specific advice can be found from the Outdoor Education Advisers Panel (OEAP) which is made up of expert practitioners from local authorities and is one of several organisations that offers training. The OEAP's website (<http://www.oeap.info>) also provides schools with details of local authority outdoor education advisers.

POWER TO BAR ABUSIVE PARENTS

Sometimes aggressive or abusive behaviour from a parent can present a risk

to staff and children. School premises are private property and parents will generally have permission from the school to be on school premises. However, in cases of abuse or threats to staff, pupils or other parents, schools may ban parents from entering the school.

It is also an offence under section 547 of the Education Act 1997 for any person (including a parent) to cause a nuisance or disturbance on school premises. The police may be called to assist the school in removing a parent but local authorities and governing bodies may also authorise a person to remove a person if they have reasonable cause to believe that the person is causing a nuisance or a disturbance.

Schools should have a written policy setting out the behaviour expected of parents on the premises and the procedures that will happen when the school wishes to restrict a parent's access to school premises. A parent who has been banned from entering school premises is trespassing if he or she does so without permission.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Legislative links

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1999/3242/contents/made

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2004/1309/contents/made

www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/index.htm

www.dft.gov.uk and www.dft.gov.uk/dvla/ for information on transport legislation affecting schools

External links

www.hse.gov.uk Health and Safety Executive

www.oeap.info Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel

www.cleapss.org.uk provides advice on science safety

www.ase.org.uk Association for Science Education

www.afpe.org.uk Association for PE

lotcqualitybadge.org.uk Council for Learning Outside the Classroom

ANNEX A

Key Elements of a Health and Safety Policy

The HSE's website contains a simple two page template that any employer can use to create a health and safety policy – see <http://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/write.htm>. The issues that school employers decide to include in the health and safety policy will depend on the size of the school and the nature of the risks associated with the school's activities. The template on the HSE website includes the following which should be included in any health and safety policy:

- A general statement of policy
- Who is responsible to do what (delegation of tasks)
- Arrangements to establish, monitor and review measures needed to meet satisfactory health and safety standards

In addition schools may wish to include any of the following in their health and safety policy and associated risk assessment:

- Training of staff in health and safety, including risk assessment
- Consultation arrangements with employees
- Recording and reporting accidents to staff, pupils and visitors – including those reportable under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR)
- Policy and procedures for off-site visits, including residential visits and any school-led adventure activities
- Dealing with health and safety emergencies – procedures and contacts
- First aid and supporting medical needs
- Occupational health services and managing work-related stress
- Workplace safety for teachers, pupils and visitors
- School security
- Violence to staff (may cross-refer to behaviour policy)
- Manual handling
- Slips and trips
- On-site vehicle movements
- Management of asbestos
- Control of hazardous substances
- Selecting and managing contractors
- Maintenance (and, where necessary examination and testing) of plant and equipment such as electrical equipment, local exhaust ventilation, pressure systems, gas appliances, lifting equipment and glazing safety)
- Fire safety, including testing of alarms and evacuation procedures

