OUNDLE
School

Laxton
Junior School
OUNDLE

Health and Safety Handbook

December 2025

Contents

Introduction

This Handbook is for all employees to provide a general introduction to a wide range of health and safety topics. It is supplementary to the full Health and Safety Policy Manual.

For those who wish to delve a bit deeper into a particular subject, there are links to further information at the end of each section.

Joe Rice (Health and Safety Manager)

Document Review

This document shall be reviewed every two years or when circumstances necessitate a review.

1. Health and Safety Policy (Summary of key responsibilities)

The Corporation of Oundle School has developed a health and safety policy in recognition of its legal duty to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of all staff, pupils, contractors and visitors to the school. It is based on the Plan, Do, Check, Act approach to managing health and safety. Our policy has been agreed by the school's health and safety committee and the general statement of commitment has been signed by the Chairman of the Governing Body, Head of Oundle School and Bursar. Although ultimate responsibility for health and safety rests with the Governing Body, high standards of health and safety can only be achieved if staff at all levels observe their own personal health and safety duties.

As well as providing you with a safe place of work and safe work equipment the school has to provide you with the right information, instruction, training and supervision to help you achieve the necessary competence to work safely. This is not only a legal duty but can also contribute to the success of the school. You will be provided with:

- **Information** that is easy to understand and describes the hazards and risks, the measures in place to control the risks, and how to follow any emergency procedures.
- **Clear instructions** so that you know what you are expected to do.
- **Adequate health and safety training** that is relevant and effective.
- **An appropriate level of supervision**, which is particularly vital for new, inexperienced and young workers.

Achieving good standards of health and safety is a partnership and **all employees** have individual and personal responsibilities. As such, **you have a duty to:**

- Take reasonable care of your own health and safety and other people who may be affected.
- Co-operate with the school to enable compliance with health and safety legislation.
- Never intentionally interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety or welfare.
- Work in accordance with the instruction and training provided, particularly in relation to any machinery, work equipment or safety device.
- Inform your line manager of any work situation or equipment which could present danger, or of any shortcomings in the protection arrangements in place for health and safety.
- Report all accidents, work-related ill health conditions and non-injury / 'near miss' incidents to your line manager. If your work involves catering and the handling of food you are required to report any infectious or contagious diseases to your manager.
- Make your line manager aware of any activity that may require a risk assessment and contribute to the process.
- Ensure visitors to the school are provided with relevant health and safety information.

- Set a good personal example, particularly for pupils and other members of staff by observing safe working practices.
- Familiarise yourself with the health and safety policy.

If you have **management responsibilities**, you will have additional health and safety duties. These include but are not limited to:

- Carrying out risk assessments and checking that risk control measures are effective.
- Identifying and addressing staff health and safety training needs.
- Ensuring that adequate and proportionate levels of supervision are in place.
- Assisting with the implementation of emergency procedures within your department.
- Incident reporting and investigation.
- Consulting with staff on matters that may affect their health and safety.

Your role may require you to be instructed on specific and more detailed aspects of the health and safety policy e.g. working at height, contractor management, etc. Your line manager will arrange this when required.

Health and safety training will also be provided when:

- The findings of risk assessments indicate the need for health and safety training or refresher training.
- New technology or work equipment is introduced, or a system of work is altered.
- People are transferred to a new environment or given a change of activities or responsibilities.
- Incident investigation results show that training is required as remedial action.
- Refresher training is specifically required by legislation or guidance to ensure continued competence (e.g. for mini-bus drivers, first-aiders, forklift drivers, electricians, etc).

The **Health and Safety Manager** is responsible for advising the school on the measures necessary to comply with health and safety legislation. This role includes but is not limited to:

- Providing advice and guidance for staff.
- Making sure risk assessments are completed and assisting with the development of safe systems of work.
- Investigating incidents and ensuring compliance with incident reporting requirements.
- Monitoring health and safety performance.
- Providing reports and information for the Governing Body and School Committees.

The school's detailed Health and safety policy manual is located on the Staff Hub within the Health and Safety section under the Bursary tab.

2. Risk assessment and risk control

A key part of managing health and safety within the school is the need to assess and control risks. To do this we need to think about what might cause harm to people and decide whether we are doing enough to prevent harm.

A risk assessment is about identifying and taking sensible and proportionate measures to control the risks. It also helps to determine whether more needs to be done to control the risks. The principles are based on identifying how accidents and ill health could happen and concentrating on real risks – those that are most likely and which will cause the most harm.

The risk assessment methodology used is based on the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) guidance "Managing risks and risk assessment at work" which is also used to inform the school's health and safety policy manual and risk assessment policy.

The steps are summarised below:

1. Identify the hazards

One of the most important aspects of a risk assessment is accurately identifying the potential hazards in the workplace. A good starting point is to walk around the workplace, make a list of the activities taking place and think about any hazards e.g. what is it about the activities, processes or substances used that could injure people or harm their health?

2. Decide who might be harmed and how

Thought needs to be given to how employees and pupils (or others who may be present such as contractors or visitors) might be harmed. The process should involve consultation with colleagues to see what they think the hazards are, as they may notice things that are not always obvious and may have some good ideas on how to control the risks. For each hazard, being clear about who may be harmed will help identify the best way of controlling the risk.

3. Evaluate the risks and decide which controls are necessary

Having identified the hazards and who may be harmed, a decision is required on how likely it is that harm will occur and its possible severity i.e. the level of risk and what to do about it. Consideration needs to be given to what is already being done and whether any additional control measures are in place. Further options may include:

- Getting rid of the hazard altogether.
- If not, deciding how to control the risks so that harm is unlikely.

Some practical steps to take include:

- Trying a less risky option.
- Preventing access to the hazards.
- Organising work to reduce exposure to the hazard.
- Issuing protective equipment.
- Providing welfare facilities such as first-aid and washing facilities.
- Involving and consulting with workers.

4. Record the findings, implement them and provide information

The significant findings of the risk assessment are recorded on the school's standard format and placed on the Staff Hub. The record of the significant findings should detail the hazards, how people might be harmed and the measures in place to control the risks. The record should be simple, proportionate to the risks and focused on the controls. Putting the results of the risk assessment into practice is vitally important. It is important to share the findings of risk assessments with colleagues and prioritise and tackle the most important things first.

Your manager will inform you of the significant finding of risk assessments for your area of work. This will include details of the control measures identified; training requirements; local procedures and rules; supervision arrangements; hazard and fault reporting procedures; and details of any limitations regarding the use of machinery, substances or 'out of bounds' areas.

5. Review the risk assessment

Few workplaces stay the same. Sooner or later, new equipment, substances and procedures will be introduced that could lead to new hazards and risks. So it makes sense to review risk assessments on a regular basis and in the following circumstances:

- If the nature of the work changes, e.g. when changes occur to the tasks, the personnel doing the work, the procedures or if any new equipment or substances are introduced.
- When incidents involving injury or work related ill-health, or near misses have occurred.
- When health and safety legislation or guidance are changed or updated.
- When staff spot a problem or highlight a shortcoming in arrangements.

Your role

Your involvement will depend on the responsibilities your job within the school attracts. These are covered in section 1.0 of this booklet i.e. those in management roles will lead on risk assessments and all other employees are required to contribute to the process

3. Department for Education (DfE) Guidance - Health and safety: Responsibilities and duties for schools (April 2022)

Contents

The contents of the DfE's recently revised guidance are briefly summarised below. For full details there is a link to the resource on the next page.

1. Responsibilities

The key responsibilities at senior level and the need for schools to appoint competent persons to ensure they meet their responsibilities to secure the safety of pupils while undertaking school activities are explained in this section. Pupils should be safe in school and when undertaking out of school activities. The risk management to keep them safe should be proportionate to the nature of the activities. Teachers should be able to take pupils on exciting school trips that broaden their horizons. Pupils should be able to play freely in the playground and be able to take part in sports.

As COVID-19 becomes a virus that the country learns to live with, the government has moved away from stringent restrictions. Therefore, while the government will continue to manage the risk of serious illness from the spread of the virus, schools should consider COVID-19 as one risk amongst others in relation to health and safety risk assessments and managing risk.

2. Leadership

Commitment from the highest level is essential for effective health and safety management and the school's health and safety policy should be an integral part of the school's culture and values.

3. Elements of a health and safety policy

The main elements of every health and safety policy should cover the principles of a Plan, Do, Check, Act approach to managing health and safety. There is also a list of the main sections on the arrangements for health and safety that the policy should contain.

4. Assessing and managing risks

Risk assessments are necessary to identify the measures necessary to control risks during school activities. This could include anything related to the school premises or delivery of its curriculum, whether on or off site.

5. Preparation for public health incidents

In line with public health advice provided, Schools must make sure that risk assessments are undertaken to identify the measures needed to reduce the risks from public health incidents so far as is reasonably practicable. The UK Health Security Agency provides guidance and information on the management of infectious diseases in schools and other childcare settings.

6. Support for schools

The DfE guidance provides links to a number of other websites and sources of government guidance that schools can adopt or modify to suit their needs.

7. Other areas and activities to consider

This section also provides links to guidance and further help on health and safety including information on work at height; slips and trips in educational establishments; vehicle movements, asbestos management; hazardous substances; managing contractors; estate management and building design and maintenance; manual handling; and managing work-related stress.

8. School security and emergency preparation

All schools should have adequate plans in place to enable them to manage and respond to serious incidents relating to security and emergency situations.

9. Additional powers of local authorities

This relates to the powers of local authorities under Section 29(5) of The Education Act 2002.

10. Staff training

Schools must ensure that staff receive information and training about how to meet their responsibilities identified within the health and safety policy. Staff whose work involves a greater element of risk will need extra specific training.

11. Duties of employees

The duties placed on all employees are as detailed in Section 1.0 of this Handbook.

12. Recording and reporting injuries and accidents

Certain types of work-related injuries and ill heath to staff and pupils must be recorded and reported to the Health and Safety Executive.

13. Review and evaluation

All schools should regularly review their health and safety policies and performance.

14. The Law

The guidance highlights the main laws (Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999) that schools must be familiar with.

Find out more

DfE Resource – health-and-safety-advice-for-schools/responsibilities-and-duties-for-schools

4. Guidance on educational visits and trips

Oundle School guidance

The specific arrangements for external trips are available on the Staff Hub. Trip Leaders are required to obtain permission and approval for non-routine trips that require a risk assessment and extra planning. The approval is granted by both the Trips Coordinator and Deputy Head Co-Curricular.

Laxton Junior School guidance

The specific arrangements for educational visits, visitors and residentials are available on ''The Hive'. Trip Leaders are required to obtain permission and approval from the Assistant Head Co-curricular and Deputy Head.

DfE guidance on health and safety on educational visits

In November 2018 the DfE produced a new web-based resource on "Health and safety on educational visits" to supplement their resource on "Health and safety: Responsibilities and duties for schools". The new guidance provides more detail about schools' duties when planning routine visits, or those requiring risk assessment and extra planning or approval. The contents of the guidance are listed here but staff leading trips should familiarize themselves with full details which are available via the link below

Contents

1. The 2 main types of trips (routine visits and trips that need a risk assessment and extra planning).
2. When to get consent from parents.
3. Using outside organisations.
4. Adventure activities: caving, climbing, trekking and watersports.
5. Trips abroad.
6. Knowing what to do in an emergency.
7. Evaluating trips.
8. Educational visits coordinators.

Find out more

DfE Resource – health-and-safety-on-educational-visits

5. Contractor management

External contractors appointed by the school are required to carry out their work in accordance with the law and in a way that eliminates or reduces the risks to health and safety. All members of staff who hold a budget and commission the work of contractors are responsible for observing the arrangements detailed in the health and safety policy manual. This includes making a prior assessment of a contractor's health and safety arrangements and competencies with the assistance of the Health and Safety Manager.

Contractors are required to sign in prior to working on school premises and they are given an induction covering general information on health and safety and site-specific rules. Identity checks are also carried out in accordance with our safeguarding procedures.

All contracted work on school premises relating to construction, building maintenance and the installation of plant and equipment must be arranged by, or in consultation with, the Building Department.

Find out more

Health and safety policy manual Section 3.8 - Contracted services.

6. Welfare facilities and working environment

Welfare facilities are provided for your well-being and include:

- Adequate toilets and hand basins, with soap and towels or a hand-dryer.
- Somewhere to rest and eat meals.
- Drinking water.
- A place to store clothing (and somewhere to change if special clothing is worn for work).

A healthy working environment is achieved by the provision of:

- A reasonable working temperature and good ventilation.
- Lighting that is suitable for the work being carried out.
- Enough room space and suitable workstations and seating.
- A clean workplace with appropriate waste containers.

Find out more

Health and safety policy manual Section 3.7 - Workplace health, safety and welfare.

7. Incident reporting and investigation

It is the school's policy to investigate incidents resulting in injury, dangerous occurrences, property damage, near misses and cases of work-related ill health. The purpose is to establish the facts, determine the causes and identify the actions necessary to prevent similar events from happening again. It is not the purpose of accident investigations to allocate blame.

Other key reasons for the prompt reporting and investigation of incidents are as follows:

- To enable us to comply with legal reporting requirements under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations.
- To learn lessons, monitor safety performance and appraise the effectiveness of risk assessments and the risk control measures in place.

What do I have to do?

It is your duty to report incidents and non-injury / near misses to your line manager and assist with the investigation. All incidents should be recorded on the school's incident reporting system "Smartlog". The system is available on the Staff Hub, and is monitored by the health and safety Manager.

Incidents involving injury should be recorded by the injured employee's line manager only and **not by the injured employee themselves**. Non-injury / near miss incidents can be recorded by any member of staff (but the line manager should still be informed of the incident).

Absence due to an injury at work and cases of work-related ill health must also be reported to the Human Resources Department

8. First aid arrangements and basic first aid advice

Accidents and illness can happen at any time, and first aid can save lives and prevent minor injuries becoming major ones. Based on the assessment of needs, the school provides adequate arrangements for first aid to make sure that employees, pupils and visitors receive immediate help if they are taken ill or are injured.

This includes providing a sufficient number of qualified first aiders, an adequate number of first-aid boxes and the provision of information on first aid. The full policy on first aid is available on the Staff Hub and is supplemented by separate policies on Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) and Emergency Adrenaline Auto-Injectors (AAIs) and Asthma Inhalers. The first aid training courses available include First Aid at Work, Emergency First Aid at Work, Outdoor and Wild Country First Aid and Sports Injuries First Aid.

The school has **5 internally sited AEDs** which are located in the Health Centre, Oundle School Sports Centre, The Acre Sports Centre, Laxton Junior School and the Stahl Theatre. In addition, there are **3 AEDs located in external cabinets,** outside the Patrick Engineering Centre, Athletics Track Hub and the Bursary.	 AEDs Location map
There are **emergency AAIs and Asthma Inhalers located in Allergy Response Boxes (most of which are wall-mounted) in 26** school buildings. This includes all main dining areas. The devices should be used **only in an emergency** and must not be regarded as a 'back-up' or as spares.	 AAIs Location map

Note: The emergency services must be called immediately when any person is showing the symptoms of a cardiac arrest and, in all cases, after an AAI is administered.

Basic advice on first aid at work

The following information, taken from an HSE leaflet, provides basic advice on first aid for use in an emergency. It is not a substitute for effective training.

What to do in an emergency. Your **priorities** are to:

- Assess the situation – do not put yourself in danger. Make the area safe.
- Assess all casualties and attend to any **unconscious** casualties first.
- Send for help – do not delay.

Check for a response

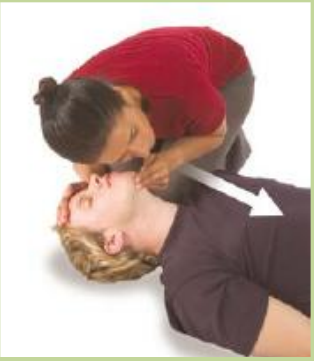
Gently shake the casualty's shoulders and ask loudly, "Are you alright?" If there is no response, your **priorities** are to:

- Shout for help.
- Open the airway and check for normal breathing and take appropriate action.

A Airway

To open the airway:

- Place your hand on the casualty's forehead and gently tilt the head back.
- Lift the chin with two fingertips.



B Breathing

Look, listen and feel for normal breathing for no more than 10 seconds:

- Look for chest movement.
- Listen at the casualty's mouth for breath sounds.
- Feel for air on your cheek.

If the casualty <u>is</u> breathing normally:

- Place in the recovery position and get help.
- Check for continued breathing.

If the casualty is <u>not</u> breathing normally:

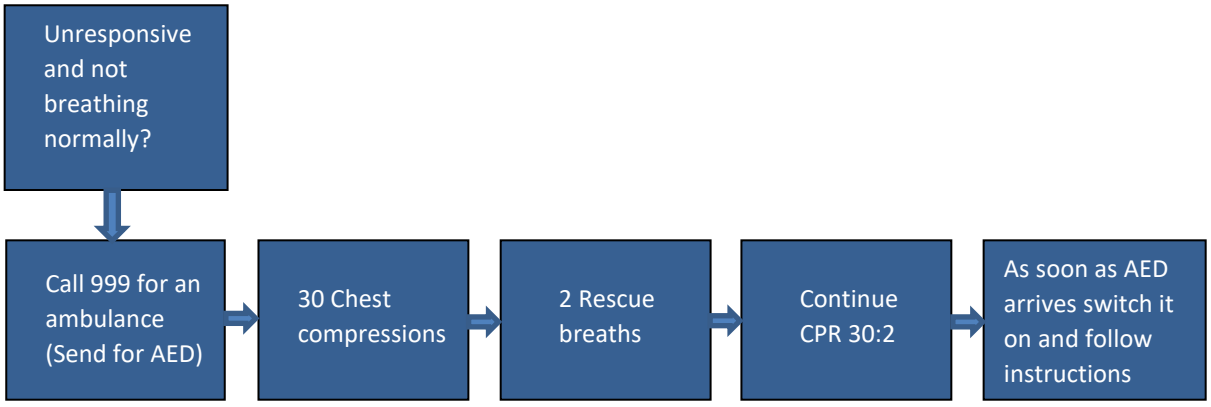
- Get help.
- Start chest compressions (see CPR).

C CPR

To start chest compressions:

- Lean over the casualty and with your arms straight, press down on the centre of the breastbone 5–6 cm, then release the pressure.
- Repeat at a rate of about 100–120 times a minute.
- After 30 compressions open the airway again.
- Pinch the casualty's nose closed and allow the mouth to open.
- Take a normal breath and place your mouth around the casualty's mouth, making a good seal.
- Blow steadily into the mouth while watching for the chest rising.
- Remove your mouth from the casualty and watch for the chest falling.
- Give a second breath and then start 30 compressions again without delay.
- Continue with chest compressions and rescue breaths in a ratio of 30:2 until qualified help takes over or the casualty starts breathing normally.

Adult Basic Life Support Sequence



Severe bleeding - If there is severe bleeding:

- Apply direct pressure to the wound.
- Raise and support the injured part (unless broken).
- Apply a dressing and bandage firmly in place.

Broken bones and spinal injuries - If a broken bone or spinal injury is suspected, **obtain expert help. Do not move casualties** unless they are in immediate danger.

Burns - Burns can be serious so if in doubt, seek medical help. Cool the affected part of the body with cold water until pain is relieved. Thorough cooling may take 10 minutes or more, but this must not delay taking the casualty to hospital.

Certain chemicals may seriously irritate or damage the skin. Avoid contaminating yourself with the chemical. Treat in the same way as for other burns but flood the affected area with water for 20 minutes. Continue treatment even on the way to hospital, if necessary. Remove any contaminated clothing which is not stuck to the skin.

Eye injuries - All eye injuries are potentially serious. If there is something in the eye, wash out the eye with clean water or sterile fluid from a sealed container to remove loose material. **Do not attempt to remove anything that is embedded in the eye.**

If chemicals are involved, flush the eye with water or sterile fluid for at least 10 minutes, while gently holding the eyelids open. Ask the casualty to hold a pad over the injured eye and send them to hospital.

Find out more

First Aid and Supplementary Policies

LJS - First Aid Policy

9. Fire safety and emergency procedures

Most fires are preventable. Those responsible for schools, workplaces and other buildings to which the public have access can avoid them by taking sensible precautions. To support this, we all have a duty to observe the right behaviours and procedures. This section covers general advice on fire safety and emergency procedures.

Note: Fires attended by the Fire Service **have occurred at Oundle School** e.g. due to **cooking, the use of microwaves, toasters and faulty or damaged electrical equipment.** The incidents did not escalate due to our fire safety measures and the quick action by staff but these could quite easily have **resulted in more serious consequences.**

General fire safety hazards

Fires need three things to start – a source of ignition (heat), a source of fuel (something that burns) and oxygen:

- Sources of ignition include heaters, lighting, naked flames, electrical equipment, smokers' materials (cigarettes and matches), and anything else that gets very hot or causes sparks.
- Sources of fuel include wood, paper, plastic, rubber or foam, loose packaging materials, waste rubbish and furniture.
- Sources of oxygen include the air around us; oxidising chemicals and oxygen supplied from gas cylinders which can enrich the atmosphere and help a fire burn.

What does my employer have to do?

The school carries out fire risk assessments for each building to ensure that adequate and appropriate fire safety measures are in place to minimise the risk of injury or loss of life in the event of a fire. A programme of fire evacuation practice drills is also implemented. There is a fire safety policy in place which includes details of the format and methodology for fire risk assessments. The aspects considered within the assessments include:

- Identifying fire hazards and people at risk.
- Fire detection and warning systems, and firefighting equipment.
- Means of escape.
- Testing and maintenance of fire precautions.
- Emergency evacuation procedures.
- Information and training requirements.
  (**Note:** All staff are required to undertake fire safety training.)

What do I have to do?

As part of your introduction to the school or to a new department, you should be made familiar with:

- Your role in an emergency evacuation situation and the identity of people nominated with specific responsibilities for fire safety and emergency evacuation. This should include the action to be taken on discovering a fire, how to raise the alarm and what to do upon hearing the alarm.
- The procedure for assisting visitors and contractors where required.
- The location and, when appropriate, the use of fire-fighting equipment.
- Location of escape routes, including the alternative routes which may not be in regular use.
- How to open all emergency exit doors and the importance of keeping all fire doors closed to prevent the spread of fire, heat and smoke.
- The location of the evacuation assembly point and the need to report directly to this position in the event of an emergency evacuation.
- Where appropriate, how to stop machines and processes and isolate power supplies in the event of a fire.
- Where relevant, the risks and safe use of flammable and explosive substances.
- The importance of general fire safety precautions such as good housekeeping and keeping escape routes free from obstructions.
- How to report faults, incidents and near misses.

If you fulfill the role of an **Evacuation Controller** or **Fire Warden,** you will be given additional information and training.

Emergency evacuation procedures

The basic instructions in the event of an emergency (**for most buildings**) are reproduced below, however, please familiarise yourself with the specific instructions detailed in the emergency evacuation procedures and fire action notices within your location.

If you discover a fire:

Immediately operate the nearest break-glass fire alarm call point.

On hearing the fire alarm signal (electronic siren):

1. Leave the premises quickly and calmly by the nearest available exit. Move purposefully and quietly, but without running.
2. Go directly to the evacuation assembly point which is situated at (**See fire action notice for details**).

3. Escort any visitors for whom you have responsibility to the assembly point.
4. Do not stop or return to collect any personal belongings.
5. Do not use the lifts.
6. Do not take any personal risks or do anything which may put other people at risk.
7. Where appropriate, make sure doors and windows are closed when leaving the premises.
8. Do not re-enter the premises until instructed to do so.

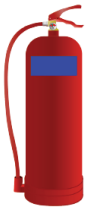
Fire extinguishers

In the event of a fire, the priority is to evacuate all occupants to a safe area. Fire extinguishers and fire blankets are located throughout our premises but they should **only be used by those who are trained and competent.**

General information on fire classes and common types of extinguishers in use

Class of fire		Description
Class A		Fires involving solid materials such as wood, paper or textiles.
Class B		Fires involving flammable liquids such as petrol, diesel or oils.
Class C *		**Fires involving gases.**
Class D *		**Fires involving metals.**
Class F		Fires involving cooking oils such as deep-fat fryers.
Electrical		Fires involving electrical equipment.

*** Class C and D fires must only be tackled by people with specialist training, knowledge and fire-fighting equipment.**

Extinguisher type	Use on	Don't use on
Foam (cream) 	 Can be used on wood, paper, textiles and contained flammable liquid fires.	Do not use on electrical and cooking media fires. They should not be used on free-flowing liquid fires unless the operator has been specially trained.
Carbon dioxide (black) 	 Can be used on flammable liquid and electrical fires. If possible, when using on electrical equipment, the power should be disconnected first.	Do not use on wood, paper, textiles and cooking media fires.
Powder (blue) 	 Can be used on wood, paper, textiles, flammable liquid and electrical fires.	Do not use on cooking media fires. Powder extinguishers will damage electrical equipment and are not suitable for use in confined spaces.
Wet chemical (oatmeal) 	 Can be used on wood, paper, textiles and cooking media fires. It is particularly suitable for catering departments.	Do not use on liquid fires (other than cooking oils, etc).
Fire blankets 	Fire blankets should be located in the vicinity of the hazard and are suitable for dealing with small fires in containers of cooking oils or fats and fires involving clothing.	
P50 Foam 	 Can be used on wood, paper, textiles, flammable liquid and electrical fires (up to 1000V).	**Note:** This new type of extinguisher has been installed in Scott House, Athletics Track Hub, the new Sports Centre, Cobthorne Stables and Cobthorne House.

Find out more

Fire Safety Policy

10. Safety signs

Employers are required to use a safety sign where there is a significant risk to health and safety that has not been avoided or controlled, as long as the use of a sign can help reduce the risk. Safety signs are not a substitute for other methods of controlling risks such as engineering controls and safe systems of work.

Fire safety signs are required to provide information on fire exit routes, to identify fire safety equipment and the action to be taken in the event of a fire, etc. Information on first aid arrangements is also provided by signs throughout the school.

Safety sign colours and definitions

Colour	Meaning	Examples	
Blue	Mandatory sign.		
Yellow or amber	Warning sign.		
Red	Prohibition sign and identification of fire safety equipment.		
Green	Emergency escape, first aid (safe condition sign).		

11. Personal protective equipment

The school has duties concerning the provision and use of personal protective equipment (PPE). PPE is equipment that will protect the user against health or safety risks at work that cannot be adequately controlled in other ways. It can include items such as safety helmets, gloves, eye protection, high-visibility clothing, safety footwear and safety harnesses. It also includes respiratory protective equipment (RPE).

PPE is provided free of charge, it has to be assessed to ensure it is suitable, maintained and stored properly, and you have to use it in accordance with any training you are given.

Why is PPE important?

Making the workplace safe includes providing instructions, procedures, training and supervision to encourage people to work safely and responsibly. PPE should only be considered as the 'last line of defence', as it fails to danger. However, even where engineering controls and safe systems of work have been applied, some hazards might remain. These can result in injuries to the:

- Lungs, e.g. from breathing in contaminated air.
- Head and feet, e.g. from falling materials.
- Eyes, e.g. from flying particles or splashes of corrosive liquids.
- Skin, e.g. from contact with hazardous substances.
- Body, e.g. from extremes of heat or cold.

When selecting and using PPE

- Make sure it is appropriate and protects against the hazards involved.
- Select PPE that complies with UK product safety regulations and bears UKCA or CE marking, as permitted by current law.
- Ensure that it fits correctly, can be adjusted and if more than one item of PPE is needed make sure they are compatible and can be used together effectively.

What do I have to do?

You have a duty to - wear PPE, when identified by risk assessments, in accordance with the training you are given; keep it clean and store it safely; and report any loss or obvious defects in PPE to your line manager. There are no exemptions from wearing PPE when it is deemed as being necessary.

Table of hazards and examples of types of PPE

Part of body	Hazards	Types of PPE available
Eyes	Chemical or metal splash, dust, projectiles, gas, vapour and radiation.	Safety glasses, goggles, faceshields and visors.
Head	Impact from falling or flying objects, risk of bumping head, hair getting tangled in machinery.	Industrial safety helmets, bump caps, hairnets.
Ears	Noise – a combination of sound level and duration of exposure, very high-level peak sounds are a hazard even with short duration.	Earplugs, earmuffs, semi-insert/canal caps.
Lungs / respiratory system	Dust, vapour, fumes, gas, oxygen-deficient atmospheres.	Disposable filtering facepiece or respirator, half- or full-face respirators, air-fed helmets, breathing apparatus.
Hands and arms	Abrasion, temperature extremes, cuts and punctures, impact, chemicals, electric shock, radiation, biological agents and prolonged immersion in water.	Gloves, gloves with a cuff, gauntlets and sleeving that covers part or all of the arm.
Feet and legs	Wet, hot and cold conditions, electrostatic build-up, slipping, cuts and punctures, falling objects, metal and chemical splash, heavy loads and vehicles.	Safety boots and shoes with protective toe caps and penetration-resistant mid-sole, wellington boots, gaiters, leggings, spats, chainsaw boots.
Whole body protection	Temperature extremes, adverse weather, chemical or metal splash, spray from pressure leaks or spray guns, impact or penetration, contaminated dust, entanglement of own clothing and contact with vehicles.	Conventional or disposable overalls, boiler suits, specialist protective clothing e.g. protective aprons, high-visibility clothing.

Find out more

Health and safety policy manual Section 3.16 - Personal protective equipment.

12. Slips and trips

Most slips occur when floors become wet or contaminated and many trips are due to poor housekeeping. The solutions are often simple and cost-effective, and a basic assessment of the risks should help to identify what you can do to tackle slip and trip risks.

Why is dealing with slips and trips important?

Slips and trips are the most common cause of injury at work. On average, they cause over a third of all major injuries in the UK and can lead to other types of accidents, such as falls from height or falls into machinery. **On average, slips and trips account for around 25% of all work-related reported injuries involving staff, pupils and members of the public at Oundle School.**

What do I have to do?

To help prevent these accidents you need to think about what might cause slips or trips in your workplace and decide whether you are doing enough to prevent them. Once you have identified the risks you must control them.

How can I do it?

- Prevent floors from getting wet or contaminated in the first place.
- Have procedures in place and follow them for both routine and responsive cleaning.
- If a spillage does happen, clean it up quickly.
- If floors cannot be dried after cleaning and are left wet, stop anyone walking on them until they are dry and use the right cleaning methods and products.
- Look out for trip hazards, such as uneven floors or trailing cables, obstructions left in walkways and encourage good housekeeping by your work colleagues.
- Wear the correct footwear that is suitable for the environment you work in.

Find out more:

Health and safety policy manual Section 3.7 – Workplace health, safety and welfare.

13. Manual handling

Incidents involving manual handling can result in long term absence and injuries include musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) such as pain and injuries to the back, neck, arms, legs and joints, and repetitive strain injuries of various sorts. Manual handling is also a contributing factor in other incidents involving slips, trips and falls.

Manual handling covers a variety of activities including lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling and carrying. If any of these tasks are not carried out appropriately there is a risk of injury.

Why is manual handling important?

Manual handling injuries can have serious and long term implications for the employer and injured person. They can occur almost anywhere and heavy lifting, awkward postures, repetitive movements of arms, legs and back or existing injuries can increase the risk.

What do I have to do?

Where it is not possible to avoid manual handling tasks, employers and employees must look at the risks and adopt sensible health and safety measures to prevent or avoid injury.

For any lifting activity - always take into account:

- Your individual capability and the weight and nature of the load.
- The surrounding environmental conditions.
- Level of training you have received.
- The way your work is organised including repetition, adequacy of breaks, etc.

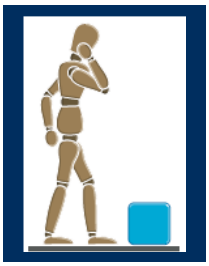
If you need to lift something manually:

- Reduce the amount of twisting, stooping and reaching.
- Try and avoid lifting from floor level or above shoulder height, especially heavy loads. Adjust storage areas to minimise the need to carry out such movements.
- Consider how you can minimise carrying distances.
- Assess the weight to be carried and whether you can move the load safely or need any help – maybe the load can be broken down to smaller, lighter components.

If you need to use lifting equipment:

- Consider whether you can use a lifting aid, such as a forklift truck, electric or hand-powered hoist, or a sack barrow.
- Think about storage as part of the delivery process – maybe heavy items could be delivered directly, or closer, to the point of use or storage area.

Good handling technique for lifting



Think before lifting/handling. Plan the lift. Are there any inherent hazards e.g. sharp edges, mirrors, contents that may move? Does the item need to be dismantled? Can handling aids be used? Where is the load going to be placed? Will help be needed with the load? Remove obstructions such as discarded wrapping materials. For a long lift, consider resting the load midway on a table or bench to change grip.

Adopt a stable position. The feet should be apart with one leg slightly forward to maintain balance (alongside the load, if it is on the ground). Be prepared to move your feet during the lift to maintain your stability. Avoid tight clothing or unsuitable footwear, which may make this difficult.

Get a good hold. Where possible the load should be hugged as close as possible to the body. **Start in a good posture.** At the start of the lift, slight bending of the back, hips and knees is preferable to fully flexing the back (stooping) or fully flexing the hips and knees (squatting).
Don't flex the back any further while lifting. This can happen if the legs begin to straighten before starting to raise the load.

Keep the load close to the waist. Keep the load close to the body for as long as possible while lifting. Keep the heaviest side of the load next to the body. If a close approach to the load is not possible, try to slide it towards the body before attempting to lift it.
Keep the head up when handling. Look ahead, not down at the load, once it has been held securely.

Avoid twisting the back or leaning sideways, especially while the back is bent. Shoulders should be kept level and facing in the same direction as the hips. Turning by moving the feet is better than twisting and lifting at the same time.

Put down, then adjust. If precise positioning of the load is necessary, put it down first, then slide it into the desired position.

Don't lift or handle more than can be easily managed. There is a difference between what people can lift and what they can safely lift. If in doubt, seek advice or get help.

Find out more

Health and safety policy manual Section 3.11 – Manual handling.

14. Work at height

Working at height is one of the biggest causes of fatalities and major injuries. Common causes include falls from ladders, stepladders and through fragile roofs.

Work at height means work in any place, including at or below ground level (for example in underground workings), where a person could fall a distance liable to cause injury.

This section explains how we can take simple, practical measures to reduce the risk of falling while working at height.

What do I have to do?

You must assist the school in making sure that **all** work at height is properly planned, supervised and carried out by people who are competent to do the job. This must include the use of the right type of access equipment. Consider what needs to be done and take a sensible, risk-based approach to identify suitable precautions.

Control measures

There is a simple hierarchy of control measures (as described below) which you should follow to minimise the risk of a fall from height. Those in control of the work **need to:**

- Avoid work at height where possible.
- Use work equipment e.g. scaffold, working platform, etc to prevent falls where work at height cannot be avoided.
- Where the risk of a fall cannot be eliminated, use work equipment to minimise the distance and consequences of a fall if one occurs.
- Always consider measures that protect all those at risk, i.e. collective protection measures (scaffolds, nets, soft landing systems) before measures that only protect the individual, i.e. personal protection measures (a harness).

Note: When the access equipment selected is a mobile elevating work platform, scaffold (including tower scaffold), work restraint system, fall-arrest system, safety nets or soft landing system, or straight or extension ladders then the school's permit-to-work at height procedure must be complied with.

Dos and don'ts of working at height - Do….

- Make sure the surface/access equipment in use is stable and strong enough to support your weight and that of any equipment. Any edge protection should be wide enough and strong enough to prevent a fall.

- As much work as possible from the ground or partly from the ground, for example assemble structures on the ground and lift them into position with lifting equipment.
- Take precautions when working on or near fragile surfaces, e.g. an asbestos cement roof, to prevent a fall or to minimise the distance and consequences in the event of a fall.
- Ensure you can get safely to and from where you want to work at height and also consider emergency evacuation and rescue procedures.
- Make sure you are competent to do the work you are responsible for, including if you are involved in planning and organising it.
- Choose the most appropriate equipment for the type of work being done.
- Provide protection from falling objects.
- Make sure equipment used for work at height is well maintained and inspected regularly.

Don't…

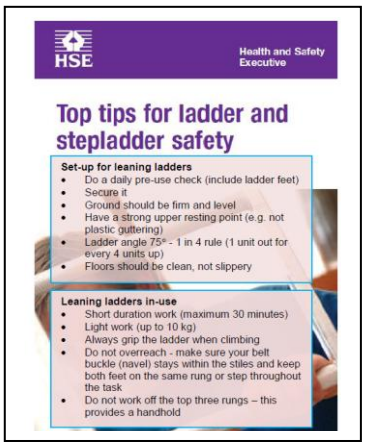
- Use ladders or stepladders if the nature of the work has not been assessed as 'low risk' i.e. if it is deemed to be 'heavy' or if the task will take longer than thirty minutes or so to complete.
- Overload ladders or stepladders – the person and anything they are taking up should not exceed the highest load stated on the ladder.
- Overreach on ladders or stepladders – keep your belt buckle (navel) inside the stiles and both feet on the same rung throughout the task.
- Work off the top three rungs or steps.
- Use ladders if you cannot maintain three points of contact at the working position. If this is not possible, consider an alternative system of work.

- Carry out work at height if you are **not competent** (someone who doesn't have the skills, knowledge and experience to do the job).

Find out more

Health and safety policy manual Section 3.13 - Work at height.

Information on training courses and copies of the pocket card illustrated here are available from the health and safety Manager.



15. Safe use of hazardous substances

Many substances used or created at work could harm your health. These substances could be dusts, gases or fumes that you breathe in, or liquids, gels or powders that come into contact with your eyes or skin. There could also be harmful micro-organisms (commonly known as germs) present that can cause infection or an allergic reaction.

Harmful substances can be present in anything from paints and cleaners to flour dust, solder fume, blood or waste. Ill health caused by these substances used at work is preventable. Many substances can harm health but, used properly, they almost never do.

What are the hazards?

Some substances can cause asthma or other diseases, including cancer. Many can damage the skin, and some can cause serious long-term damage to the lungs. The effect can be immediate, such as dizziness or stinging eyes, or can take many years to develop, such as lung disease. Many of the long-term or chronic effects cannot be cured once they develop.

What do I have to do?

The law, Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH), requires the school to adequately control exposure to substances that can cause ill health. This requires us to:

- Identify which harmful substances may be present in the workplace.
- Decide how people might be exposed to them and be harmed.
- Look at what measures are in place to prevent this harm and decide whether enough is being done.
- Provide information, instruction and training and, in appropriate cases, provide health surveillance.

Hazard checklist

- ☐ Does any product you use have a danger label?
- ☐ Does your process produce gas, fume, dust, mist or vapour?
- ☐ Is the substance harmful to breathe in?
- ☐ Can the substance harm your skin?
- ☐ Is it likely that harm could arise because of the way you use or produce it?

What are you going to do to about it? For example:

- Use something else?
- Use it in another, safer way?
- Control it to stop harm being caused?

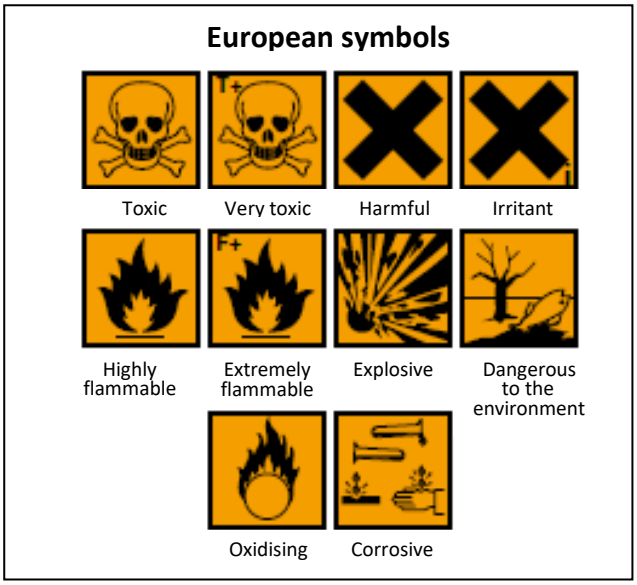
COSHH assessments

A COSHH assessment follows the same principles as a general risk assessment but concentrates on the hazards and risks from hazardous substances in the school in order to identify appropriate control measures. It should also be remembered that health hazards are not limited to substances labeled as 'hazardous'. Some substances can be produced by our processes e.g. wood dust from sanding, welding fume and silica dust from cutting stone, concrete or tiles.

Safety data sheets and product labels

Products you use that are classified as 'dangerous for supply' will have a label that has one or more hazard warning symbols. Some examples are given opposite.

These products should also come with a safety data sheet which provides some information on the hazards and the measures for control.



A globally harmonized international system of labeling was recently introduced to replace the European symbols.

Some of them are similar to the European symbols, but there is no single word describing the hazard. This information will come in the form of a 'hazard statement' on the packaging and the safety data sheet from the supplier.

Ventilation

- All workplaces need an adequate supply of fresh air. This can be natural ventilation, from doors and windows or controlled, where air is supplied and/or removed by a powered fan. If you work in an office environment, natural ventilation will normally be enough to control dusts and vapours.
- Local exhaust ventilation (LEV), or extraction, are engineering control solutions to reduce exposures to dust, mist, fume, vapour or gas and are used in some of our workshops.

Some simple checks to prevent skin damage - **Use the Avoid, Protect, Check approach:**

- **Avoid** direct contact between unprotected hands and substances, products and wet work where this is sensible and practical e.g. by using the appropriate gloves.
- **Protect** the skin. Avoiding contact will not always be possible so it is important to wash any contamination from the skin promptly and dry it thoroughly. Protect the skin by moisturising as often as possible and particularly at the end of the day – this replaces the natural oils that help keep the skin's protective barrier working properly.
- **Check** hands regularly for the first signs of itchy, dry or red skin – when skin problems are spotted early they can be treated, which can stop them from getting too serious.

Micro-organisms

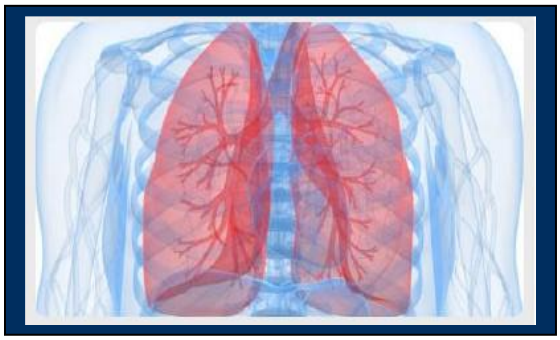
Micro-organisms are bacteria and viruses (more commonly known as germs), fungi or parasites. People who work with animals, or provide care for people, or who clean up or handle waste materials, can be exposed to harmful micro-organisms. These can cause an infection if they are breathed in, swallowed, or if they penetrate the skin, and can include some very serious illnesses. Some may in turn cause an allergic reaction or are toxic.

Your risk assessment should consider any exposure to micro-organisms (or to blood or bodily fluids, animals or animal products or waste materials which are known to carry micro-organisms). In general, unless it has been treated, you should assume that human/animal waste materials, including sewage, may contain harmful micro-organisms that could cause an infection. Controlling the risk of infection is relatively straightforward – usually simple, good personal hygiene measures, personal protective equipment, correct disposal procedures and training are sufficient.

If you work outdoors, you should take precautions if you work near stagnant water as it can carry harmful micro-organisms because of contamination.

Asbestos-containing materials

Previous exposure to asbestos is still causing a significant number of lung diseases and deaths in Great Britain. The people who are currently most at risk are those who work in the building trades.



As long as asbestos is in good condition and is not disturbed or damaged there is negligible risk. However, if it is disturbed or damaged, it can become a danger to health because asbestos fibres are released into the air.

Although it is now illegal to use asbestos in the construction or refurbishment of any premises, many thousands of tonnes of it were used in the past in such things as:

- Lagging on plant and pipework.
- Insulation products such as fireproof panels.
- Asbestos cement roofing material.
- Sprayed coatings on structural steel work to insulate against fire and noise.

Managing asbestos-containing materials in buildings

This is governed by the Control of Asbestos Regulations and the school has a policy and management plan in place which requires us to:

- Take reasonable steps to find out if there are asbestos-containing materials present and the condition it is in.
- Keep up-to-date, a record (register) of the location and condition of the asbestos-containing materials (and materials which are presumed to contain asbestos).
- Prepare and implement a plan that sets out how the risks from these materials will be managed.
- Provide information on the location and condition of any asbestos-containing materials to anyone who is liable to work on or disturb them and ensure they are competent for any tasks they need to carry out.
- Identify which work needs to be undertaken by licensed contractors.

Find out more

Health and safety policy manual Section 3.12 - COSHH & 3.19 - Asbestos-containing materials.

16. Machinery and work equipment

The definition of 'work equipment' in health and safety regulations is extremely wide. It covers almost all equipment used at work including machinery in school workshops, chainsaws, knives, hand tools, photocopiers, shredders, lift trucks and other workplace transport, laboratory apparatus, lifting equipment, step ladders, etc.

Why is machinery safety so important?

Moving machinery can cause injuries in many ways:

- People can be struck and injured by moving parts of machinery or ejected material. Parts of the body can also be drawn in or trapped between rollers, belts and pulley drives.
- Sharp edges can cause cuts and severing injuries, sharp-pointed parts can cause stabbing or puncture the skin, and rough surface parts can cause friction or abrasion.
- Parts of the machine, materials and emissions (such as steam or water) can be hot or cold enough to cause burns or scalds and electricity can cause electrical shock and burns.
- Injuries can also occur due to machinery becoming unreliable and developing faults or when machines are used improperly through inexperience or lack of training.

What does my employer have to do?

Machinery and work equipment provided for use must be:

- Suitable for its intended purpose and conditions of use.
- Purchased to comply with any relevant British Standards and UKCA mark.
- Assessed to ensure that effective control measures are introduced e.g. measures to prevent people coming into contact with dangerous moving parts of machinery and work equipment, and accessible emergency stop controls.
- Maintained in efficient working order.
- Operated by employees who have received adequate training on the use of the equipment.

What do I have to do?

Do….

- Ensure the work area around all machines is kept clean and tidy, free from obstructions or slips and trips hazards, and well lit.

- Check the machine is well maintained and fit to be used, i.e. appropriate for the job and working properly and that all the safety measures are in place – guards, isolators, locking mechanisms, emergency cut-off switches etc.
- Use the machine properly and in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Wear appropriate protective clothing and equipment required for that machine, such as safety glasses and hearing protection.

Don't….

- Use a machine or appliance that has a danger sign attached to it. Danger signs should only be removed by an authorised person who is satisfied that the machine is safe to use.
- Wear dangling chains, loose clothing or rings, or have loose, long hair that could get caught up in moving parts.
- Distract people who are using machines.
- Remove any safeguards, even if their presence seems to make the job more difficult.

Find out more

Health and safety policy manual Section 3.9 - Provision and use of work equipment.

17. Electrical safety

Electricity is a familiar and necessary part of everyday life, but electricity can kill or severely injure people and cause damage to property.

There are simple precautions when working with, or near, electricity that can be taken to significantly reduce the risk of electrical injury to you and others around you. This section provides a summary of those precautions.

What are the hazards?

The main hazards of working with electricity are:

- Electric shock and burns from contact with live parts.
- Injury from exposure to arcing, fire from faulty electrical equipment or installations.
- Explosion caused by unsuitable electrical apparatus or static electricity igniting flammable vapours or dusts.

Electric shocks can also lead to other types of injury, for example by causing a fall from ladders or scaffolds etc.

What does my employer have to do?

Risk assessments need to be carried out and should take into consideration the type of electrical equipment used, the way in which it is used and the environment that it is used in. Electrical installations and electrical equipment must be suitable for their intended use and the conditions in which they are operated, and only used for their intended purposes.

Electrical equipment and installations must be maintained to prevent danger. Maintenance work is carried out by competent electricians and the arrangements for inspecting and testing fixed installations and portable electrical equipment are in the health and safety policy.

What do I have to do?

Make sure that you know how to use and operate electrical equipment safely. Some other key points to remember include:

- Make sure enough sockets are available and check that socket outlets are not overloaded.
- Ensure there are no trailing cables that can cause people to trip and fall.
- Switch off and unplug appliances before cleaning or adjusting them.
- Stop using equipment immediately if it appears to be faulty – have it checked by a competent person.
- For equipment operating at 230 volts or higher, consider using a residual current device (RCD) between the electrical supply and the equipment, especially when working outdoors, or within a wet or confined place.

One of the best ways of reducing the risk of injury when using electrical equipment is to limit the supply voltage to the lowest needed to get the job done, such as:

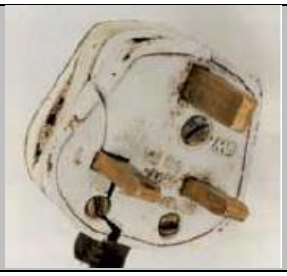
- When electrically powered tools are used, battery-operated ones are safest.
- Alternatively, portable tools designed to be run from a 110 volt centre-tapped-to-earth supply are readily available.

If you use portable electrical equipment, you should carry out visual checks before use. Remove the equipment from use immediately and get it repaired or replaced if:

- There is damage (apart from light scuffing) to the cable sheath.
- The plug is damaged, for example the casing is cracked or the pins are bent.
- There are any inadequate joints, including taped joints in the cable.
- The outer sheath of the cable is not effectively secured where it enters the plug or the equipment. Obvious evidence would be if the coloured insulation of the internal cable cores was showing.
- The equipment has been subjected to conditions for which it is not suitable, e.g. it is wet or excessively contaminated.

- Damage has been caused to the external casing of the equipment or there are some loose parts or screws.
- There is evidence of overheating (burn marks or discoloration).

Some examples:

			
Damaged cable	Missing cable grip, outer sheath not secured	Damaged plug casing	Cut or damaged cable inadequately repaired with tape

Find out more

Health and safety policy manual Section 3.10 - Electrical safety.

18. Display screen equipment

Display Screen Equipment (DSE) has been blamed, often wrongly, for a wide range of health problems. In fact, only a small proportion of DSE users actually suffer ill health as a result of their work. DSE work can be associated with neck, shoulder, back or arm pain, as well as eye discomfort, but they are generally caused by the way in which the equipment is used rather than the equipment itself.

How do we minimize the risks?

The problems highlighted above can be avoided by good workplace and job design, and by the way you use your DSE equipment. It is our policy to assess DSE workstations and reduce the risks. This is normally done using the DSE self-assessment checklist form.

What else can I do?

Make full use of the equipment provided and adjust it to get the best from it to avoid any potential health problems. Here are some **practical tips:**

Getting comfortable

- Adjust your chair and DSE to find the most comfortable position for your work. As a guide, your forearms should be approximately horizontal and your eyes at the same level as the top of the display screen. Ensure that your chair gives firm support to the lower and middle part of your back.
- Avoid excess pressure from the edge of your seat on the backs of your legs and knees.
- Make sure you have enough work space to take the documents and equipment you need. Try repositioning the keyboard, screen and mouse to find the best arrangement for you.
- Arrange your desk and screen to avoid glare, or bright reflections on the screen. This will be easiest if neither you nor the screen is directly facing windows or bright lights. Where curtains or blinds are fitted, adjust them to prevent unwanted light.
- Make sure there is space under your desk to move your legs freely. Move any obstacles such as boxes or equipment.

Keying in

- Adjust keyboard to get a good keying position. A space in front of the keyboard is sometimes helpful for resting the hands and wrists when not keying.
- Try to keep your wrists straight when keying and keep a soft touch on the keys.

Using a mouse

- Position the mouse within easy reach and use it with the wrist straight. Sit upright and close to the desk, so you don't have to work with your mouse arm stretched. Move the keyboard out of the way if it is not being used.
- Support your forearm on the desk, and don't grip the mouse too tightly. Rest your fingers lightly on the buttons and do not press them hard.

Reading the screen

- Adjust the brightness and contrast controls on the screen to suit lighting conditions in the room. Make sure the screen surface is clean.

Posture and breaks

- Don't sit in the same position for long periods. Make sure you change your posture as often as practicable. Some movement is desirable, but avoid repeated stretching to reach things you need (if this happens a lot, rearrange your workstation).
- Take frequent breaks of activity away from the screen. Frequent, short breaks are better than fewer, long breaks.

Find out more

Health and safety policy manual Section 3.15 - Display screen equipment.

19. Noise at work

Noise is part of everyday life, but too much noise can cause temporary or permanent hearing loss. This can be hearing loss that gets worse over time, damage caused by sudden, extremely loud noises, or tinnitus (permanent ringing in the ears). Your employer has a duty to reduce the risks and protect your hearing, and you can play your part to assist in achieving this.

How do we know if there is a noise problem at work?

Noise may be a problem if any of the following apply:

- The noise is intrusive, like a busy street or a vacuum cleaner for most of the working day.
- You have to raise your voice to have a normal conversation when about 2 metres apart.
- You use noisy powered tools or machinery for more than half an hour a day.
- Your work or occupation is one known to have noisy tasks e.g. construction, agriculture, exposure to live music or impact noises from sources such as cartridge tools or guns.
- If you have muffled hearing at the end of the day, even if it recovers by the next morning.

What Regulations apply?

The Noise at Work Regulations require the school to:

- Assess the risks from noise at work and take action to reduce noise exposure.
- Provide you with hearing protection if noise exposure cannot be reduced enough by using other methods.
- Make sure the legal limits on noise exposure are not exceeded.
- Provide you with information, instruction and training.
- Carry out health surveillance where there is a risk to health.

What do I have to do?

- Co-operate and help us to do what is needed to protect your hearing e.g. by using noise-control devices such as noise enclosures and wearing any hearing protection provided.
- Look after your hearing protection and report any problems with noise control devices or hearing protection to your line manager.
- Attend your hearing test appointments when required.

Find out more

Health and safety policy manual Section 3.17 - Control of noise at work.

20. Hand-arm vibration at work

Hand-arm vibration (HAV) and vibration-induced carpal tunnel syndrome can be caused by operating hand-held power tools such as chainsaws and road breakers, hand-guided equipment such as powered lawnmowers and hand-fed machines such as pedestal grinders and woodworking machines. Long-term exposure can lead to health problems, and the school has a duty to assess the risks and reduce them.

Why is dealing with hand-arm vibration important?

Hand-arm vibration syndrome (HAVS) in its severest form is a painful and disabling condition that affects the nerves, blood vessels, muscles and joints in the hands and arms. It causes tingling and numbness in the fingers, reduces grip strength and sense of touch, and affects blood circulation (known as vibration white finger).

What Regulations apply?

The Vibration at Work Regulations require the school to:

- Assess the vibration risks to employees to identify if there is a problem.
- Put appropriate control measures in place to prevent or reduce the risks. This includes purchasing equipment with lower vibration exposure levels, doing some jobs in other ways, job rotation and ensuring machines and tools are maintained as recommended by the manufacturer.
- Monitor vibration levels using the 'exposure points system' as recommended by the Health and Safety Executive to check that the exposure limit values are not exceeded.
- Provide information and training for employees on the health risks and actions to be taken to control the risks including making sure they are able to select the right equipment for the job and can use it correctly.
- Provide health surveillance for employees where some risk remains.

What do I have to do?

- Help the school comply by using equipment in accordance with the training you receive and report any faulty or damaged equipment.
- Keep accurate records of exposure when asked to do so.
- Participate in the health surveillance programme when required.

Find out more

Health and safety policy manual Section 3.18 – Control of vibration at work.