

# Tower College Risk Management Policy

Introduction .....	2
Risk Assessments Procedures (Who, What, How, When) .....	3
Responsibilities For Risk Assessments .....	4
The School's Responsibility .....	4
Heads of Teaching and Support Departments.....	4
Responsibilities of all staff .....	5
General Arrangements.....	5
Dynamic Risk Assessment .....	6
Training .....	6
Educational Areas .....	7
Classroom and Office Risks .....	7
Educational Visits .....	7
Access by pupils to risky areas .....	8
Pupil Welfare and Supervision.....	8
Requirements for contractors engaged on behalf of Tower College .....	9
Events at Tower College.....	9
First Aid risk assessment .....	9
Display Screen Assessments .....	9
Young Workers.....	10
New and Expectant Mothers .....	10
Monitoring and Review of Risk Assessments .....	11
Appendix 1 - How to complete a risk assessment .....	12
Appendix 2 – Template Risk Assessment.....	15
Appendix 3 – Further Guidance and Principles.....	15

## Introduction

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSWR 99) requires formalized risk assessments to determine operations and situations that could impose a severe risk on those involved. All Tower College staff must consider the impact of their actions (and omissions) on the Health and Safety of others. The procedure for Risk Assessment, as detailed in this policy, is part of the school's Health and Safety Management Plan. If correctly followed, it is designed to mitigate the risk posed to those undertaking or associated with school activities and operations.

It would be impossible to Risk Assess every operation or activity that a school undertakes. To that end, the legislation dictates that only activities attracting the possibility of a Severe Risk need to be Risk Assessed. Notwithstanding, when considering activities attracting the possibility of Severe risk, the Competent Person should also consider Medium and Low-risk issues in their planning, as it is entirely possible that any combination of Low or Medium-risk activities could manifest themselves as a Severe risk, should the circumstances allow. Only activities identified as Severe or Medium need to be mitigated through a Safe System of Work, as detailed below.

If a Risk Assessment is being produced on a new activity or for the first time, or if the assessment is following a change in the law or an incident surrounding the activity being assessed, the Principal and Head of Pupil Welfare must approve the new Risk Assessment; this may involve seeking expert advice.

Assessments should identify significant hazards to our team members, and anyone affected, including our students, visitors, and contractors. Most assessments will include consideration of the following:

- The Task (people, materials, substances)
- The working environment (both immediate and surrounding)
- Working materials and tools (including plant and equipment)
- The suitability of those carrying out the task (safeguarding checks, experience, training)
- Arrangements for emergency rescue

MHSWR 99 requires that risk assessments remain up to date, which means any significant change affecting risk (e.g., a new team member, machine, or work practice) should lead to a re-assessment of risk, as should any observation or incident reported through the School Incident Reporting system.

The School records Risk Assessments in National Online Safety, the staff website ([tcstaff.online](http://tcstaff.online)) and in @TC.

## Risk Assessments Procedures (Who, What, How, When)

**Who?** - A Competent Person should carry out a Risk Assessment with experience of the situation or operation. Should anyone feel they need to be more competent to carry out a Risk Assessment, they should seek help from their Head of Department or the Bursar.

**What?** – The Competent Person should list all the activities required to carry out any Operation and, from this, all reasonable Hazards posed by such activities. The Risk posed by each Hazard is then quantified numerically using the formula Likelihood x Severity.

**How?** - To establish whether the Risk is Severe, Medium, or Minor, Tower College uses the *Citassess Risk Management System*, which adopts the RISK = LIKELIHOOD x SEVERITY formula.

Risk rating		Likelihood of occurrence		
		Probable	Possible	Remote
Likely impact	<b>Major</b> Causes major physical injury, harm, or ill health.	High	High	Medium
	<b>Severe</b> Causes physical injury or illness requiring first aid.	High	Medium	Low
	<b>Minor</b> Causes physical or emotional discomfort.	Medium	Low	Low

A Safe System of Work is required to mitigate either Likelihood or Severity and bring the Risk score down to Minor if a high-risk rating is obtained.

Any Safe Systems of Work will not be generic but tailored to each job. It will consider the following processes as a minimum, where relevant:

- Controlling Access/Egress - consideration as to evacuation/movement of large groups
- Use of Support staff - as required to troubleshoot problems and ensure legislative compliance with buildings and fire regulations
- Compliance with School First Aid Policy and School Fire Policy through the provision of trained First Aid and Fire Marshall personnel, as required by the identified risk
- Tailoring Emergency procedures (use of personnel, radio or other communications)
- Identifying Hazardous substances
- Analysis of the Task: Housekeeping requirements, Time and duration, Lighting, Required Tools, Training and Methods to be applied, Environmental Considerations, PPE / RPE
- Facilities required / available to ensure the well-being of all concerned (comfort, temperature, nutrition, hydration, emotional and physical support)

If implementing a Safe System of Work is insufficient in mitigating the risk to an acceptable level, then a system of Management Controls should be implemented. Implementation of such controls should follow the Hierarchy of Controls listed below:

## Elimination Substitution

Engineering controls (either process or mechanical) Signage/warning and administrative controls  
Personal Protective / Respiratory Equipment

**When?** – The Risk Assessment should form part of the core planning process and be used concurrently with any logistical planning tools. The Competent Person is responsible for communicating the content of Risk Assessments to those at risk by distributing the RA or through a series of briefings.

## Responsibilities For Risk Assessments

### The School's Responsibility

It is the School's responsibility, through its management, to ensure risk assessments are completed and implemented. The work involved in meeting this responsibility is delegated to key roles within the school, namely the Business Manager, the Head of Pupil Welfare (Health and Safety Manager), the Deputy Principal, Assistant Principals, Heads of Departments, and the Site Manager. The Head of Pupil Welfare monitors and evaluates risk assessments and reports on risk assessment to SMT.

Tower College will utilise risk assessments at all levels to manage risk, from the Risk Register to risk assessments for individual staff members. It will provide suitable and sufficient training for staff required to complete risk assessments to ensure staff have the knowledge and understanding to fulfil this responsibility and undertake effective risk assessments; as a minimum, all teaching staff will undertake online training in risk assessment. Key staff in support departments responsible for completing risk assessments will also undertake the online training or obtain the required knowledge and skills via other training methods.

### Heads of Teaching and Support Departments

Heads of Departments should ensure that risks within their areas of responsibility or arising out of their department's work are identified and removed or adequately reduced and controlled so far as is reasonably practicable. Risk assessments will enable suitable controls, helping establish safe systems of work and H&S training needs of staff.

Assisted by the Head of Pupil Welfare, risk assessments are the responsibility of Heads of Departments; however, responsibilities for specific assessments are as follows:

ACTIVITY	RISK ASSESSMENT RESPONSIBILITY
Trips and Visits	Trip leader (overseen by EVC)
Maintenance Activities	Site Manager
Grounds Maintenance	Site Manger
Cleaning & Room/Venue set ups	Domestic Services Manager
Building Work Activities	Health & Safety Manager / Site Manager
External Lets	Hirer / Function & Events Manager
Fire Risk Assessment	Health & Safety Manager / Site Manager
Pregnancy Risk Assessment	Head of Department/Line Manager/ Health & Safety

	Manager
Individual Classrooms	Head of Department / Teacher
Playing Fields/Pitches/Courts	Director of Sport/ Health & Safety Manager / Site Manager
Machinery/Equipment	Head of Department owning the equipment / Health & Safety Manager
Events	Event Organizer

Heads of Department should ensure that risk assessments are stored in the shared area for ease of access and reference. Heads of Department should ensure department risk assessments are reviewed regularly, after an incident/accident or at least annually.

### **Responsibilities of all staff**

All staff are responsible for taking reasonable care of their safety, pupils, and visitors. They are responsible for cooperating with the health and safety policy and arrangements (including risk assessments) and members of the SMT to enable the Governors to comply with their health and safety duties.

All staff are expected to participate in completing risk assessments when requested and follow safety-related instructions and safe systems of work identified in risk assessments. Finally, all staff members are responsible for reporting any risks/defects or concerns to their line manager to reduce risks.

### **General Arrangements**

Each department is responsible for ensuring risk assessments are in place for all work activities, and the health and safety manager will work with all departments to provide advice and support.

Risk assessments should consider the following general hazards/situations:

- Safeguarding of pupils
- Supervision arrangements
- Manual handling
- Working at height
- Slips and trips
- Hazards from equipment/machinery used
- Lone working
- Substances hazardous to health (COSHH)
- Noise
- Access and egress
- Preventing unauthorised access to high-risk areas
- New and expectant mothers.

Risk assessments should be undertaken using the school risk assessment template to enable a consistent judgement of risk and easy identification of the high-priority risks, see Appendix 2. Completed risk assessment should be made available on the shared drive, and the Health and

Safety Manager should be notified.

Various generic risk assessments have been created covering some of the above generic risks (available on the intranet). However, generic risk assessments should be treated with caution. These can be a helpful starting point for departments. Still, assessments need to be specific to the actual situation, and it is essential that we can operate all the control measures listed.

Several site-wide risk assessments have been completed and are available, with associated procedures, from the Estates Department and Health and Safety manager; these include:

- Fire
- Legionella
- Asbestos

## **Dynamic Risk Assessment**

Although many risk assessments have been completed, it is possible that some tasks still need assessing or reassessing; therefore, if any member of staff has a role which they think has uncontrolled risks, they must inform their line manager or the Health and Safety Manager.

Levels of risk can change from day to day, and tasks that have been assessed and suitably controlled may have a higher level of risk on some occasions (e.g. due to weather conditions or poor housekeeping). Staff members must take a moment to assess every job's risk before starting it. This is known as a 'dynamic risk assessment'. It's the same principle as looking both ways before crossing the road – you must do it every time before crossing the road. Staff must still take the time to assess the risks before undertaking a task, even if there is an up-to-date risk assessment.

Staff must never undertake a task where they have identified a risk that means they cannot do the task safely at that point in time or that creates an uncontrolled risk to others, especially pupils at the School.

## **Training**

All new staff members are given an induction into the School's arrangements for risk assessments and health and safety. Specialist training is given to those whose work requires it.

All staff responsible for completing risk assessments will be provided with training to provide them with the knowledge and understanding of the risk assessment process and the skills required to undertake a suitable and sufficient risk assessment.

Line Managers and Heads of Departments are responsible for ensuring their staff are briefed on risks specific to their department and the control measures to protect pupils' and staff's health and safety.

Risk assessments should be used to identify further staff training needs to enable them to work safely.

## Educational Areas

There are several higher risk-focused activities which take place, each of which requires risk assessment:

- safeguarding, child protection, and Prevent
- outdoor adventurous training and overnight trips
- science experiments
- each sport and PE activity
- Duke of Edinburgh award
- art activities and equipment
- CCF activities
- music activities (including minimising the risk of hearing loss to staff)

Schemes of work and lesson plans for the above educational areas should include details of the hazards and risks associated with the activity to ensure pupils are aware of the risks involved and general health and safety arrangements.

Tower College subscribes to the CLEAPSS Advisory Service ([www.cleapss.org.uk](http://www.cleapss.org.uk)), which provides model risk assessments for Science, Art and Design and Technology activities.

Those organising Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme activities and those leading trips are responsible for completing detailed risk assessments, with support from the Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC), the School's professional Trips Health and Safety Adviser, and the Health and Safety Manager.

## Classroom and Office Risks

Recognising the limited risks involved in classroom teaching, the School will use a Health and Safety Checklist for all classrooms. The Health and Safety checklist will be provided to teachers annually; each teacher should complete it and return it to the Health and Safety Manager. All responses will be collated, and an action plan will be created with risk levels and priorities identified; this plan will be given to the Maintenance department to implement the necessary remedial measures.

All teaching subjects will be asked to complete the H&S checklist to provide a safe environment for teaching and learning.

Office staff will also be requested to complete a simple health and safety checklist. However, these are low-risk work environments, so it's important to ensure safe access/egress and suitable lighting and ventilation, for example.

## Educational Visits

There is a separate policy for educational trips involving pupils; this is overseen by the Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC), who approves all trips. For full details, please see the "Educational Visits

Policy", which covers routine trips, major trips and arrangements for dealing with external organisations. The following is drawn from this policy:

*Routine Trips:* On induction to the staff, all teachers are briefed on the "Do's and Don'ts" and "Actions On" regarding routine school trips, such as away matches and theatre trips. Every teacher reads and signs a copy of a generic risk assessment devised for this purpose. The EVC stores the originals, and teachers retain copies for reference. This standard risk assessment document covers key aspects of supervision and responses to incidents. A copy is displayed on the School's shared drive and intranet.

*Major Trips:* Overseas, overnight trips, trips involving adventure training and any travel involving swimming in open water or boating must have specific risk assessments completed and submitted to the EVC for approval and storage. The School's professional Trips Health and Safety Adviser will be consulted, as appropriate, including with the completion of the trip Risk Assessment. The EVC must also ensure the correct licences are in place for adventure activities. Before a major trip departs, key information and the trip Risk Assessment must be deposited with the EVC. This information will be stored on the School's shared drive, accessible to staff who may need to access it.

### **Access by pupils to risky areas**

Risk assessments of all areas of the School reinforce the policy of ensuring that our pupils do not have unsupervised access to potentially hazardous areas, such as cleaners' cupboards or boiler rooms, and the Science Laboratories. Doors to these areas are kept locked when not in use. Pupils are only allowed access if risks are suitably controlled or accompanied by a staff member.

Pupils do not have access to the operational areas of the School, such as Grounds, Maintenance, and Catering Departments. Further details are available in the Policy "Pupil Access to Risky Areas".

A site-wide risk assessment captures the above risks and others, such as transport arrangements. This site-wide risk assessment aims to consider generic site-related risks unlikely to be picked up by teaching and support departments' activity/operational risk assessments to protect the safety and health of all those using the site. The Health and Safety Committee reviews the site-wide risk assessment.

### **Pupil Welfare and Supervision**

When completing risk assessments, staff, mainly teaching staff, should ensure that safeguarding risks to pupils are considered and documented. One of the controls used to protect pupils will be adequate competent supervision. The 'Supervision of Pupils and Missing Pupil Procedure' details the expectations of how pupils are supervised during various activities and times of the day. Staff ratios and availability play a key part in ensuring appropriate supervision of pupils.



## **Requirements for contractors engaged on behalf of Tower College**

Contractors are responsible for undertaking their risk assessment to protect the health and safety of their staff, Tower College pupils and staff (and others). The contractor "owns" the risk involved with their work activities. However, Tower College must ensure competent contractors are used, sufficient time for planning is allowed, and risk assessment forms part of the planning and work processes.

If a contractor is employed to undertake work on behalf of Tower College, the person engaging the contractor (contracting manager) must ensure suitable and sufficient risk assessments are in place to cover the work before starting the work. The contracting manager will need to review and discuss the contractor's risk assessments and supervise the contractor to ensure that risk assessments are being adhered to.

## **Events at Tower College**

Planning for events at Tower College will also involve risk assessments at different levels depending on the scale of the event.

## **First Aid risk assessment**

The Health and Safety Manager has undertaken a risk assessment to establish the level of first aid provision required. This risk assessment concludes that ?? qualified first aiders were required; specific first aid skills would be required for outdoor adventure activities, e.g., Duke of Edinburgh Award expeditions.

Staff responsible for organising first aid provision for sports activities and fixtures (home and away) should ensure there is an appropriate risk assessment in place to establish the levels of provision required and the types of first aid kits required.

## **Display Screen Assessments**

The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 require the School to protect employees from any risks associated with Display Screen Equipment (DSE) (i.e. computers and laptops). These Regulations only apply to employees who regularly use DSE as a significant part of their daily work (for continuous periods of 2 hours or more). The Regulations do not apply to workers who use DSE infrequently or for short periods.

The above requirements will be achieved by requiring all DSE users to complete an online training and assessment programme. The assessment will identify any additional controls needed, e.g. document holders or a footrest, with the results shared with the individual's line manager.

## Young Workers

When employing a young person under 18, whether for work or work experience, under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, Tower College has the same responsibilities for their health, safety and welfare as other employees. While there is no requirement for a separate risk assessment specifically for a young person if a department has yet to employ a young person, they should review their risk assessment and consider the specific factors for young people before a young person starts with them. It is important to consider a young person's lack of maturity, risk awareness, insufficient attention to safety and lack of experience or training.

A young person should not be asked to do work involving a health risk from extreme cold or heat, noise, or vibration. There are also specific restrictions within the Approved Code of Practice relating to young people using lifting machinery, power presses, woodworking machinery, and forklift trucks. Suppose a department in Tower College wishes to employ a young person directly or via a work experience/apprenticeship scheme. In that case, the Head of Department must contact the Health and Safety Manager for further advice.

## New and Expectant Mothers

New or expectant mother means an employee who is pregnant, has given birth within the previous six months or is breastfeeding. Tower College should take account of women of child-bearing age when carrying out all risk assessments and identify the required preventive and protective measures.

Heads of Departments or Managers should ensure that departmental risk assessments adequately cover risks to new and expectant mothers. Suppose this needs to be covered or is felt to be insufficient. In that case, the line manager should complete a specific risk assessment using the template provided in the Expectant and Nursing Mothers at Work Policy, available on @TC.

Where the risk assessment identifies risks to new and expectant mothers, and these risks cannot be avoided by the preventive and protective measures taken, Tower College will need to do one of the following:

1. Alter her working conditions or hours of work if it is reasonable to do so and avoid the risks or if these conditions cannot be met.
2. Identify and offer her suitable alternative work that is available
3. Suspend her from work. The Employment Rights Act 1996 (the Department of Trade and Industry's responsibility) requires this suspension to be on full pay. Employment rights are enforced through the employment tribunals.

## Monitoring and Review of Risk Assessments

All risk assessments should be regularly reviewed:

- If there is a significant change in the circumstances, e.g. new equipment/ways of working
- After an accident or incident
- If the original assessment is no longer valid, e.g. change in legislation or changes in technology/science.
- In all other cases, regularly (annually)

Risk assessments should also be reviewed and recorded when major structural work is planned, if work practices change or in the event of an accident. As each department (teaching and support) reviews and develops its risk assessments, it will be possible to maintain a "library" of risk assessments on our shared drive for staff to refer to and adapt for their use.

The Health and Safety Manager will conduct a health and safety review of all departments, focusing on risk assessments to ensure they are kept up to date, reviewed at least annually and of a quality deemed 'suitable and sufficient'. Such reviews will occur annually but may be more frequent if significant improvements are required.

The Health and Safety Manager will periodically provide an overview of school-wide risk assessments, focusing on high-level risks, to the Health and Safety Committee for review, and action will be taken where necessary through planned improvements to reduce risk.

## Appendix 1 - How to complete a risk assessment

### Background

The law does not expect the School to eliminate all risks, but it does require it to protect people so far as is 'reasonably practicable' from harm. The aim of Risk Assessments is to help make sure no one gets hurt or becomes ill as a result of the School's undertakings or activities.

### What is a Risk Assessment?

A risk assessment is simply a careful examination of what, in your work or workplace, could cause harm and enables you to weigh up and decide if enough is being done to prevent harm, or if more precautions are needed.

Definitions:

- Hazard: A hazard is anything that may cause harm eg. chemicals, electricity, working from ladders, driving, undertaking social surveys [another word for Hazard could be Danger].
- Risk: Is the combination of the likelihood, great or small, of someone being harmed by the hazard and the severity of that harm should it occur.
- Harm: Injury or illness.
- Reasonably Practicable: Weighing up the cost versus the benefit ie. evaluating the risk against the trouble, time and money needed to control it.

### Carrying out a Risk Assessment

The School recommends use of the Health and Safety Executive's 'Five Steps to Risk Assessment' process when assessing risk. This is a practical method, consisting of the following five steps:

- Identify the hazards, taking into account the harm which may occur and the risk (the likelihood) of the harm occurring.
- Decide who might be harmed and how.
- Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions.
- Record your findings and implement them (including communicating to all relevant persons).
- Review your risk assessment and update if necessary.

It is important to decide if the hazard is significant and whether enough precautions are in place to control the risk. For example, there is no point assessing the risk of getting a paper cut, a day-to-day risk which is usually insignificant.

In addition, do not overcomplicate the process as the School's risks are usually well known with necessary control measures established and easy to apply.

**(Note: Numerical/quantitative risk assessments are not normally recommended. The method creates unnecessary complexity that is not always necessary or appropriate at the School.**

Numerical values may be assigned for practical ease of prioritising recommended actions, but such are not generally necessary for identifying actual risk.)

## **STEP 1: Identify the hazards**

The first step is to identify workplace hazards that could cause harm. However, when you work somewhere everyday it may be easy to overlook them. The following should help make sure you do not miss anything.

- Walk around your workplace to see what could reasonably cause harm. Take someone else with you as well, as two pairs of eyes are better than one.
- Ask people as others may have noticed something not immediately obvious to you.
- Look at previous Accident and Incident Records these may highlight less obvious hazards or cases of ill health.
- Check Manufacturer's Instructions which may help spot hazards eg. Tippex has a hazard warning label, but if used sensibly the risk is negligible so do not mention it.
- Think long-term health hazards eg. high levels of noise as well as safety hazards.

## **STEP 2: Decide who might be harmed and how**

Be clear about who might be harmed by each hazard, as it will help you work out how best to manage the risk. Do not list people by name (unless necessary), instead identify groups eg. Security staff and how they might be harmed eg. 'Security staff may suffer back injury from repeated lifting of boxes'. Remember:

- Some workers have requirements eg. young workers, new and expectant mothers, health condition (for example blood clotting issue so a paper cut is a risk).
- Not all people are in the workplace all the time eg. cleaners, visitors, contractors, members of the public, students or employees of other organisations who you share the workplace with.

## **STEP 3: Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions**

Having spotted the hazards, then evaluate the risk by thinking about what controls are already in place, how the work is organised and whether what you are already doing to manage the risk is enough. You must also, always ensure your controls satisfy legal requirements, industry standards and any manufacturing guidance etc.

If you then, still feel there are shortfalls, decide how to better control the risk. Apply the principles below when thinking about additional controls, asking if there is a way to eliminate the hazard altogether:

- Try a less risky option eg. use a less hazardous chemical, outsource the activity.
- Prevent access to the hazard eg. install guarding, work permit systems.
- Organise work to reduce exposure to the hazard eg. put barriers between pedestrians and traffic, set up staff work rotas.
- As a last resort, issue PPE eg. footwear, safety goggles etc.
- Provide welfare facilities eg. first aid and washing facilities to clean off contamination.
- Consider storage – good housekeeping is a basic essential in good health and safety management.

Finally, do not worry. Improving health and safety need not cost a lot. For example, placing non-slip material on slippery steps is an inexpensive precaution as is making demonstrators wear coloured lab coats instead of the usual white so easy to spot in a room full of students!

#### **STEP 4: Record your findings and implement them**

Risk assessments do not have to be perfect but do have to be suitable and sufficient, with detail appropriate to the level of risk. It must also show:

- A proper check was made.
- All those who might be affected were consulted.
- All the significant hazards were addressed.
- The precautions are reasonable, and the remaining risk is low.
- Staff and their representatives were involved in the process.

Risk assessments can be recorded on the School's Risk Assessment Form or a suitable alternative. Each significant finding must be recorded, with information included under the relevant heading:

- What are the dangers / hazards? Write down the significant hazards.
- Who might be harmed and how to identify groups of people who could be affected. Remember those that may not be in the workplace all the time eg. members of public, part time workers.
- What are you doing already to prevent harm list what is already in place to reduce the likelihood of harm occurring or make any harm less serious.
- What further action is necessary list any additional controls needed to reduce the risk 'so far as is reasonably practicable'.
- How will you put the assessment into action state who will carry out the action, by when and date when the action is completed.

When writing down results, keep it simple, for example 'staff tripping over rubbish' - bins provided, regular bin collections, H&S Coordinator carries out weekly housekeeping checks.

Date the Risk Assessment and communicate it to anyone who is affected by the hazards as they need to know what controls are needed to manage any risk. In addition, keep a record of the Risk Assessment for future reference with a copy, if appropriate passed to the Health and Safety Manager

#### **STEP 5: Review the Risk Assessment and update if necessary**

Review the Risk Assessment from time to time and revise if necessary. For example, a significant change in the process such as new equipment or substances which introduce new hazards, or an individual with specific needs.

Note: Make sure the revised Risk Assessment is re-communicated to those affected and others as necessary. As part of this process make sure all old Risk Assessments relating to the same activity are removed from use. This includes checking Notice Boards, Web Sites etc.

## Appendix 2 – Template Risk Assessment

Please click [HERE](#) to preview.

## Appendix 3 – Further Guidance and Principles

### General Risk Assessment

Tower College acknowledges that it has a general duty under the *Health and Safety at Work Act 1974* and *Regulation 3 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999* to assess the risks to the health and safety of staff and others.

There are also specific health and safety regulations under which it is necessary to conduct risk assessments, referenced in this document's applicable sections.

When implementing our risk assessment procedure, we first carried out a general risk assessment of our premises and activities to identify all relevant hazards. For some of these hazards, the general risk assessment will be sufficient to convey an appropriate degree of detail and clarity about the control measures required and the level of risk to which people are exposed.

However, the general risk assessment should also identify areas of health and safety that require specific risk assessments to be completed. The general risk assessment should briefly outline these areas but then refer to the title of the specific risk assessment and, if necessary, its location.

The *General Risk Assessment Procedure* can be used to complete most risk assessments except where stated otherwise, in which case alternative methodology is referenced.

### Subject-Specific Risk Assessments

Science  
Technology  
Physical Education  
Art and Design

Curriculum coordinators carry out these subject-specific risk assessments. These subject areas must be risk assessed because they carry inherent risks to both teaching staff and pupils, especially in the Middle and Upper Schools.

For Science, Technology and Art and Design, the school should refer to CLEAPSS for guidance and the Association for Physical Education for P.E.-related safety matters and good practice.

### Fire Risk Assessment

Under current fire safety legislation, the *Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005*, it is a requirement to carry out a fire risk assessment (FRA) and keep it up to date. The fire risk assessment aims to ensure 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. To help prevent fire in the workplace, the risk assessment must identify what could cause a fire to start, i.e., sources of ignition (heat or sparks) and substances that burn, and the people who may be at risk. Once the risks have been identified, it is possible to take appropriate action to control them and consider whether they can be avoided altogether or, if not, how to reduce and manage the risks.

*The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order) 2005* is not prescriptive about how often the fire risk assessment and emergency plan should be reviewed.

Risk assessment should be dynamic, considering that risks may change over time. Risk assessments must be reviewed whenever significant changes occur.

In the government guidance [Fire Safety Risk Assessment: Educational Premises](#) it states, with regards to reviewing the risk assessment:

*“You should constantly monitor what you are doing to implement the fire risk assessment, to assess how effectively the risk is being controlled.*

*Suppose you have any reason to suspect that your fire risk assessment is no longer valid or that a significant change in your premises has affected your fire precautions. In that case, you will need to review your assessment and, if necessary, revise it. Reasons for review could include:*

- *changes to work activities or how you organise them, including introducing new equipment (or people) (e.g., installation of computer equipment in a classroom).*
- *a change of use to part of your premises (e.g., a school hall for public performances);*
- *alterations to the building, including the internal layout.*
- *substantial changes to furniture and fixings.*
- *the introduction, change of use or increase in the storage of hazardous substances.*
- *the failure of fire precautions, e.g., fire-detection systems and alarm systems, life safety sprinklers or ventilation systems; significant changes to display material;*
- *a significant increase in the number of people present.*
- *and the presence of people with some form of disability.*

*As a result of internal or external audits and inspections of enforcement action, you should consider the potential risk of any significant change before it is introduced. It is usually more effective to minimise risk by, for example, ensuring adequate, appropriate storage space for an item before introducing it to your premises.*

*Do not amend your assessment for every trivial change, but if a change introduces new hazards, you should consider them and, if significant, do whatever you need to do to keep the risks under control. In any case, you should review your assessment to ensure the precautions are still working effectively. You may want to re-examine the fire prevention and protection measures simultaneously with your health and safety assessment.*

*If a fire or ‘near miss occurs, this could indicate that your assessment may be inadequate, and you should re-assess. It is good practice to identify the cause of any incident and then review and, if necessary, revise your fire risk assessment considering this. Records of testing, maintenance training, etc., are useful aids in reviewing.”*

Significant changes can also be missed, especially when there are changes to staff in positions of responsibility, and therefore, risk assessments should be reviewed after a set period, regardless of whether there has been a specific change. The period between reviews should be sufficient to allow for the satisfactory completion of any remedial actions identified in the previous FRA and for the successful implementation of any revised fire safety procedures while still ensuring that the review occurs frequently enough to check the adequacy of the changes introduced and to ensure that new issues have not arisen in the meantime. A review period of every three years is put forward as suggested frequency by the London Borough of Hounslow. Still, the actual period must be site-specific and determined by the risk level and the assessor's recommendations. This means that the review could be more than three years or less. The assessor should put down a recommended review date on the FRA, and checks should not exceed five years. Tower College undertakes a Fire Risk Assessment annually (September). For further assistance, please refer to the [Tower College Fire Safety Policy](#).



## **COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health)**

Using chemicals or other hazardous substances at work can put people's health at risk, so it is necessary to comply with the specific requirements of the *Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH)* to control exposure to hazardous substances to prevent ill health.

Failure to adequately control hazardous substances can lead to employees or others becoming ill. Effects from hazardous substances range from skin irritation to chronic lung disease or, on occasion, death.

All schools use substances or products that are mixtures of substances, e.g., cleaning chemicals used in science labs. Some schools will also have processes that create substances, such as wood dust and soldering fumes from technology workshops or silica dust from clay in art classes. These could cause harm to employees, pupils, contractors, and others.

To comply with COSHH, schools need to follow these eight steps:

- Assess the risks.
- Decide what precautions are needed.
- Prevent or adequately control exposure.
- Ensure that control measures are used and maintained.
- Monitor the exposure.
- Carry out appropriate health surveillance.
- Prepare plans and procedures for accidents, incidents, and emergencies.
- Ensure employees are adequately informed, trained, and supervised.

COSHH assessments have a specific template and criteria to be covered, as the HSE recommends.

## **Manual Handling**

Manual handling is one of the most common causes of injury at work. It causes over a third of all workplace injuries, including Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs) such as upper and lower limb pain/disorders and joint and repetitive strain injuries.

Work-related manual handling injuries can have severe implications for both the employer and the person who has been injured. Employers may have to bear substantial costs through lost production, sickness absence and potential compensation payments. The injured person may find that their ability to do their job is affected, and there may be a permanent impact on the quality of their life.

If possible, manual handling tasks should be avoided altogether. Where these tasks are unavoidable, the risk should be mitigated by lifting and moving equipment whenever possible, e.g., trolleys, pump trucks, etc.

Where tasks are essential and cannot be done using lifting and moving equipment, a suitable and sufficient risk assessment must be conducted under the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 requirements. Manual Handling risk assessments have a particular template and a specific set of criteria to be covered, as the HSE recommends.

## **DSE (Display Screen Equipment)**

Display Screen Equipment (DSE) is a device or equipment with an alphanumeric or graphic display screen, regardless of the display process involved; it includes PC display screens and those used in laptops, touchscreens, and other similar devices such as interactive whiteboards.

Computer workstations or equipment can be associated with neck, shoulder, back or arm pain, as well as with fatigue and eyestrain. These aches and pains are sometimes called upper limb disorders (ULDs), including various medical conditions such as RSI (Repetitive Strain Injury).

*The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992* aim to protect the health of people who work with DSE. The Regulations were introduced because DSE is one of the most common work equipment.

Any staff who are computer users must complete a DSE assessment to ensure they follow good DSE practices to avoid ULDs. The aim is to act preventatively and catch things before they become a serious problem that involves time off and expense to resolve.

An individual is a computer user if all or most of the following points are true:

- The individual depends on using DSE to do the job as no alternative means are available.
- The individual has no discretion regarding whether or not to use the equipment.
- Significant training or particular skills are required.
- DSE is commonly used continuously for at least one hour every day.
- The job requires a fast transfer of information between the user and the screen.
- The job activity requires high levels of attention and concentration from the user.

## **Asbestos**

Asbestos is the single most significant cause of work-related deaths in the UK. Approximately 20 tradesmen, including plumbers, electricians, and joiners, die from asbestos exposure every week. There are also significant recorded cases of family members of such tradesmen also contracting asbestos-related illnesses due to fibres being carried into the home on clothes and equipment.

Asbestos was extensively used as a building material in the UK, predominantly from the 1950s to the mid-1980s. It was used for various purposes and was ideal for fireproofing and insulation. However, asbestos continued to be used in construction until the year 1999, when its use became banned in the UK. Therefore, buildings constructed before 2000 (houses, factories, offices, schools, hospitals) could contain asbestos. Asbestos materials in good condition are safe unless asbestos fibres become airborne, which happens when materials are damaged or disturbed.

The *Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012* was enacted on 6 April 2012, updating previous asbestos regulations. Under Regulation 4, the named responsible person, or 'duty holder' (who controls the premises), must manage asbestos. This requires the duty holder to:

- Take reasonable steps to determine if there are asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) in non-domestic premises, and if so, its amount, where it is and what condition it is in.
- Presume materials contain asbestos unless there is strong evidence that they do not.
- Assess the risk of anyone being exposed to fibres from the materials identified.
- Prepare a Management Plan detailing how these materials' risks will be managed.
- Take the necessary steps to put the plan into action.
- periodically review and monitor the program and the arrangements to act on it so that the program remains relevant and up to date, and
- make and keep up to date a record of the location and condition of the asbestos-containing materials – or materials which are presumed to contain asbestos;
- provide information on the materials' site and condition to anyone liable to work on or disturb them.
- Anyone is also required to cooperate, as far as is necessary, to allow the duty holder to comply with the above requirements.

Points 1-3 of the above requirements are typically achieved by employing the services of an expert asbestos consultant to carry out an [Asbestos Management Survey](#). However, points 4-8 are ongoing, and the duty holder's responsibility is to ensure they happen.

A [management survey](#) is the standard survey. Its purpose is to locate, as far as reasonably practicable, the presence and extent of any suspect ACMs in the building which could be damaged or disturbed during normal occupancy, including foreseeable maintenance and installation, and to assess their condition. A Management Survey will consist of a mainly visual inspection, with minor intrusion and sampling of accessible materials.

Suppose any building or refurbishment work is planned that will disturb the fabric of the building. A Demolition and Refurbishment Survey will be necessary before any demolition or refurbishment work is carried out. The Management Survey will not be sufficient for this purpose.

A Demolition and Refurbishment Survey is used to locate and describe, as far as reasonably practicable, all ACMs where the refurbishment work will occur or in the whole building if demolition is planned. The survey will be fully intrusive and involve destructive inspection, as necessary, to gain access to all areas, including those that may be difficult to reach. A refurbishment and demolition survey may also be required in other circumstances, e.g., when more intrusive maintenance and repair work will be carried out or for plant removal or dismantling.

## **Legionella**

The [Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 \(COSHH\)](#) provides a framework of duties designed to assess, prevent, or control the risk from bacteria like Legionella and take suitable precautions.

[Legionnaires' disease: The control of Legionella bacteria in water systems \(L8\)](#) is the approved code of practice for managing and controlling the risks in water systems. Under it, a named responsible person, or 'duty holder' (the person in control of the premises), must ensure that a risk assessment is carried out. This will require the services of an appropriate, technically qualified contractor.

The risk assessment should include:

- management responsibilities, including the competent person's name and your system's description.
- any potential risk sources.
- any controls currently in place to control risks.
- monitoring, inspection, and maintenance procedures
- records of the monitoring results and inspection and checks carried out.
- a review date.

## **Food Safety and Hygiene**

If the school employs the services of a catering contractor, then the contractor will be required to carry out the assessment. However, as part of their contractor vetting procedure, the school ensures they have satisfied and continue to meet this requirement.

The exceptions to this are the fire, legionella, and asbestos risk assessments, which should be completed by the school for the building and which should then be made available to the catering contractor to inform them of the risks and precautions in place.

A kitchen is a high-risk location with hazards ranging from hot surfaces, liquids, steam, and other substances; sharp implements; hard surfaces and edges; sources of ignition; increased risk of slips, trips, and falls; cleaning

chemicals and the moving and handling of heavy and unstable loads. It is, therefore, essential that an assessment of these physical risks is carried out.

In addition to these physical risks, it is a requirement under *The Food Safety Act 1990 (as amended)* and *The General Food Regulations 2004 (as amended)* to implement a specific risk management system in catering facilities that assesses the risk to the safety and hygiene of the food itself. This system is called HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point). It ensures that food business operators look at how they handle food and introduce procedures to ensure the food produced is safe to eat.

As part of routine Local Authority inspections, the food safety enforcement officer will check that the business has an appropriate HACCP-based food safety management system. Further advice on completing an HACCP is available from the Food Standards Agency website: <http://food.gov.uk/business-industry/caterers/haccp/>

## **Lone Working**

Under their general duties, schools are responsible for conducting a risk assessment for lone workers or workers who sometimes work or travel alone.

Lone workers are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision. They may be found in a wide range of situations, including:

- People working alone in premises.
- People who work from home
- People working separately from others.
- People working outside regular hours, e.g., cleaners and security, production, maintenance, or repair staff

Even if someone works in a busy office or factory, they can become a lone worker when travelling for work, working late, or working from home. Whether staff are lone workers daily or occasionally, a risk assessment for lone working is required.

What are the hazards? Hazards to employees could include:

- violence and abuse.
- injuries from animals are also relevant in some occupations.
- accidents where the consequences are worse if there's no immediate assistance, e.g., slips, trips and falls, suffocation in confined spaces, electrocution or working with dangerous substances
- accidents that result from lone working, e.g., attempting to lift something (or someone) alone when help is needed or falling from a ladder that needed to be supported by an extra person
- long-term health issues resulting from an employee's isolation, lack of supervision, knowledge, or training. This could include musculoskeletal disorders due to a lack of a proper DSE assessment.

## **Working at Height**

Any tasks requiring work to be carried out at height must be risk assessed under the *Work at Height Regulations 2005*.

Work at height means work anywhere, including at or below ground level (for example, in underground workings), where a person could fall a distance liable to cause injury. Working at height remains one of the biggest causes of fatalities and significant injuries. Typical cases include falls from ladders and through fragile roofs.

Routine jobs can be risk-assessed in advance to ensure they are carried out safely. Non-routine and one-off jobs that are not necessarily foreseeable should be individually assessed before the work occurs.

This will include caretaking and maintenance staff, but will also have others, e.g., cleaners, teachers, TAs who put up displays, etc.

### **Break times/supervision**

Supervision requirements should be decided through risk assessment as there is no prescriptive formula for this process (except for early years). It may be that supervision levels have changed over time due to incidents/accidents or the introduction of specific recreation equipment requiring an enhanced monitoring presence. Decisions like this should be recorded and used to inform the outcome of a risk assessment. It is insufficient to state that 'adequate' supervision will be provided. What does this mean? – it must be clear how the supervision ratios for break times and lunchtimes have been decided.

### **Events (fairs, fetes, concerts, firework displays, sports days etc.)**

Under their general health and safety duties, schools organising events must plan, manage and monitor the event to ensure that workers and the visiting public are not exposed to health and safety risks. Specific risk assessments should be completed during the planning of events.

### **Finger Traps**

It is estimated that >30,000 people per annum trap their fingers in doors, resulting in injuries, including broken or amputated fingers. Most affected by such "finger-trapping" incidents are children under 8. Young children, or other vulnerable persons, don't recognise hazards that may exist around us like adults and older children do. So, more excellent care is needed when managing children's exposure to health and safety risks. What may be reasonably safe for adults may not be safe for children with less experience, maturity, and development.

Incidents have occurred where young children have trapped their fingers in the gap on the hinged side of doors (i.e., the doorjamb) and between gates and gateposts, resulting in very painful injuries.

*The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992* require all doors and gates to be suitably constructed, including fitted with necessary safety devices. No explicit legal requirements or standards require school doors to be equipped with hinge-side finger shields. However, the risks posed by all doors and gates must be assessed and reasonable precautions taken to ensure they can be used safely, which may require finger shields or similar devices.

The Health and Safety Executive has advised that "as finger guarding devices are readily available and relatively inexpensive to install, it is reasonably practicable for schools, or other establishments which are frequently used by young children or vulnerable persons, to fit guarding on doors identified as high risk following a suitable risk assessment".

### **First Aid / Welfare / Admin of Medication**

*Under the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 2013*, employers and persons controlling premises must assess first-aid needs. This involves considering workplace hazards and risks, the organisation's size and other relevant factors to determine what first-aid equipment, facilities and personnel should be provided. This includes considering the provision of first aid during periods before and after the regular school day, during events, holidays and when lone work takes place or out-of-hours work by contractors. For further information, please refer to the First Aid Policy, the Managing Medicines and Healthcare Needs in Schools, Early Years

Settings, the Infection Control Procedure and the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Procedure.

## **Boiler Rooms**

A boiler room presents multiple potential risks, such as fire, explosion, flooding, the release of carbon monoxide, confined spaces, burns and injuries from the release of pressurised steam, contact with hot surfaces and working parts.

As well as the hazards mentioned above, a risk assessment should provide details on such things as keeping the boiler room free of storage and combustibles; how often the boiler room is checked for signs of gas leaks, e.g., smells; how frequently the boiler is maintained and by whom etc.

## **Extended use of School Premises**

People's health and safety are a key priority at any time and should not be forgotten when developing or accommodating extended services.

Potential risks must be identified and appropriately managed to avoid incidents occurring and insurance claims against the school. A new user entering the school may give rise to new risks that must be addressed through alterations to premises or how they are managed.

Risk assessments need to be completed by the school for all school activities taking place on the site. As part of its duty of care, the school should also carry out appropriate risk assessments before lettings to ensure that the rooms/facilities to be provided meet the user's requirements. It should also operate a system of pre- and post-inspection of facilities before and after each letting. Organisations or individuals using school facilities should also be asked to complete risk assessments for the activities they are providing, and schools should keep a copy on file and check that they are reviewed.

Potential health and safety issues could include:

### **Suitability of premises and access**

Are the premises suitable for the intended activities, the people's age and the group's size? How easy are the premises to find? Access and exit routes should be well-lit and well-signed. Consider physical access for anybody with additional needs, especially mobility difficulties.

### **Health and safety measures**

The school should already have a health and safety policy, but make sure that the different uses of the building and the new activities on offer are covered. You must also undertake a risk assessment for any new activities developed as part of extended services.

### **Caretaking and cleaning**

Have you considered extended services' effect on when maintenance can be carried out? This is particularly an issue when the school is used at weekends or over holidays. Cleaning rotas may also need to be altered to take account of extended use of facilities.

### **Personal Safety (including Child Protection)**

Will staff/volunteers be working alone? Are there any procedures in place to manage any risks this may bring? Child protection issues should also be considered in all planning and practice in extended services, where arrangements and circumstances can differ from everyday school practice.

## Grounds safety

The grounds of any premises present multiple potential hazards. Some risks that are relevant to the grounds are:

- Falling trees and tree branches that could injure staff, pupils, and public members (especially near boundaries that may overhang the public highway) – regular ground maintenance is required to ensure trees are kept in good condition.
- Children climbing and falling from trees. This will partly be controlled through supervision at break times. Still, consideration may also be given to removing lower branches to prevent climbing and fencing around the outside of trunks, which will also help to avoid tripping over raised roots.
- Slopes on landscaping and traffic routes could become treacherous in wet or icy conditions.
- Build-up of fallen leaves leading to slips and potential blocking of drains leading to flooding and health concerns
- Hazardous or harmful plants and fungi
- Pest control
- Use of herbicides, pesticides, fungicides

The control measures to combat many of these risks will likely be met by hiring the services of a specialist grounds maintenance contractor to carry out a scheduled programme of maintenance work, and therefore, the risk assessment does not need to detail how these works will be carried out, it only needs to say who the contractor is and to outline to work to be done and at what frequency. The contractors must provide schools with specific risk assessments and safe methodology for carrying out the work.

However, if a school staff member is to carry out any work themselves, e.g., the caretaker, the activity should also be risk assessed. This could be covered within other risk assessments and a reference made to them, e.g., Working at height and use of work equipment.

## Slips, Trips and Falls

Slips and trips are the most common cause of injury at work. On average, they cause 40 per cent of all reported major injuries and can lead to other serious accidents, such as falls from height. Slips and trips are also the most reported injuries to members of the public.

*Regulation 12 of the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992* requires that floors be suitable, in good condition and free from obstructions. People should be able to move around safely.

## General Storage

Under the general duties of the *Health and Safety at Work Act 1974*, employers and those in control of premises must ensure that equipment and goods are stored and transported safely to prevent injury to staff and others.

Lack of sufficient storage that is fit for purpose is often a significant issue for schools, especially those in older premises, which are restricted by historical building layout and design. Schools must assess the risks presented by storage hazards and consider the storage implications before introducing new materials or pieces of equipment.

## Play Equipment, Toys, and Outside Furniture

The fact that competent professionals have installed play equipment to specific British and European standards does not exempt the school from carrying out a risk assessment because it remains a risk long after installation, and this is compounded by changes to the playground layout and the school building, increases in pupil numbers, deterioration of the equipment. Also, the fact that accidents of a higher severity frequently occur while children are using play equipment means that it is essential to demonstrate that all reasonable action is being taken and as a means of proving that accidents have not occurred due to faulty equipment, lack of adequate supervision or other failures in Health and Safety Management.

### **Ponds / Conservation Areas**

Ponds and conservation areas present a range of health and safety risks, which will need to be assessed under general health and safety duties, including:

- Slips, trips, and falls
- Drowning
- Lack of adequate supervision
- Remote location / not visible from the school building
- Access not sufficiently restricted
- Lack of warning signage
- Poor pond design, including considerations of depth and intended purpose
- Lack of pond maintenance
- Lack of illumination
- Lack of an emergency plan
- Lack of safety equipment
- Inappropriate user dress code
- Transmission of disease and health effects

Also, **The Occupiers Liability Act** focuses explicitly on persons in control of premises and their duties towards the safety of visitors. This duty extends to ensuring trespassers are not exposed to foreseeable risks.

### **Adverse weather conditions and extremes of heat and cold**

During adverse weather, e.g., rain/flooding, icy and snowy conditions, heat waves, etc, many of the risks to which employees and others are exposed are increased. Therefore, specific health and safety measures must be taken to ensure activities can continue safely. This can only be achieved through planning, which requires a particular risk assessment.

[\*Regulation 12 of the Workplace \(Health, Safety and Welfare\) Regulations 1992\*](#) also requires that traffic routes be suitable, in good condition and free from obstructions. People should be able to move around safely.

### **Waste Control (Including Hazardous Waste)**

Organisations that produce hazardous waste have a duty of care to store it safely, manage it effectively and remain compliant with the environmental regulations that govern its use. Schools will produce a combination of domestic, clinical, and hazardous waste, and a risk assessment should be completed to say how these types of waste are to be managed safely to avoid harm to staff, pupils, the public and the environment. The storage of litter and recyclable material (e.g., wood, furniture, paper, and textiles) should also be stored so that its proximity does not present an increased fire risk to the building, e.g., as a result of arson.

The [\*Waste \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2011\*](#) and the [\*Hazardous Waste \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2005\*](#) are specific environmental regulations that govern the management and control of waste.



## **Traffic Management on the School Site**

Every year, there are over 5,000 accidents involving transport in the workplace—about 50 of these result in people being killed [www.hse.gov.uk/statistics](http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics). The leading causes of injury are people falling off vehicles or being struck or crushed by them.

The main hazard in school regarding traffic management is the proximity of moving vehicles accessing the site to pedestrians, most of which will be pupils and the public. The risk assessment's primary focus is to implement control measures to ensure that vehicles and pedestrians are separated, especially at times of increased risk, e.g., during icy and snowy conditions. Controls will take the shape of physical separation, such as barriers and separate footpaths and using road markings, signage, speed limits and one-way systems. It will also rely on management, such as ensuring adequate supervision and the arrival of staff and visitors and deliveries are restricted to certain times. Consideration should also be given to the safety of those who have parked their vehicle on the school grounds to ensure their safe access and egress to and from the car park.

## **Security**

Break-ins, thefts, and arson are some security risks schools commonly face. These activities pose a safety risk, and the results can be costly.

Establishing the level of security risk for schools through risk assessment based on evidence of crime in the area, the condition of the premises and their boundaries and the extent of existing security systems is a beneficial exercise to help schools develop strategies for prevention and as a means of generating evidence to gain support from the local authority and school partners.

## **Violent / Aggressive Situations**

Violence is a recognised and foreseeable hazard in some schools, exacerbated in certain situations and locations. The risk assessment will identify if violence presents a significant potential risk and allow suitable controls to be implemented to protect staff and others.

Violence and lone-working risk assessments are sometimes combined. While it is appropriate to consider the risk of violence in lone-working situations, this will not satisfactorily address all potential violent concerns, which are not exclusive to lone-working situations.

## **Cleaning**

Cleaners carry out many duties essential to a school's smooth running. These include dusting, mopping, vacuuming, sweeping, buffing or waxing floors, emptying and carrying rubbish bins and bags. Many of these tasks are potentially dangerous because of how the work has traditionally been carried out. Still, many hazards are avoidable, so risk assessment is essential. Typical hazards affecting cleaning staff are:

- Slips, trips, and falls
- Manual Handling
- Working at Height
- Use of hazardous substances
- Occupational Dermatitis

## **Work Experience / Young Workers**

*Under Regulation 19 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999*, employers and those that control premises have a responsibility to ensure that young people employed are not exposed to risk due to:

- lack of experience.
- being unaware of existing or potential risks.
- lack of maturity
- They must consider:
  - the layout of the workplace.
  - the physical, biological, and chemical agents they will be exposed to.
  - how they will handle work equipment.
  - how the work and processes are organised.
  - the extent of health and safety training needed.
  - risks from agents, processes, and work.

In most cases, young people will not be at any greater risk than adults in the workplace and for workplaces that include these hazards, there will likely be control measures in place. Therefore, making a specific risk assessment for the young person may not be necessary – the existing risk assessments in place for the business should suffice.

However, there may be circumstances in which the usual precautions are insufficient to safeguard a young person, e.g., because increased supervision is required or the young person is prohibited from performing certain operations because of an age restriction. In these situations, the existing risk assessments should be amended or a specific risk assessment completed.

## **Driving at Work/use of private vehicles**

Driving is the most dangerous work activity that most people do. It has been estimated that up to a third of all road traffic accidents involve somebody who is at work at the time. This accounts for around 20 fatalities and 250 serious injuries every week.

Health and safety law applies to on-the-road work activities as to all work activities, and the risks should be effectively managed within a health and safety management system. It is necessary to demonstrate compliance not only with duties under health and safety law but also with road traffic law, e.g., the Road Traffic Act and Road Vehicle (Construction and Use) Regulations, which are administered by the police and other agencies such as the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency.

A risk assessment will help to ensure that work-related journeys are safe, staff are fit and competent to drive safely, and the vehicles used are fit for purpose and in a safe condition.

These requirements apply to people whose main job is driving and those who drive or ride occasionally or for short distances, e.g. those who drive a school minibus or go their private vehicle to meetings at other locations.

Health and safety law does not apply to commuting unless the employee is travelling from their home to a location which is not their usual place of work.

Under health and safety law, employers owe the same duty of care to staff who drive their vehicles for work as to employees who drive company-owned, leased, or hired cars.

Under road traffic law, it is also an offence to cause or permit' a person to drive a vehicle in a dangerous condition or without a valid licence or appropriate insurance.

Therefore, schools must have procedures to ensure that all vehicles (irrespective of who owns them) used for work purposes conform to road traffic law, are safe and adequately maintained, and are fit for purpose.

For staff that drive their private vehicles while at work, the school should check that they have the following information on at least an annual basis and keep copies of the data securely:

- Valid Driving licence
- Proof of vehicle roadworthiness (i.e., MOT)
- Valid insurance certificate (including cover for business use)
- Annual Vehicle service record

The risk assessment should clarify that the above monitoring requirements are to be carried out.

## **Glazing**

*Under Regulations 14, 15 and 16 of the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992*, windows in impact-sensitive locations must be constructed of safety materials (e.g. toughened or laminated glass), windows and skylights must be safe to operate and not present a collision hazard or be possible to fall through or out of. All windows must be designed to allow them to be cleaned safely.

Those in control of premises must conduct suitable risk assessments and put all 'reasonably practicable' measures in place to meet these glazing-related requirements.

If sufficient expertise is not available within the school to ascertain if the existing glazing meets statutory requirements, it may be necessary to employ the services of a specialist.

## **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

*Under the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992*, employers and those controlling premises have specific duties concerning providing and using personal protective equipment (PPE). PPE is equipment that will protect the user against health and safety risks at work. It can include safety helmets, gloves, eye protection, high-visibility clothing, safety footwear and safety harnesses. It also includes respiratory protective equipment (RPE).

PPE should only be used as a last resort because it only protects the individual wearing it, and if the user fails to wear it or it is faulty, there is no protection. Consideration should always be given to collective and passive controls which protect anyone in the area and do not require direct action from the worker. However, there will be situations in which the use of PPE is often unavoidable, e.g., where there is a risk of injury to:

- the lungs, e.g., from breathing in contaminated air
- the head and feet, e.g., from falling materials
- the eyes, e.g., from flying particles or splashes of corrosive liquids
- the skin, e.g., from contact with corrosive materials
- the body, e.g., from extremes of heat or cold

A risk assessment should consider the tasks performed by staff (and pupils in specific subjects), whether PPE is required, what the appropriate PPE is, how it will be kept, issued, maintained, and replaced and how staff will be instructed in its use.

## Health Surveillance

*Under regulation 6 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999*, employers and those in control of premises must ensure that employees are provided with any necessary health surveillance appropriate to mitigate the risks to their health identified in a risk assessment.

Risk assessments must be carried out under the *Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002*, *Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005*, and *Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005* if staff and others are exposed to these factors, which should identify circumstances in which health surveillance is required.

Such health surveillance will be relevant to any staff exposed to activities or substances that could affect their health, e.g., noise, chemicals, airborne contaminants, etc. A risk assessment should be completed to identify any tasks that could potentially affect staff health, e.g., cleaners at risk of contracting occupational dermatitis due to exposure to cleaning chemicals; technicians and teachers in resistant materials departments at risk of respiratory conditions due to exposure to wood dust; cleaners exposed to respiratory disease due to exposure to clay dust containing silica in art departments.

## Safe Use of work equipment (e.g., Hand Tools, Power Tools, Machinery)

Under the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER), there is a specific duty to risk assess work equipment to identify the hazards it presents, the suitability of the equipment and the control measures necessary to use them safely.

Work equipment is almost any equipment used by a worker while at work, including:

- machines such as circular saws, drilling machines, photocopiers, mowing machines, and strimmers.
- hand tools such as screwdrivers, knives, hand saws and chisels.
- lifting equipment such as lift trucks, elevating work platforms, hoists, slings, and bath lifts.
- other equipment such as ladders and water pressure cleaners.

Such tools are frequently used by caretaking staff but are also used by other school staff. Many tasks cannot be completed without their use, yet even simple hand tools can cause severe injuries through misuse or poor maintenance. A risk assessment of equipment should take into consideration the following:

- Appropriate Selection of equipment for the job
- Proper use
- Inspection
- Maintenance
- Training

## School Trip Risk Assessments

Before undertaking any school visit, schools must conduct a suitable and sufficient assessment of their general health and safety duties.

The risk assessment should detail any significant risks associated with the activity and what precautions must be taken.

For some regular activities (e.g., swimming lessons and school sports fixtures), this need not be done every time but should be in place and reviewed regularly. A teacher's duty of care on a school visit is not confined to regular school hours. It lasts throughout the time away and can only be put aside when responsibility for the care of the children can be reasonably delegated to some other person or persons.

Where third-party supervising agents are engaged (such as those who work at education or activity centres not employed directly by the school), teachers must complete all necessary checks of the supervising agents, which will include checking with the Disclosure and Barring Service, confirmation that all the required licenses are in place for the activity or trip and that the activities are carried out by competent people and by approved practices and health and safety requirements. The risk assessment should clarify that such checks have been carried out.

## **Confined Spaces**

Confined spaces are substantially (though not always entirely) enclosed and where there is a reasonably foreseeable risk of serious injury from hazardous substances or conditions within the area or nearby.

Examples of confined spaces include closed tanks, vessels, and sewers; Open- topped tanks and vats; Closed and unventilated, or inadequately ventilated, rooms or silos; Constructions that become confined spaces during their manufacture; Rooms during spray painting.

Confined spaces might also include ducts, culverts, tunnels, manholes, shafts, excavations, inspection pits, freight containers, building voids, enclosed rooms (particularly plant rooms), and cellars.

In accordance with *Regulation 4 of the Confined Spaces Regulations 1997*, when a confined space has been identified, the priority when carrying out a risk assessment is to identify the measures needed to avoid work in confined spaces. If it is impossible to avoid the job, then the risk assessment must be used to determine what steps are required to enable the work to be carried out safely and to produce a written safe system of work.

## **Class pets/keeping of animals.**

The RSPCA strongly discourages keeping animals as pets in schools except when using alternatives is impossible because it believes that animal welfare can generally be taught in schools without keeping animals captive.

Schools can be noisy and frightening places for some animals, and it is tough to properly look after an animal's needs in a classroom environment. Ultimately, it is the decision of the Headteacher and governing body whether animals are kept in school. However, suppose a decision is made to have a classroom pet. In that case, a risk assessment must be carried out under the school's general health and safety duties, which ensures the health, safety and welfare of staff, pupils, and the animal itself.

Some areas that would need to be covered in a risk assessment are:

- Where the pet will be kept
- Who will be responsible for looking after the pet daily
- Who will be responsible for cleaning the cage/hutch, etc and how often
- Is the pet low-maintenance
- How will it be cared for, and where has information been sought
- How will you prepare pupils
- Supervision of pupils and numbers of pupils at any one time
- Health and Hygiene when handling the animal
- If anyone has an allergy. If so, they may not need to handle the pet for it to affect them. Being in the room may be enough.
- people living with Asthma could be affected too.
- What you will do if you can no longer keep the pet.
- Who will look after the pet during the weekends and holidays

- Are any vaccinations necessary for the pet?

## **Personal or confidential risk assessments**

### **New and Expectant Mothers**

*Under regulation 16 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999*, employers and those controlling premises must conduct a risk assessment for new and expectant mothers.

Because the condition of a pregnant mother will regularly change throughout the pregnancy, it will be necessary to review the risk assessment at regular intervals with the employee in question. There may be occasions when a pupil in secondary education becomes pregnant. The same principles of evaluation should be followed in these situations.

The frequency of the reviews will depend on the individual circumstances, e.g., if there are complications with the pregnancy, whether pre-existing conditions exist, the level of risk presented by the person's job, etc. However, as a starting point, it would not be unreasonable to carry out a review monthly.

For further guidance, please refer to the New and Expectant Mothers at Work Guidance Note and the Model School Risk Assessment for New and Expectant Mothers.

### **Stress**

Stress is the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demands placed upon them. It arises when they worry they cannot cope. Stress-related reasons account for a significant number of days lost through sickness absence. It must also be recognised that stress may be a factor in or related to other absences or performance issues. The effect on individuals is profound and often long-lasting. Therefore, it is clearly in everyone's interest to reduce stress in the workplace. To this end, the school, its managers, and each individual have a part to play. In partnership with the school, employees are responsible for ensuring their physical and emotional health and well-being to enable them to fulfil their contractual requirements. Stress risk assessments require a specific template and a specific set of questions or criteria to be covered, as the HSE recommends.

### **Return to Work / medical conditions / Disability.**

This includes situations in which staff members have returned to work following an accident/injury, an operation, or diagnosis of an illness, condition, or disability.

In such situations, it is necessary to conduct a risk assessment for the individual to ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to the workplace and their role to allow them to continue working safely.

### **Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP)**

Current equality and fire safety legislation complement each other by ensuring that buildings are not only accessible to disabled and vulnerable people but that they can also escape safely in case of fire or other emergencies.

Part of the fire safety risk assessment for any building/premise must include an emergency plan with an evacuation strategy. This plan must consider the evacuation of all people likely to be in or using the building/premise and give details on how it will be implemented.

For those who are disabled, either permanently or temporarily, specific evacuation plans are required. These plans are called **Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans**, or **PEEPs** for short. The program must be tailor-made

to meet the requirements of the individual and, where applicable, the person/s that may be required to assist with the evacuation of the disabled person.

The PEEP is a personal plan and must be drawn up in consultation and with the active participation of the person concerned.

Under current fire safety legislation, the *Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005*, it is the responsibility of the person(s) in control of the building to provide a fire safety risk assessment that includes an emergency evacuation plan for all people likely to be in the premises, including disabled people, and how that plan will be implemented. Such an evacuation plan must not rely upon the intervention of the Fire and Rescue Service to make it work.

The *Equality Act 2010* does not make any changes to these requirements. It underpins the current fire safety legislation in England and Wales by requiring that employers or organisations providing services to the public take responsibility for ensuring that all people, including disabled people, can leave the building they control safely in the event of a fire.