

# Management of school buildings and premises.

## Schools Safety Guide

### Document information

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## 1. Introduction

This guide has been produced to provide guidance to assist, advise and inform on the responsibilities in the management of health and safety in premises occupied by schools. The guidance advises on how to meet regulations and provides signposts to other, more general, premise related legislation and guidance to schools

The Head Teacher has responsibility in accordance with statutory requirements, care guidelines and school policies and is responsible for the management of the health and safety of buildings and outside areas within their premises and for providing and maintaining a safe work place (covering building fabric, equipment and building services) through inspections, servicing, monitoring. They will also need to allocate responsibilities to people to assist in the management of issues identified in this guidance

## 2. The Law

The Education Act 1996 prescribes the required standard for premises of all maintained schools<sup>1</sup> within The School Premises (England) Regulations, similarly the Education Act 2002 sets out the required standards for premises of independent schools, which includes academies (Including alternative provision academies) and free schools, these are set out in Part 5 of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations<sup>2</sup>. Although there are two sets of school premise regulations in place the requirements are identical and so all types of schools now have to meet the same standards. The regulation covers the schools land and buildings provided for the school, including both permanent and temporary buildings and detached playing fields. The regulations clarify what is meant by the term suitable<sup>3</sup> and special requirements<sup>4</sup>.

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HSWA), and regulations made under it, are aimed at securing the health, safety and welfare of employees (e.g. teachers and other school staff). They also aim to protect others (e.g. pupils and school visitors) against risks to their health and safety (but not welfare) arising from the activities of a work undertaking. The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 expand on the HSWA and aim to ensure that workplaces meet the health, safety and

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<sup>1</sup>The Regulations apply to nursery, community, community special, foundation, foundation special and voluntary controlled schools and to pupil referral units.

<sup>2</sup> As amended by the Alternative Provision Academies and 16 to 19 Academies (Consequential Amendments to Subordinate Legislation) (England) Order 2012 and the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012.

<sup>3</sup> Any requirement that anything provided under these Regulations must be “suitable” means that it must be suitable for the pupils in respect of whom it is provided, having regard to their ages, numbers and sex and any special requirements they may have.

<sup>4</sup> A pupil has “special requirements” if the pupil has any needs arising from physical, medical, sensory, learning, emotional or behavioural difficulties which require provision which is additional to or different from that generally required by children of the same age in school’s other than special schools.

welfare needs of a workforce (e.g. school staff) and cover most spaces in schools. They cover a range of requirements such as for heating, ventilation, cleanliness, workstations, seating and welfare facilities. There are also other regulations that are specific to the subject headings covered in this document.

### 3. Building/Premise Risk assessment

The Head Teachers duties and responsibilities will include workplace risk assessments considering the Workplace (Health and Safety and Welfare) regulations. Risk assessments for the school premise should be completed using the Risk Assessments SSG.

A model building/premise risk assessment that can be adapted and adopted can be found in the model risk assessment of the PPS website.

### 4. Testing, inspection, checks and servicing

Testing, inspection and servicing of equipment will be required to comply with legislation, a list of these can be found in the Schools Premise Logbook. All documentation arising from tests, inspections and servicing should be kept as part of the school's Health and Safety file, the Schools Premise Logbook template on the PPS website should be used to support this process. The use of diary/calendar (paper or electronic) to manage testing inspections and servicing (internal by school and external by competent contractors) should be used to manage and monitor the process ensuring that the frequency of tests, inspections and servicing requirements are met. Regular equipment and site checks must be carried out as outlined within the topic specific School Safety Guides SSG these should be completed and recorded in addition to the testing, inspection and servicing regimes.

### 5. Defects and repairs and maintenance

There will be a requirement for a system to record defects and concerns (covering building fabric, equipment and building services), the system should also record action or remedial measures taken. All repairs should be undertaken by a competent person, where there is a contact or agreement to carry out repairs and maintenance by either the council or another contractor selection and use of contractors SSG should be followed in the management of contractors working within the confines of the school.

### 6. Building works, alteration, improvement

The Building Regulations apply to most buildings in England and Wales. They set standards which are mainly to ensure the safety and health of people in or around buildings. Works must also be carried out in accordance with health and safety legislation; the school must ensure that construction work is covered under Construction Design and Management (CDM) Regulations.

More information on CDM regulations the following link selection and use of contractors SSG can be found on the PPS website.

## 7. Ensuring contractors working on the premises are controlled

The school must ensure they have procedures in place, so they know what work is being carried out, where it is being carried out and by whom and ways in which people may be at risk and the precautions to be taken by the contractor.

More information on the selection and use of contractors can be found on the PPS website

## 8. Sports and play and outdoor spaces

More information on the SGG outside play equipment can be found on the PPS website.

## 9. Security

Security equipment used within schools will need to be maintained, checked and inspected to ensure that they are working as expected and operating in a safe manner, examples of these are:

- fencing and gates (manual or automatic opening);
- automatic access barriers;
- intercom and camera systems;
- electronic visitor management systems;
- intruder and panic alarm systems;
- safety glass, window and door shutters;
- security doors and locking systems.

Most security measures are intended to prevent unauthorised access to the school buildings and grounds. Some, particularly physical measures, can do so in a way that directly conflicts with fire safety although practical solutions can usually be found to these problems. Advice should be sought from your competent fire risk assessor before security doors are fitted on fire escape routes, or any decision made on the widespread use of polycarbonate glazing or sealed windows.

## 10. Training

Training will be a requirement for persons who are identified as responsible for building/premise issues, this should also include topic specific training such as asbestos, legionella awareness, principles of risk assessments, fire risk assessments and accident reporting, recording and investigation.

## 11. General standards for school facilities

The general standards for school facilities are set out with The School Premises (England) Regulations<sup>5</sup>. It covers toilet and washing facilities for pupils, facilities for

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/1943/contents/made>

staff and visitors is covered by The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations<sup>6</sup> and should be separate from those provided for pupils, except where they are designed for use by those who are disabled.

Changing accommodation and showers, it is preferable for showers to be in areas separated from toilets and they need to provide adequate privacy. Consideration may also be given to providing changing rooms, with or without showers, at primary schools for pupils who need to wear sports kit for physical education, but this is not required under the regulations.

The requirements for medical and therapy rooms enable pupils that are ill or injured to be looked after appropriately, and for therapy to be offered to those with special educational needs or disabilities who need it. In mainstream schools, this may involve assistance from visiting specialists, such as a physiotherapist or speech therapist.

Good management of acoustics is needed to ensure that each area remains suitable for its use. For example, a lack of maintenance can lead to deterioration in acoustic conditions. Special educational needs will require a higher acoustic standard.

Further guidance on lighting in schools this can be found in Lighting Guide 5, "Lighting for Education" (LG5), and British Standard BS EN 12464-1. Pupils with special educational needs, including visual impairment and other disabilities, may have additional lighting requirements and specialist advice may be needed.

Drinking water facilities need to be maintained in good working order and kept clean and the outlets need to be clearly marked 'drinking water'. Tanked supplies can be difficult to maintain in good condition, and so it is generally preferable if drinking water supplies in schools can be connected directly to the cold-water main.

To avoid the risk of scalding, 43°C is generally the maximum temperature for hot water in baths and showers, and in all cases where the occupants are severely disabled. It is also good practice to limit hot water supplies to washbasins in nursery and primary schools to 43°C.

Distribution temperatures and legionella controls need to comply with HSE guidance on managing legionella in hot and cold-water systems.

## Further information

If you require further information, please contact one of the health & safety unit:

[health\\_safety@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:health_safety@sandwell.gov.uk)

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1992/3004/contents/made>