

Health and Safety Policy



Equalities Statement

In our Trust we work to ensure that there is equality of opportunity for all members of our community who hold a range of protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, as well as having regard to other factors which have the potential to cause inequality, such as socio-economic factors.

Document Management	
Version Number:	3
Date Approved:	July 2026
Next Review Date:	July 2027
Approved By:	Board of Directors
Responsible For:	Head of Estates

Policy Revision Log	
Date	Version No. Brief Detail of Change
October 2023	V1 - No changes
October 2024	V2 - General updates to Health and Safety Policy, new details relating to curriculum health and safety
June 2026	V3 - Annual Review, new details relating to drugs and alcohol and supervision of pupils, and union consultation amendments.

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Statement of Intent

It is the policy of The Swale Academies Trust Board and the Chief Executive Officer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all the Trust's staff, pupils and others who may be affected by the Trust's work.

Swale Academies Trust is committed to the continued improvement of health and safety risk management across all areas of the Trust's activities and accordingly and we will:

- Ensure that effective health and safety arrangements are in place through an ongoing annual programme of internal and external inspections and auditing of the Academies' health and safety management systems.
- Provide clear, visible and technically competent leadership for health, safety and wellbeing.
- Allocate suitable and sufficient resources to ensure health, safety and welfare is properly managed across the Trust.
- Ensure the provision of sufficient health and safety training, information, instruction and appropriate levels of supervision for all staff to enable them to understand their health and safety responsibilities and have the knowledge, competence, and confidence to undertake their work safely.
- Comply with all relevant health, safety and welfare legal requirements, as a minimum.
- Proactively identify the hazards associated with our activities, and mitigate risks as far as reasonably practicable.
- Provide and implement effective arrangements to manage residual risks to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that our workplaces are safe and without risks to health.
- Openly share and promote this policy, and actively engage and communicate with staff, union representatives, governors, pupils, school visitors, contractors and others in relation to health, safety and welfare.

Mike Wilson
Chief Executive Officer

Paul Goodson
Chairman of the Trust Board

1. National Guidance and Statutory Requirements

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
- The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013
- The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015
- The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 2022
- The School Premises (England) Regulations 2012

This policy has due regard to national guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2018) 'Health and safety: responsibilities and duties for schools'
- DfE (2017) 'Safe storage and disposal of hazardous materials and chemicals'
- HSE (2014) 'Sensible health and safety management in schools'

2. Roles and responsibilities

Swale Academies Trust, as the employer, has a duty to:

- Assess the risks to staff and others affected by school activities in order to identify and introduce the health and safety measures necessary to manage those risks.
- Inform employees about risks and the measures in place to manage them.
- Ensure that adequate Health and Safety training is provided.

2.1. The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees have ultimate responsibility for Health and Safety matters for each school in the Trust.

The Board of Trustees have a duty to ensure that staff and pupils are not exposed to Health and Safety risks. This applies to school related activities on or off all school sites.

The Board of Trustees will:

- Decide and agree to this policy.
- Ensure they are aware of significant matters, including risks faced by the Trust, RIDDOR and near misses
- Give strategic guidance.
- Ensure that the auditing of Health and Safety takes place and action plans are developed as a result of audit.
- Ensure that there is a robust Health and Safety Management System in place to be adopted by schools

2.2. Local Governing Body

Local Governing Bodies need to ensure that schools provide safe and healthy environments for pupils, staff and visitors.

The Local Governing Body will:

- Monitor and review Health and Safety issues.
- Monitor the Health and Safety Action Plan and ensure compliance.

2.3 Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for day-to-day Health and Safety matters. This involves:

- Implementing the Trust Health and Safety policy.
- Establishing the Health and Safety Management System in school.
- Ensuring there are enough staff to safely supervise pupils.
- Ensuring that the school building and premises are safe and regularly inspected.
- Ensure that those who have been assigned specific responsibilities in school for Health and Safety have been identified, this has been communicated and adequate training has been provided.
- Reporting to the Local Governing Body on Health and Safety matters.
- Ensuring appropriate evacuation, lockdown and other emergency procedures are in place and regular drills are held.
- Ensuring that in their absence, Health and Safety responsibilities are delegated to the Deputy Headteacher.
- Ensuring all risk assessments are completed and reviewed.

2.4 Health and safety lead

The nominated Health and Safety lead has responsibilities delegated by the Headteacher.

2.5 Staff

All staff have a duty to take care of themselves and of others. All staff will:

- Take reasonable care of their own Health and Safety and that of others who may be affected by what they do at work.
- Cooperate with the school and Trust on Health and Safety matters including training.
- Inform the appropriate person of any work situation representing a serious and immediate danger so that remedial action can be taken.
- Model safe and hygienic practice for pupils.
- Understand emergency evacuation and lockdown procedures and feel confident in implementing them.
- Understand and take ownership of their own roles and responsibilities related to Health and Safety as set out in specific job descriptions and risk assessments.
- Where appointed as a subject or area leader, ensure that safety procedures are developed and adhered to with operations carried out in line with the applicable guidance and legislation within the department (EVOLVE, CLEAPSS, AfPE, HSE, UKHSA).

2.6. Pupils and parents

Pupils and parents are responsible for following the school's Health and Safety advice and for reporting any Health and Safety incidents or concerns to a member of staff.

2.7. Contractors

Contractors will adhere to all relevant legislation and provide the necessary information to the site lead (premises team) before starting work as set out within the Trusts 'Maintenance and Building Contractors' Safeguarding Procedure'.

3. Risk Assessment

Depending upon the activities / processes being risk assessed, there may be a need to approach risk assessments in different ways. Generally, there are 3 types of risk assessment:

- A generic risk assessment may be carried out at Trust schools where activities, although are carried out at different times and locations, may still present the same hazards and risks. For example, general classroom risk assessments as activities are carried out in the same setting.
- A specific risk assessment should be conducted for activities where the hazards faced by staff differ at each site. For example, a Design and Technology department may have different machinery; different activities within different locations, therefore presenting different hazards, e.g. pillar drill will require a specific risk assessment.

- A dynamic risk assessment may be conducted in circumstances where there is a requirement for staff to deviate from stipulated controls on the grounds that the above generic / specific risk assessments become irrelevant owing to changing circumstances. A dynamic risk assessment will only usually be required when plans change or in emergency situations. Where a dynamic risk assessment is likely to be required, this will not normally need to be written down owing to the potential urgency of the situation. Staff will need to be of a high level of competence in order to consider the situation in hand and make impulsive competent decisions to ensure the safety of themselves and others affected by their actions.

There are occasions where there is a requirement to undertake additional risk assessments. These include individuals (e.g. young persons with challenging behaviour), during emergency / non-routine circumstances or as a result of a specific piece of legislation.

- Individual risk assessments should be conducted where activities involve disabled people, young people (under 18), new and expectant mothers or any one with a specific need (e.g SEND). These assessments may need to be carried out with the individual present and a representative if they wish, to ensure that they are familiar with the necessary controls.
- Emergency / Non-routine risk assessments may be incorporated into all of the above assessment types or may be a completely separate assessment. It is good practice to consider what controls may need to be in place in the event of a non-routine / emergency situation. For example, while routing cables through a building, an electrical installations engineer may accidentally drill through a wall containing hazardous asbestos material.

Day-to-day running of the school including responsibility for the health and safety of staff and pupils is delegated to the head teacher and school management team. They have a key role in making sure risks are managed effectively on site. Specific responsibilities filter down through the school's structure, for example

- Headteachers: Required to manage health and safety and ensure risk assessments are implemented.
- Heads of Department/Subject Leads: Typically tasked with writing assessments for their specific areas, such as science labs, workshops, and sports.
- Site Managers: Responsible for assessing premises, fire safety, and general building hazards.

4. Site security

The site team is responsible for the security of the school site in and out of school hours. They are responsible for the intruder alarm and fire systems and visual inspections of the site.

The site team are key holders and will respond to an emergency or to be a named key point of contact where keyholding is outsourced out of hours.

5. Fire

Emergency exits, assembly points and assembly point instructions are clearly identified by safety signs and notices and fire emergency evacuation plans. This information is disseminated to all staff, pupils and visitors.

A fire risk assessment of the premises will be reviewed on an annual basis and a new fire risk assessment produced by a competent person every five years or when significant changes have occurred to the fire system and/or building footprint. SAT commissions external specialists to produce new fire risk assessments.

- Emergency evacuations must be practised a minimum of three times a year.
- Fire alarm testing will take place every day (visual) and weekly (activated). This will be logged by the site team.
- Emergency lighting testing will take place weekly (visual) and monthly (activated). This will be logged by the site team.
- New staff will be trained in fire safety awareness and all staff and pupils will be made aware of any new fire risks.

Staff should only use fire extinguishers if trained in how to operate them safely. If trained, they should only use the extinguisher if they feel confident to do so and not put themselves or others at undue risk. There should always be a clear escape available. Ensure the alarm is raised before attempting to tackle a fire.

In the event of a fire schools are to follow their fire evacuation plan.

The school will have special arrangements in place for the evacuation of people who may need assistance, for example, a person with impaired mobility.

6. COSHH

Schools are required to control hazardous substances, which can take many forms, including:

- ☞ Chemicals; Products containing chemicals; Fumes; Dusts; Vapours; Mists; Gases and asphyxiating gases; Germs that cause diseases, such as leptospirosis or legionnaires disease.

Control Of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) risk assessments are completed by the responsible person and circulated to all employees who work with hazardous substances. Staff will also be provided with protective equipment, where necessary.

Staff will use and store hazardous products in accordance with instructions on the product label. All hazardous products are kept in their original containers, with clear labelling and product information.

Any hazardous products are disposed of in accordance with specific disposal procedures.

Emergency procedures, including procedures for dealing with spillages, are displayed near where hazardous products are stored and in areas where they are routinely used.

7. First Aid

The headteacher is responsible for determining and ensuring an appropriate number of staff in each setting will be first-aid trained with a qualified person on site at all times.

A record of trained first aiders will be maintained and displayed at each site.

First aid boxes will be kept maintained with a supply of first aid materials.

Lists of students and staff with allergies and medical needs will be kept and displayed.

8. Gas safety

In line with Trust Premises Management Policy, the installation, maintenance and repair of gas appliances and fittings will be carried out by a competent Gas Safe registered engineer.

Gas pipework, appliances and flues are regularly maintained.

All rooms with gas appliances are checked to ensure that they have adequate ventilation.

9. Legionella

A water risk assessment is completed by the Trust water management contractor who is responsible for ensuring that the identified operational controls are conducted and recorded in the school's water log book.

This risk assessment will be reviewed every two years or when significant changes have occurred to the water system and/or building footprint.

All members of the school site team to undertake Legionella Awareness training.

The risks from legionella are mitigated by the following control measures:

- Regular water temperature checks,
- Disinfection of shower heads,
- Water flushing.

10. Asbestos

Site staff must be aware of the Trust Asbestos Procedure.

Staff should be briefed on the hazards of asbestos, the location of any asbestos in the school and the action to take if they suspect they have disturbed it.

Arrangements are in place to ensure that contractors are made aware of any asbestos on the premises and that it is not disturbed by their work. Contractors will be advised that if they discover material which they suspect could be asbestos, they will stop work immediately until the area is declared safe.

A record is kept of the location of asbestos (asbestos register) that has been found is held in each school reception.

The Trust will provide all properties constructed pre 2005 with a Management Survey (as defined in HSG 264). The survey work will be carried out in accordance with legal requirements and HSE codes of practice, by organisation's appointed and approved by the Trust.

Management surveys will be conducted every 5 years to ensure that the Trust is discharging its duties and ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all that access its premises.

Buildings constructed after the year 2000 are unlikely to contain asbestos. The HSE stipulates that attention should be given to those built on Brownfield sites and if any older equipment was being used. SAT's approach to post 2000 buildings:

- 2000 – 2005 – Continue to be part of SAT's Management Survey regime to offer reassurance that no ACMs are present.
- 2005 – Present – These buildings will no longer form part of the survey programme as are deemed to be constructed free from asbestos.

All members of the school site team to undertake Asbestos Awareness training.

11. Equipment

All equipment and machinery is maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. In addition, maintenance schedules outline when extra checks should take place.

When new equipment is purchased, it is checked to ensure that it meets appropriate educational standards.

All equipment is stored in the appropriate storage containers and areas. All containers are labelled with the correct hazard sign and contents.

12. Electrical equipment

All staff are responsible for ensuring that they use and handle electrical equipment sensibly and safely.

Any pupil or volunteer who handles electrical appliances does so under the supervision of the member of staff who so directs them.

Any potential hazards will be reported to the site team immediately.

Permanently installed electrical equipment is connected through a dedicated isolator switch and adequately earthed.

Only trained staff members can check plugs.

Where necessary a portable appliance test (PAT) will be carried out by a competent person.

All isolator switches are clearly marked to identify their machine.

Electrical apparatus and connections will not be touched by wet hands and will only be used in dry conditions.

Maintenance, repair, installation and disconnection work associated with permanently installed or portable electrical equipment is only carried out by a competent person.

13. PE and Play equipment

Pupils are taught how to carry out and set up PE equipment safely and efficiently. Staff who have been trained to check that equipment is set up safely.

Any concerns about the condition of the gym floor or other apparatus will be reported to the site team immediately.

Gym, PE and Play equipment should be checked regularly and have annual inspections from a competent person.

14. Display screen equipment

All staff who use computers daily as a significant part of their normal work have a display screen equipment (DSE) assessment carried out. 'Significant' is taken to be continuous/near continuous spells of an hour or more at a time.

Staff identified as DSE users are entitled to an eyesight test for DSE use upon request, and at regular intervals thereafter, by a qualified optician (and corrective glasses provided if required specifically for DSE use).

15. Specialist equipment

Lifts and Hoists should be inspected annually by a competent person.

Parents are responsible for the maintenance and safety of their children's wheelchairs. In school, staff promote the responsible use of wheelchairs.

16. Lone working

Lone working may include, but not limited to:

- Before or After School Hours: Staying late to mark work, plan lessons, or leaving early when the school is otherwise empty.
- Isolated Areas: Working alone in a classroom or office, even if other staff are in different parts of the building.
- Extracurricular Activities: Running after-school clubs or sports practices without other staff members present.
- Off-site Activities: Conducting home visits or accompanying pupils on field trips alone
- Site manager duties.

Potentially dangerous activities, such as those where there is a risk of falling from height, will not be undertaken when working alone. If there are any doubts about the task to be performed, then the task will be postponed until other staff members are available.

If lone working is to be undertaken, a colleague, friend or family member will be informed about where the member of staff is and when they are likely to return.

The lone worker will ensure that they are medically fit to work alone.

17. Working at height

Sites staff will ensure that work is properly planned, supervised and carried out by competent people with the skills, knowledge and experience to do the work. In addition:

- The site team retain ladders for working at height ensuring that regular equipment inspections are undertaken
- Pupils are prohibited from using ladders.
- Staff will wear appropriate footwear and clothing when using ladders.
- Contractors are expected to provide their own ladders for working at height.
- Before using a ladder, staff are expected to conduct a visual inspection to ensure it is safe to use.

- Access to high levels, such as roofs, is only permitted by trained persons.
- All members of the school site team to undertake Working at Height training.

18. Manual handling

It is up to individuals to determine whether they are fit to lift or move equipment and furniture. If an individual feels that to lift an item could result in injury or exacerbate an existing condition, they will ask for assistance.

Staff undertaking manual handling procedures must first undertake Manual Handling training.

The school will ensure that proper mechanical aids and lifting equipment are available, and that staff are trained in how to use them safely.

19. Off-site visits

When taking pupils off the school premises, schools will ensure that:

- Risk assessments will be completed where off-site visits and activities require them.
- All off-site visits are appropriately staffed.
- Staff will take a school mobile phone, a portable first aid kit, information about the specific medical needs of pupils along with the parents' contact details.
- For Early Years Foundation Stage, there will always be at least one first aider with a current pediatric first aid certificate on school trips and visits, as required by the statutory EYFS framework.

Schools should refer and follow the Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel (OEAP) guidance for all school trips

20. Lettings

Those who hire any aspect of the school site or any facility will be made aware of the content of the Trust's Health and Safety policy, and will have responsibility for complying with it.

21. Violence at work

We believe that staff should not be in any danger at work, and will not tolerate violent or threatening behaviour towards our staff.

All staff will report any incidents of aggression or violence (or near misses) directed to themselves to their line manager/Headteacher immediately. This applies to violence from pupils, visitors or other staff.

22. Smoking & Vaping

Smoking or vaping is not permitted anywhere on any Trust school premises.

23. Alcohol and Drugs

The abuse of alcohol or drugs is a safety and health hazard and if there is any suspicion that a member of staff, pupil or visitor is incapacitated, this must be reported to a member of the School/Senior Leadership Team.

It is not permitted to have alcohol on any Trust premise. For clarity, this includes consumption of alcohol at social events or where alcohol is used as prizes such as raffles at fund raising events.

24. Supervision of Pupils

All pupils shall be supervised to a level to ensure their health and safety. The head teacher for each school is responsible for ensuring that suitable arrangements are made for supervision of their pupils at all times.

25. Infection prevention and control

We follow national guidance published by Public Health England (PHE) when responding to infection control issues.

26. New and expectant mothers

Risk assessments will be carried out whenever any employee or pupil notifies the school that they are pregnant or breastfeeding. These will be reviewed and updated as required.

Appropriate measures will be put in place to control risks identified.

27. Occupational stress

We are committed to promoting high levels of health and wellbeing and recognise the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors through risk assessment.

Systems are in place within the school for responding to individual concerns and monitoring staff workloads.

28. Accident reporting

28.1 Accident recording

An electronic accident form will be completed as soon as possible after the accident occurs by the member of staff or first aider who deals with it.

As much detail as possible will be supplied when reporting an accident.

Information about injuries will also be kept in the pupil's educational record.

Records held in the first aid and accident book will be retained by the school for a minimum of 3 years, in accordance with regulation 25 of the Social Security (Claims and Payments) Regulations 1979, and then securely disposed of.

28.2 Reporting to the Health and Safety Executive

The school First Aider will keep a record of any accident which results in a reportable injury, disease, or dangerous occurrence as defined in the RIDDOR 2013 legislation (regulations 4, 5, 6 and 7).

The school Health and Safety Lead will report these to the Health and Safety Executive as soon as is reasonably practicable and in any event within 10 days of the incident (or 15 days in the event of a 7+ day absence from work).

The school Health and Safety Lead must report any RIDDOR event to the Head of Estates prior to reporting to the HSE.

Schools with Early Years Foundation Stage provision must:

28.3 Notifying parents

The Headteacher will inform parents of any accident or injury sustained by a pupil, and any first aid treatment given, on the same day, or as soon as reasonably practicable.

28.4 Reporting to Ofsted and child protection agencies

The Headteacher will notify Ofsted of any serious accident, illness or injury to, or death of, a pupil while in the school's care. This will happen as soon as is reasonably practicable, and no later than 14 days after the incident.

The Headteacher will also notify the Child Protection agencies of any serious accident or injury to, or the death of, a pupil while in the school's care.

29. Radiation

Science departments may hold a selection of radioactive substances. A Radiation Protection Supervisor must be nominated within the school along with a Radiation Protection Officer (external) who is appointed by CLEAPSS on behalf of the school. The Supervisor and Officer must ensure that the school complies with the Ionising Radiations Regulations and information should be contained in the science department health and safety documentation.

30. Swimming Pools

Schools with swimming pools must have Normal Operating Procedures and Emergency Action Plans in place that all users must be aware of and adhere to. These must be updated annually.

31. Physical Education

These activities will be conducted within any recommendations and published documentation of the Association for Physical Education.

32. Science

Procedures recommended by CLEAPPS will be followed for all activities, preparations, storage, use and disposal of materials (including radioactive). These can be found on the CLEAPPS website.

33. Design and Technology

Procedures recommended by CLEAPPS or other approved bodies will be followed. These can be found on the CLEAPPS website.

34. Training

All staff must undertake the appropriate training (mandatory and role specific mandatory) as per the Trust's Training Matrix.