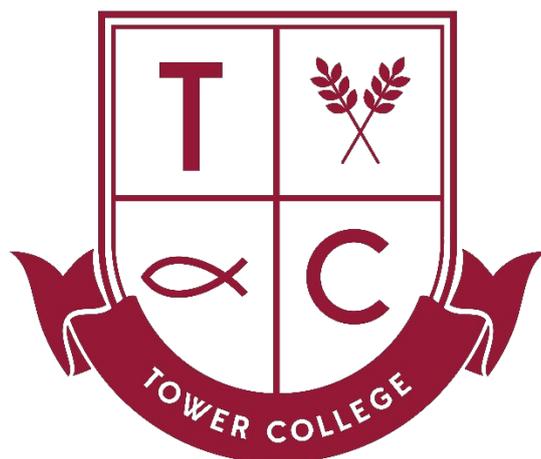


RISK ASSESSMENT GUIDANCE & PRINCIPLES



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FOR COVID-19 – Please see separate *Guidance Document* and *Risk Assessment*

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Risk Assessment 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 and these are referenced in the applicable sections of this document.

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 in its own right 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 make reference 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

These subject specific risk assessments are carried out by curriculum co-ordinators. It is particularly important that these subject areas are risk assessed, because they carry inherent risks to both teaching staff and pupils, especially in the Middle and Upper School.

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 purpose of the fire risk assessment is to ensure that adequate and appropriate fire safety measures are in place to minimise the risk of injury or loss of life in the event of a fire. 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 then possible to take appropriate action to control them and consider whether they can be avoided altogether or, if this is not possible, how you can reduce the risks and manage them.

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 a dynamic process which takes into account the fact 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.

If you have any reason to suspect that your fire risk assessment is no longer valid or there has been a significant change in your premises that has affected your fire precautions, you will need to review your assessment and if necessary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

- *changes to work activities or the way that you organise them, including the introduction of 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 a 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 keep your assessment under review to make sure that the precautions are still working effectively. You may want to re-examine the fire prevention and protection measures at the same time as your health and safety assessment.

If a fire or 'near miss' occurs, this could indicate that your existing assessment may be inadequate and you should carry out a re-assessment. It is good practice to identify the cause of any incident and then review and, if necessary, revise your fire risk assessment in the light of this. Records of testing, maintenance and training etc. are useful aids in a review process."

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 of time, regardless of whether there has been a specific change. The period of time 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 3 years is put forward as suggested frequency by the London Borough of Hounslow, but the actual period must be site specific and be determined on the level of risk and the recommendations of the assessor. This means that the review could be more than 3 years, but could also be less. The assessor should put down a recommended review date on the FRA and reviews should not exceed a period 5 years. Tower College undertakes a Fire Risk Assessment on annual basis (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 occasions, death.

All schools use substances, or products that are mixtures of substances, e.g. cleaning chemicals, 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 other people.

To comply with COSHH, school 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 to deal with accidents, incidents and emergencies
- Ensure employees are properly informed, trained and supervised

COSHH assessments have a specific template and a specific set of criteria to be covered, as recommended by the HSE.

Manual Handling

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

Work related manual handling injuries can have serious 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 using 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 will need to be conducted under the specific requirements of the *Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992*. Manual Handling risk assessments have a specific template and a specific set of criteria to be covered, as recommended by the HSE.

DSE (Display Screen Equipment)

Display Screen Equipment (DSE) is a device or equipment that has an alphanumeric or graphic display screen, regardless of the display process involved; it includes PC display screens and those used in laptops, touch-screens 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), which can include a range of 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 kinds of work equipment.

It is essential that any staff that are computer users complete a DSE assessment to ensure they follow good DSE practice 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 is dependent upon the use of DSE in order to do the job as there are no alternative means readily available.
- The individual has no discretion as to whether or not to use the equipment
- Significant training or particular skills are required
- DSE is normally used continuously for at least one hour every day
- The job requires 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 greatest cause of work-related deaths in the UK. Every week approximately 20 tradesmen die from exposure to asbestos including, plumbers, electricians and joiners. 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 through to the mid-1980s. It was used for a variety of 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, any 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* came into force on 6 April 2012, updating previous asbestos regulations. Under Regulation 4 of these regulations, the named responsible person, or 'duty holder' (the person in control of the premises) has a duty to manage asbestos. This requires the duty holder to:

- take reasonable steps to find out 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 that sets out in detail how the risks from these materials will be managed;
- take the necessary steps to put the plan into action;
- periodically review and monitor the plan and the arrangements to act on it so that the plan 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 location and condition of the materials to anyone who is liable to work on or disturb them.

There is also a requirement on anyone to co-operate, 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 it remains the responsibility of the duty holder 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 some minor intrusion and sampling of accessible materials.

If any building work or refurbishment work is planned that will disturb the fabric of the building, it will be necessary to carry out a [Demolition and Refurbishment Survey](#) 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 in the area where the refurbishment work will take place 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 \(COSHH\)](#) provide 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 and under it there must be a named responsible person, or 'duty holder' (the person in control of the premises) who is required to 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 name of the competent person and a description of your system
- 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 the one required to carry out the assessment. However, the school ensure, as part of their contractor vetting procedure, that they have satisfied, and continue to satisfy, this requirement.

The exceptions to this are the fire, legionella and asbestos risk assessments, which should be completed by the school for the building as a whole 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) which ensures that food business operators look at how they handle food and introduces procedures to make sure 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 in place. Further advice on completing a HACCP is available from the Food Standards Agency website <http://food.gov.uk/business-industry/caterers/haccp/>

Lone Working

Under their general duties, schools have a responsibility to carry out a risk assessment for lone workers, or for 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 normal 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 purposes, working late or working from home. A risk assessment for lone working is required whether staff are lone workers every day or just occasionally.

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

Routine jobs of this nature can be risk assessed in advance to ensure they are carried out safely. Non-routine work and one-off jobs that are not necessarily foreseeable should be individually assessed prior to the work taking place.

This will definitely include caretaking and maintenance staff, but will also include others too, 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 (with the exception of early years). It may be that supervision levels have changed over time as a reaction to incidents/accidents or the introduction of specific recreation equipment requiring an enhanced monitoring presence. Decisions like this should be recorded and should be used to inform the outcome of a risk assessment. It is not sufficient to state that 'adequate' supervision will be provided. What does this actually 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 have a duty to plan, manage and monitor the event to make sure 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. The majority of those affected by such "finger-trapping" incidents are children under the age of 8. Young children, or other vulnerable persons, don't recognise hazards that may exist around us in the same way that adults and older children do, and so greater care is needed when managing the exposure of children 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 being fitted with any necessary safety devices. There are no

explicit legal requirements or standards that require doors in schools to be fitted 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 the use of finger shields or similar devices.

The Health and Safety Executive have 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 in control of premises, are required to carry out an assessment of first-aid needs. This involves consideration of workplace hazards and risks, the size of the organisation and other relevant factors, to determine what first-aid equipment, facilities and personnel should be provided. This includes giving consideration to the provision of first aid during periods before and after the normal school day, during events, holidays and when lone working 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 detail 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 is a key priority at any time and should not be forgotten when developing or accommodating extended services.

It is essential that potential risks are identified and appropriately managed to avoid incidents occurring and/or insurance claims against the school. A new user coming into the school may give rise to new risks that will need to be addressed through alterations to premises, or the way in which 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 in advance of 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 age of the people and the size of the group? 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 also need to undertake a risk assessment for any new activities that may be developed as part of extended services.

Caretaking and cleaning

Have you considered the effect that extended services will have 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 normal day to day school practice.

Grounds safety

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

- Falling trees and tree branches that could injure staff, pupils and members of the public (especially where they are near boundaries that may overhang the public highway) – regular grounds maintenance is required to ensure trees are kept in a good condition.
- Children climbing and falling from trees. This will partly be controlled through supervision at break times, but consideration may also be given to removing lower branches to prevent climbing and also fencing round the outside of trunks, which will also help to prevent tripping over raised roots.
- Slopes on landscaping and traffic routes, which 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

It is likely that the control measures to combat many of these risks will 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 contractor themselves must provide schools with the specific risk assessments and safe methodology for carrying out the work.

However, if a member of school staff is to carry out any of the work themselves, e.g. the caretaker, the activity itself should be risk assessed too. This could be covered within other risk assessments and a reference made to them, e.g. Working at height, 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 also lead to other types of serious accidents, for example falls from height. Slips and trips are also the most reported injury 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 have a duty to 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 major issue for schools, especially those in older premises, which are restricted by historical building layout and design. Schools have a duty to assess the risks presented by storage hazards and the consider the storage implications before introducing new materials or pieces of equipment.

Play Equipment, Toys and Outside Furniture

The fact that play equipment has been installed by competent professionals 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 particularly important to demonstrate that all reasonable action is being taken and as a means of proving that accidents have not occurred to faulty equipment, lack of adequate supervision or other failures in Health and Safety Management.

Ponds / Conservation Areas

Ponds and conservation areas obviously 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 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** specifically focuses on persons 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 additional and specific health and safety measures need to be taken to ensure activities can continue safely. This can only be achieved through forward planning, of which a specific risk assessments is an essential part.

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 waste, whether hazardous or not, have a duty of care to store it safely, manage it effectively and to 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 waste and recyclable material (e.g. wood, furniture, paper and textiles) should also be stored in such a way 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 environment regulations that govern the management and control of waste.

Traffic Management on School Site

Every year, there are over 5000 accidents involving transport in the workplace. About 50 of these result in people being killed www.hse.gov.uk/statistics. The main causes of injury are people falling off vehicles, or being struck or crushed by them.

The main hazard in school with regards to traffic management is the proximity of moving vehicles accessing the site to pedestrians, the majority of which will be pupils and the public. The main focus of the risk assessment is therefore 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 the use of road markings, signage, speed limits and one way systems. It will also be reliant on management such as ensuring that adequate supervision is in place and the arrival of staff and visitors and deliveries is restricted to certain times. Consideration should also be given to the safety of those that 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 of the security risks commonly faced by schools. These activities pose a risk to safety and the results can be costly.

Establishing the level of security risk for particular schools through risk assessment, based on evidence of crime in the area, the condition of the premises and its boundaries and the extent of existing security systems is an extremely useful 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, which is exacerbated in certain situations and certain locations. Risk assessment will identify if violence presents a significant potential risk and allow suitable controls to be put in place to protect staff and others.

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

Cleaning

Cleaners carry out a wide range of duties that are essential to the smooth running of a school. These include dusting, mopping, vacuuming, sweeping, the buffing or waxing of floors and the emptying and carrying of rubbish bins and bags. Many of these tasks are potentially dangerous because of the way the work has traditionally been carried out, but many of the hazards are avoidable and this is why 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 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 particular 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 it is likely there will already be control measures in place. Therefore it may not be necessary to make a specific risk assessment for the young person – the existing risk assessments in place for the business should suffice.

However, there may be circumstances in which the normal precautions are not sufficient to safeguard a young person, e.g. because increased supervision is required or because the young person is prohibited from performing certain operations, because there is 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 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 those that drive 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.

Employers owe the same duty of care under health and safety law to staff who drive their own vehicles for work as they do to employees who drive company owned, leased or hired vehicles. It is also an offence under road traffic law to 'cause or permit' a person to drive a vehicle that is in a dangerous condition or without a valid licence or appropriate insurance.

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

For staff that drive their own 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 information 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 and all windows must be designed in a manner that allows them to be cleaned safely.

Those in control of premises, must conduct suitable risk assessments and put in place all 'reasonably practicable' measures to ensure that these glazing related requirements are met.

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 in control of premises, have specific duties concerning the provision and use of personal protective equipment (PPE) at work. PPE is equipment that will protect the user against health and safety risks at work. It can include items such as safety helmets, gloves, eye protection, high-visibility clothing, safety footwear and safety harnesses. It also includes respiratory protective equipment (RPE).

PPE 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 at all. 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 certain subjects) and whether PPE is required and what the appropriate PPE is, how it will be kept, issued, maintained, 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, have a duty to ensure that employees are provided with any necessary health surveillance that is appropriate to mitigate the risks to their health that have been 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 ; 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, strimmers.
- hand tools such as screwdrivers, knives, hand saws and chisels;
- lifting equipment such as lift trucks, elevating work platforms, hoists, lifting 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 and yet even simple hand tools can cause serious 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 carry out a suitable and sufficient assessment in accordance with 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 on a routine basis. A teacher's duty of care on a school visit is not confined to normal school hours. It lasts throughout the time away and can only be put aside at times 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 necessary licenses are in place for the activity or trip and that the activities are carried out by competent people and in accordance with approved practices and health and safety requirements. The risk assessment should clarify that such checks have been carried out.

Confined Spaces

Confined spaces are those that 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 space 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 so that work in confined spaces can be avoided. If it is not possible to avoid the work, then the risk assessment must be used to determine what measures are needed 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 the keeping of animals as pets in schools except when the use of alternative 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 very difficult to look after an animal's properly needs in a classroom environment. Ultimately, it is the decision of the Headteacher and governing body whether or not animals are kept in school. However, if a decision is made to have a classroom pet, it is extremely important that a risk assessment is 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 on a daily basis
- 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 actually handle the pet for it to affect them. Being in the room may be enough.
- Asthma sufferers 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 inoculations 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 in control of premises, have a specific duty to conduct a risk assessment for new and expectant mothers.

Because the condition of an expectant mother will regularly change over the course of the pregnancy, it will be necessary to review the risk assessment at regular intervals with the employee in question. There may be occasions where a pupil in secondary education becomes pregnant. The same principles of assessment 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 on a monthly basis.

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 a variety of 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 and every individual have a part to play. Employees have a responsibility, in partnership with the school, to ensure their own 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 recommended by the HSE.

Return to Work / medical conditions / Disability

This includes situations in which members of staff have returned to work following such incidents as: an accident / injury; an operation; 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 take into account the evacuation of all people who are likely to be in or using the building/ premise and give details on how it will be implemented.

For those that are disabled, either permanently or temporarily, specific evacuation plans are required. These plans are called **Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans** or **PEEPs** for short. The plan 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 so 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 change 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.