

Health and Safety Update

Summer 2021 Edition

Working together for the safety of all

Welcome back. We hope you are all well and safe. In this edition of the H&S Update Newsletter, you will find information regarding a variety of safety topics including Covid 19 information, Brexit, HSE prosecutions, training etc.... If you have any questions, relating to any article, please do not hesitate to contact any member of the H&S Team on _healthandsafety@slough.gov.uk

Brexit – A Level Playing Field

Following Brexit earlier this year, much has been made of the 'level playing field' regarding H&S Legislation across Europe and the UK, and the possibility of the UK government eroding or diluting current standards relating to health and safety and workers' rights. IOSH have reviewed the guidance and confirmed that retained EU law in the UK is currently close or identical to the EU's own laws, however it is inevitable that the two will diverge over time as they evolve independently of one another.

The UK has an enviable health and safety record, underpinned by the domestic Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. It is therefore unlikely that the government will prioritise making any immediate widespread changes. More long-term changes are likely to be aimed at simplifying things and cutting red tape to make it easier for businesses to comply with legislation. But time will tell.

Extracted from IOSH Magazine (18th February 2021)

Employee workplace pranks are no joke

Employees that 'play around', undertake foolish vehicle operations or apply, social pressure or harassment are activities often encouraged by 'practical jokers' who pressure other colleagues to get involved. However horseplay can take this too far and put workers at risk.

Following a recent national case that was prosecuted, please be aware that employees undertaking these activities could be prosecuted under section 7 of The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 for reckless disregard for health and safety if this has resulted in serious risk.

Employers can be held vicariously liable for employees if the employer is aware of the horseplay taking place but does not take precautions against it or stop it from occurring.

Key tips to prevent horseplay

Employees should:

- not engage or participate in any type of unsafe behaviour or horseplay, initiate it, or get pressured into participating in it
- follow all regulations and work rules to ensure the safety of themselves and other employees
- ensure protective equipment is used properly and when operating machinery is in good repair and does not present a hazard
- report those behaving in an unprofessional or unsafe way to a supervisor or manager.

Managers should:

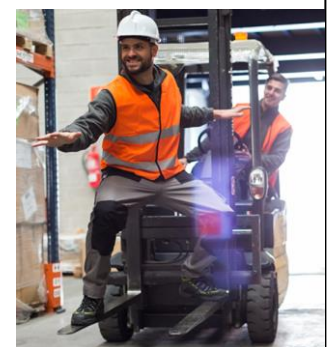
- provide a safe and healthy work environment for all employees
- take all precautions necessary to protect the safety and health of employees
- outline policies against workplace horseplay in your employee manual
- educate, communicate and train employees on workplace safety and requirements
- be an example of professionalism and not engage in any inappropriate behaviour or horseplay.

Contacts....

If you need any H&S advice, please contact any member of the H&S Team on:
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COVID Public Health England Education Webpages

For the latest information please refer to:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19>

www.slough.gov.uk
Slough
Borough Council

Ventilation and Air Conditioning Guidance: COVID

In light of the current pandemic, the HSE has recently amended and updated their guidance on ventilation and air conditioning. The guidance builds on how to identify and take action in poorly ventilated areas. It also provides guidance on other factors to consider when assessing the risk from COVID aerosol transmission and whether adequate ventilation is being provided to reduce the risk. In addition to this, the government has published guidance for the ventilation of indoor spaces to stop the spread of coronavirus.

As a school you should consider ventilation alongside other control measures needed to reduce risks of transmission as part of making your workplace COVID-secure: These include social distancing, keeping your workplace clean and frequent handwashing etc..

Balancing ventilation with keeping warm

There are simple steps you can take to make sure your school is adequately ventilated without being too cold:

- opening windows and doors partially can still provide acceptable ventilation while keeping the workplace comfortable. Opening higher-level windows will probably create fewer draughts.
- if the area is cold you could relax dress codes so people can wear extra layers and warmer clothing
- you can only use fan convector heaters if the area is well ventilated

It is recommended that your Facilities Managers review the whole guidance to be able to fully determine whether any further actions require to be undertaken by the school. In line with the guidance updates it is important to review your risk assessments, actions and records to ensure that they are suitable and sufficient.

Further information

More detailed information can be found using the following links:

- https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/equipment-and-machinery/air-conditioning-and-ventilation/index.htm?utm_source=govdelivery&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=coronavirus&utm_term=ventilation-update-guidance&utm_content=digest-4-mar-21
- https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-ventilation-of-indoor-spaces-to-stop-the-spread-of-coronavirus?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=2d49866e-a436-4e22-87de-6c83f84b8d8b&utm_content=immediately
- <https://www.cibse.org/coronavirus-covid-19/emerging-from-lockdown>
- <https://www.cibse.org/coronavirus-covid-19/emerging-from-lockdown>
- <https://www.cibse.org/coronavirus-covid-19/emerging-from-lockdown>

CLEAPPS GL343 – Guide to doing practical work during the COVID-19

This updated guidance is additional to the standard operating procedures across your school, any guidance from your employer, and CLEAPSS' general advice.

It is based on guidance from the UK Government and Public Health England, and is also aligned with guidance in Northern Ireland and Wales. This guide is likely to be updated frequently.

Version 3.01 changes (3rd March) :

- Fully reviewed against the latest DfE Guidance published February 2021
- Added section about face coverings (masks) – Pages 2 & 3
- Other minor revisions as required to match latest DfE guidance

View or Download GL343 here:

<http://science.cleapss.org.uk/Resource-Info/GL343-Guide-to-doing-practical-work-during-the-COVID-19-Pandemic-Science.aspx>

One year since the beginning of the first COVID-19 lockdown

One year on since the beginning of the first COVID-19 lockdown the HSE is reminding businesses of the important steps to take to

keep workers safe. The advice provided is also relevant to schools. The HSE recommends you:

- Revisit your COVID risk assessment(s) and continue to update the [COVID-secure risk assessments](#) to make sure they're in line with the latest government guidance
- Renewed vigour – review the measures you have put in place and make sure they are still effective including [cleaning](#) regimes, [hand washing](#) and [social distancing](#)
- [Ventilation](#) - take simple steps to improve airflow in enclosed spaces as good ventilation helps to reduce how much virus is in the air (Please see the article above)
- [Follow the roadmap out of lockdown](#) – as the country re-opens it's your responsibility to have COVID-secure measures in place

Reduced infection rates should not equate to complacency. [COVID-secure measures](#) must be prioritised to stop the spread of coronavirus to maintain the safety of their staff, visitors and customers.

More information can be found here <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKHSE/bulletins/2c904c8>

No job, no job: health and safety versus civil liberties

The UK does not generally mandate medical treatment. It works on the basis of consent which is largely effective, for example with infant immunisations.

As individuals, we decide what happens to our bodies and have the absolute right to refuse vaccination.. Forced vaccination would be a criminal offence. In addition to this just because it is possible to vaccinate, the law does not require it.

Early evidence suggests the vaccines slow virus transmission and have good efficacy in avoiding infection. Given the scale of the crisis we continue to face it seems likely a court would consider this educational messaging to be a reasonably practicable measure employers can and should be taking. The fact [COVID-19 is reportable under RIDDOR](#) strengthens this position.

However, any protected characteristics which prevent taking the vaccine such as disability, race, sex and religion would need to be considered. Examples are a disabled worker declining the vaccine on medical grounds, a pregnant woman declining the vaccine, or the evidence that BAME communities are more reluctant to take the vaccine.

Job offers can be conditional upon vaccination, but for current employees it requires a change in contract and consultation with the workforce: However this may be seen as an invasion of human rights and could lead to unfair dismissal allegation.

Here is some actions that IOSH recommends employers should take:

- prepare and disseminate a vaccine policy, which sets out the organisation's position and provides information about the approach being taken
- think about the form and content of vaccine messaging; there is plenty of guidance available
- identify trusted individuals with whom hesitant employees can raise concerns
- review COVID-19 risk assessments to include the impact of the vaccines
- reinforce existing control measures, including working from home, workplace bubbles, social distancing and hand-washing, which remain essential even when vaccinated
- consider how to collect and maintain details of who has been vaccinated bearing in mind data protection obligations
- monitor government guidance to keep up to date.

More information can be found here

COVID-19 and trips

Here is some information from EVOLVE: Based upon government guidance they believe the roadmap for trips are likely to be as follows:-

Step 1 – 8th March 2021

You can undertake local area visits but may wish to consider the size of groups if you are going to a public place (park, town, etc.)

Step 2 – no earlier than 12th April 2021

You should be able to return to attending outdoor attractions, Zoos, Theme Parks, Outdoor Adventure Centres.

Step 3 - no earlier than 17th May 2021

Returning to museums, theatres and other indoor attractions and and we may see the return of overnight trips in the UK.

Step 4 - no earlier than 21st June 2021

Normality.....maybe?... and we may see the return of international travel

Future of trips (already booked):

If you have overseas trips booked between now and the 17th May 2021, you should contact your provider immediately.

National Guidance Updates on Evolve

The OEAP National Guidance Team have been updating lots of guidance over the past few weeks. All updates can be found Evolve within the 'National Guidance' section. This includes

4.4k Coronavirus - This is the go to for COVID related guidance.

4.3b Ratios and Effective Supervision - Has been updated to clarify that, if staff who are not competent or confident are taking part in an activity, the activity leader may need to regard them as participants when considering the leader to participant ratio.

2.1b Learning Outcomes - This document provides a summary of the many areas where outdoor learning, off-site visits and learning outside the

CLEAPPS user name and password has changed

The user name and password to access CLEAPPS services has changed. If you need to access please use the following:-

Secondary schools

USERNAME: moon
PASSWORD: nasa21

Primary schools

USERNAME: play
PASSWORD: dough21

New COVID information

The government has produced new Information for local authorities about the waste codes and management routes when conducting mass testing using lateral flow antigen tests. This is relevant for schools conducting lateral flow testing.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) lateral flow tests waste codes](#)

There is also new Information about the funding allocations associated with the coronavirus (COVID-19) National Testing Programme for schools and colleges.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) mass testing funding for schools and colleges](#)

HSE Prosecutions and Lessons Learnt

Contractor sentenced following safety failings during demolition work

Blackpool Magistrates' Court heard how Peter Walling's company had been contracted to demolish a former medical centre in Blackburn and clear the land ready for development. Between 15 November and 6 December 2018, four separate incidents occurred on site when an excavator operated by Mr Walling, caused damage to underground cables and a sub-station which caused loss of electricity supplies to the local area and repair costs to the electricity supplier of £49,000. In addition to this, Mr Walling removed asbestos containing materials prior to an asbestos survey taking place, potentially exposing workers to asbestos.

More information can be found here <https://press.hse.gov.uk/2021/02/22/contractor-sentenced-following-safety-failings-during-demolition-work/>

Roofing company fined after worker suffers fatal injuries in fall

Basildon Crown Court heard how on 25 February 2018, Jonathan Moore an employee of R4 Industrial Roofing Cladding Systems Ltd was undertaking repairs on a large warehouse roof in the Port of Tilbury when he stepped on a fragile rooflight, which gave way. He fell more than 10 metres to the concrete floor below sustaining fatal injuries.

More information can be found here <https://press.hse.gov.uk/2021/02/23/roofing-company-fined-after-worker-suffers-fatal-injuries-in-fall/>

Construction company fined after worker suffered multiple burns

Leeds Magistrates' Court heard how on 18 September 2018, the company was demolishing an outbuilding in Littlethorpe, Ripon. During the demolition, the excavator being used struck a wall containing a 415v cable causing it to arc and ignite a fire. Efforts to put out the fire included holding a sheet of tin to shield the surroundings. The tin heated and dropped onto an operative who was working on the site causing burn injuries to the scalp, arm and hands.

More information can be found here <https://press.hse.gov.uk/2021/03/11/construction-company-fined-after-worker-suffered-multiple-burns/>

Gas installer prosecuted for illegal gas work

Liverpool Magistrates' Court heard how from 11 November 2018, John Atherton had installed a boiler and left the flue terminating in the loft allowing products of combustion to enter the property, resulting in the boiler being left in an immediately dangerous condition.

More information can be found here <https://press.hse.gov.uk/2021/03/11/gas-installer-prosecuted-for-illegal-gas-work/>

Theme park fined following fatal water ride incident

Stafford Crown Court heard how, on the 9 May 2017, 11-year-old Evha Jannath was on a school trip when she fell out of a raft on the Splash Canyon water ride into the ride's water trough. She was able to wade to the conveyer belt at the end of the ride and climb onto it, but then fell into a section of deeper water and drowned.

More information can be found here <https://press.hse.gov.uk/2021/03/18/theme-park-fined-following-fatal-water-ride-incident/>

Lessons Learnt (Can you link them to what the school should do – I think it might be worth putting it after each article so they can see the impact on schools when it is not directly related.

1. Disconnect services prior to starting excavation work
2. Ensure a safe system of work is in place during contractor works and the ability to rescue where required.
3. Share your asbestos register and ensure contractors remove any asbestos in a safe manner
4. Ensure planning and supervision is adequate for the task
5. Check your contractors are qualified to do the work being undertaken e.g. they are gas safe registered.
6. Ensure contractors have a suitable and sufficient risk assessment in place

Clinically extremely vulnerable staff returning to the workplace

Shielding advice was paused nationally from 31 March, with further information [available on GOV.UK](#). Clinically extremely vulnerable staff in schools, EY settings and colleges are advised that, if it's possible for them to fulfil their role from home, they should continue to work remotely. If they cannot work from home, they should return to the workplace.

Cases of COVID-19 have fallen considerably across all parts of the country. [The system of controls in place in schools](#), EY settings and colleges, when implemented in line with the school's risk assessment, create an inherently safer environment where the risk of transmission is substantially reduced.

If you your staff are feeling anxious about this change, they are being encouraged to speak to their headteacher by DfE about the safety measures in place. They can also access resources to support their mental health and wellbeing, including [Mentally Healthy Schools](#), [Headspace for Educators](#) and a free 24-hour helpline offered by [Education Support](#).

Education and Schools ebulletin from HSE April 2021

The HSE produced an Education and Schools eBulletin in April 2021. Here is an overview of the information provided:-

Buildings containing reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC)

RAAC precast floor and roof components were used in the construction of a range of buildings, including schools, built between the mid-1950s and the 1980s. Following a component failure HSE has previously highlighted the need for building owners and duty holders to identify buildings incorporating RAAC planks and take action where necessary.

The Department for Education has recently issued guidance for building owners (local authority, academy trust or diocese) on the management of buildings in England containing RAAC - [Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete: Lightweight Concrete Roofs](#). The guidance reinforces the need for schools to ensure that the condition of relevant buildings is assessed by a structural engineer and that effective monitoring and maintenance arrangements are in place to ensure on-going structural integrity.

The Local Government Association (LGA) has previously issued advice about reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete -

Managing asbestos in schools and colleges

The Department for Education has recently issued revised guidance for schools and colleges to help them understand their duties in relation to managing asbestos. This provides information and advice for those who manage schools or oversee the maintenance and repair of school buildings.

Although the guidance has been produced for schools in England, it includes information and links to useful resources for schools and colleges across Great Britain. For further information see [Managing asbestos in your school or college](#).

Preventing musculoskeletal disorders in the early years workforce

In response to increasing intelligence about the high incidence of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) affecting workers in the early years sector, HSE initiated the formation of a working group with interested stakeholders and employee representatives to explore the evidence and provide sector guidance. In addition to RIDDOR reported injuries resulting from specific accidents, it is clear that many workers in the sector experience non-reportable back, knee, neck and shoulder pain as a result of frequent, cumulative exposure to musculoskeletal hazards e.g. repetitive lifting.

The high prevalence of MSDs in the sector appear to be linked to workers having to adopt awkward postures and using furniture and equipment (e.g. chairs and desks) designed to meet the ergonomic needs of young children, to facilitate engagement with young children at their own level. The working group has developed and published guidance on the [Awareness and Prevention of Back Pain and other Musculoskeletal Disorders in the Early Years Workforce](#).

Further research is being carried out by Derby University and additional information is available using the above link. It is hoped that the information from this project will be used to inform the future curriculum, support the development of suitable training for workers in the early years sector and to help embed an understanding of the issues and measures that are effective in preventing injury and ill health.

School fined after member of the public sustains fatal head injury in fall

A school has been fined after a member of the public tripped over a retaining wall and sustained a fatal head injury.

Peterborough Magistrates' Court heard how on 17 February 2017, a family member attended The Leys & St Faith's Foundation School in Cambridge to watch an evening performance. While walking towards the hall the woman tripped over a small retaining wall and fell to the ground sustaining a serious head injury. She died six days later in hospital.

The school had failed to ensure the area was adequately lit. A pedestrian safety risk assessment also failed to identify the risk of falling over a wall and did not take into consideration the lighting conditions or potential effect of poor lighting on pedestrian safety at night.

More information can be found here

<https://press.hse.gov.uk/2021/03/31/school-fined-after-member-of-the-public-sustains-fatal-head-injury-in-fall/>

Launch of H&S Documentation Online

We are proud to announce that from the middle of May 2021 all H&S Codes of Practice, templates forms and flow charts will be available on a specific H&S page on the Link.

As part of your SLA you will automatically have access to this page, which will be password protected.

We will be sending out an email about this webpage nearer the time, however we feel it is positive step forward in the service that we offer to you as a school.

When you get change to look at the page, if you identify a need for and specific documents or templates, please do not hesitate to let us know so that we can develop it accordingly.

CLEAPPS Training

Introduction to Health & Safety for Science Technicians

This is a Self-study course consisting of 4 video presentations interspersed with diy tasks.

As it is a trial the course is free of charge.

Your feedback is important as it will help with the development of this and other online courses, so please leave feedback when prompted at the end of the course.

Please click [here](#) to start the course.

Radiation Protection Supervisor - Part A

This RPS course is intended for teachers new to the role of RPS. If you have any teachers who are interested in online refresher training please let CLEAPPS know.

To view the full course description please the CLEAPPS website:
<http://courses.cleapss.org.uk/Courses/Course-Details.aspx?CourseId=1002074>

Note; Part B of this programme is a hands on, face to face course, designed to develop participants confidence in working with radioactive materials. CLEAPPS will be scheduling Part B in Summer term 2021.

New Health & Safety for the DT department Self Study Course

This course is an introduction to managing Health & Safety for all staff in Design Technology, Food Technology and Art Departments.

It is free for CLEAPSS members.

The training consists of a series of video presentations interspersed with self-study tasks that can be completed at your own pace.

A follow up interactive training session is available to those who have completed this course. There is a charge for this section of the course

Sign into the course here: <https://mailchi.mp/cleapss.org.uk/dt-online-course-sign-up>

Schools Webinar

We are holding another schools webinar. The date for the meeting is:

Date: Monday 10th May 2021

Time: 10.00 – 11.00am

The details of the meeting are:

Format: Zoom. This can be downloaded as an app on mobile phones and laptops.

Meeting ID: 3126023755

Password: 802589

If you would like to attend, please confirm attendance to healthandsafety@slough.gov.uk

Please email questions in advance, to the email address above. These will be treated anonymously so please ensure no personal details are provided.

Findings from HSE's school spot checks and inspections

The HSE have conducted spot checks and inspections in primary and secondary schools over a three-month period from September to December 2020.

Following the initial calls, they found that around 80% of schools had a good understanding of the guidance and what it means to be COVID-secure.

Visits have shown that nearly all of the schools had implemented COVID-secure measures in accordance with the relevant government guidelines. Only a minimal number of inspections (less than 1%) identified contraventions of health and safety..

HSE inspectors did find some areas of concern common to a small number of schools such as social distancing in staff rooms and kitchen/canteens, cleaning regimes, and ventilation in school buildings.

For ventilation, most schools were relying on windows and doors being open for long periods of time. Balancing the room temperature for staff and students with the need for adequate ventilation was a common issue, especially in colder months. HSE has updated its own guidance on [ventilation and air conditioning](#) which should help school leaders to strike this balance.

Other issues that HSE advised on included:

- Generic risk assessments being used which sometimes lacked specific information
 - Lack of effective systems for regular monitoring and review of risk assessments.
 - Fire doors being propped open to aid ventilation.
 - Inappropriate rooms being used for isolating suspected cases.
 - Inadequate arrangements for managing external visitors and/or contractors.
- Additionally, HSE inspectors found many examples of innovative ways in which schools were helping to promote good practice. These included:
- Promoting social distancing by issuing pupils with coloured lanyards to identify their bubble and to help avoid mixing between different groups.
 - Using brightly coloured floor markings in school playgrounds to encourage 2m social distancing between parents and pupils during drop-off and collection times.
 - One school used a year seven science project looking at handwashing and UV light as a means of promoting effective hand hygiene.
 - Producing video walkthroughs explaining COVID-secure arrangements.
 - Use of classroom seating plans to help with self-isolation measures.
 - A click-and-collect app to purchase food from the canteen to reduce queues and avoid crowding.
 - Using video conferencing for staff meetings and phones in classrooms to speak to other staff to reduce face-to-face contact.