

Health & Safety Policy

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Policy aims

At the NEST we are aware of our responsibility to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the provision of a safe environment for staff, learners, visitors and others with whom we may share a space or who are impacted by our activities.

This policy outlines the health and safety (H&S) responsibilities, processes and expectations involved in ensuring that we:

- Provide a safe working and learning environment
- Maintain equipment and facilities to a safe standard
- Embed safe systems of working
- Have robust procedures in place to mitigate risks and address incidents
- Provide the necessary training, supervision and resource to support all staff, learners, visitors, and relevant parties in embedding these practices
- Foster a culture of shared responsibility for H&S
- Consult with staff and learners on matters impacting their H&S

The directors of the NEST (including Health and Safety Lead) are responsible for and oversight of H&S activities. However, we will also promote a culture of shared responsibility and accountability among staff and learners in following this policy.

Links to legislation and guidance

This policy has been written in compliance with the following legislation and guidance:

- Health & Safety at Work Act etc. 1974 and associated regulations
- Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981
- The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992
- The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992
- The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- School Premises (England) Regulations 2012
- The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013
- The Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014
- The Environment Act 2021
- First aid in schools, early years and further education 2022 guidance

Associated policies and further reading

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following associated policies and documents:

Anti-bullying Policy

- Behaviour Policy
- Community Contract
- Community Contract Staff
- Induction Pack
- Medication Policy
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Trips & Visits Policy

Definitions

Accident – An unintended event that results in injury, ill health or death to a person(s).

Accountable – A person who is liable and holds responsibility for risk management and effectiveness of a single, or many activities to agree standards or criteria.

Advice - Providing specific and practical direction on the action(s) to be taken to ensure compliance. Advice stops short of telling a participant exactly what to do, but if followed, should contribute to enabling a compliant solution.

As low as reasonably practicable - When risk has been reduced to a level where applying further control measures would be grossly disproportionate to the benefit that would be gained.

Competent person - A person who has the training, skills, experience, and knowledge necessary to perform a task safely and is able to apply them. Other factors, such as attitude and physical ability, can also affect someone's competence. (See www.hse.gov.uk/competence/what-is-competence.htm for information on competence).

Control measures - Measures that can be taken to reduce the possibility of a risk arising or to reduce the effect of any risk that arises. The control measures are 'elimination, substitution, engineering controls, administrative controls and personal protective equipment (PPE)'.

Dynamic risk assessment - A risk assessment that is used to respond to a change in circumstances, increased risk or failure of control measures, carried out immediately before or while an activity is underway and builds on existing risk assessments.

Hazard - An item, event, activity, or situation with the potential to cause injury, ill-health, or death; damage to or loss of equipment or property; or damage to the environment.

Incident - An event which causes loss or damage to property, plant or equipment.

Likelihood - Estimate of the probability or frequency of a risk occurring in a specified period of time, based on the description of its cause, event and consequences.

Mitigation - An activity or measure that is expected to reduce the impact of a risk event should it occur.

Operational safe system of work - A method of work which puts in place control measures arising from a risk assessment, in order to eliminate identified hazards (where possible) and complete the work with minimum risk taking into consideration the realities of operations.

Reasonably practicable – Is a narrower term than 'physically possible' ... a computation must be made by the owner in which the quantum of risk is placed on one scale and the sacrifice involved in the measures necessary for averting the risk (whether in money, time or trouble) is placed in the other, and that, if it be shown that there is a gross disproportion between them – the risk being insignificant in relation to the sacrifice – the defendants discharge the onus on them. (Definition set by Court of Appeal in Edwards vs National Coal Board [1949]) (HSE).

Residual risk - The level of risk remaining after control measures have been applied.

Risk (safety risk) - Combination of the likelihood of harm (how often) and the severity of that harm (how bad).

Risk assessment - A systematic process of identifying hazards and evaluating any risks associated with those hazards.

Risk management - Process that encompasses systematic hazard identification; risk assessment; hazard risk matrix; risk reduction and risk monitoring, evaluation, and review.

Tolerable (risk) - A level of risk that we are willing to accept in order to perform an activity or achieve an outcome. A tolerable risk is one that is considered to be worth taking, if it has been evaluated and is being managed.

Roles and Responsibilities

Directors

The NEST directors hold ultimate responsibility for H&S management and implementation of this policy. It is the responsibility of directors to:

- Oversee the implementation of this policy
- Foster a culture of shared responsibility for safety
- Ensure sufficient H&S training is provided
- Ensure the premises are safe and regularly inspected
- Work closely with the premises management (Dee Space Community Centre) to gain familiarity and ensure compliance with relevant policies and procedures
- Appoint a Health and Safety Lead who will be responsible for H&S day-today as well as Fire Warden responsibilities
- Ensure there is sufficient physical and mental health first aid training among staff, and that learner to staff ratio is optimal for safety, i.e., one staff to four learners
- Facilitate record keeping
- Appropriately disseminate H&S information
- Liaise with emergency services as necessary
- Ensure that relevant PPE is provided and used correctly

Health and Safety Lead

The designated Health and Safety Lead is responsible for the development, monitoring and review of this policy and its implementation, and for H&S day-to-day.

It is their responsibility to:

- Implement this policy
- Deliver induction H&S training to all staff and learners
- Maintain H&S records including:
 - o Accidents & Incidents Log
 - o Medications Log
 - o Food Management Systems
 - Risk Assessments
 - o Risk Assessments Review Log
 - o PAT Testing Log
 - o COSSH Register
- Ensure sufficient first aiders on site
- Arrange first aid training and ensure qualifications are refreshed as required
- Liaise with premises management (Dee Space Community Centre) to ensure premises and equipment are safe and regularly inspected, including fire alarms and fire safety equipment
- Ensure adherence to premises policies and procedures
- Take on the role of Fire Warden

- Ensure appropriate evacuation and lockdown procedures are in place and practiced
- Manage provision of appropriate PPE
- Comply with Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) <u>Making a RIDDOR report</u>
- Seek specialist advice (<u>Health and Safety Executive</u>) on H&S matters as necessary
- Audit compliance

See Appendix A for Accidents and Incidents Log, Appendix B for Medications Log, Appendix C for Food Safety Management documents, Appendix D for Risk Assessments Template, Appendix E for Risk Assessments Review Log, Appendix F for PAT Testing Log, Appendix G for COSSH Register, Appendix H for Fire Evacuation Procedure, Appendix G for Lockdown Procedure.

Staff

All staff are expected to promote a culture of shared responsibility for H&S and to facilitate a safe working and learning environment. It is their responsibility to:

- Ensure familiarity with and adherence to all H&S procedures and processes including fire safety procedures
- Take proactive responsibility for their own H&S and that of those impacted by their activities
- Maintain an appropriate level of housekeeping
- Report any accidents and incidents to the Health & Safety Lead
- Be confidant to use appropriate incident report logs
- Only use equipment when competent or trained to do so
- Contribute to H&S improvements by providing feedback

Learners and visitors

Learners and visitors who use the space need to be aware of safety processes and to understand their role in contributing to a safe environment. IT is the responsibility of these users of the space to:

- Heed H&S advice
- Be familiar with activity risk assessments and relevant mitigation measures
- Follow H&S procedures in the event of an incident including evacuation
- Report any H&S incidents to a member of staff

Coproduction

We value lived experience at the NEST, and we believe that centring the voice of lived experience is a route to better care. The insight of learners and caregivers, staff and collaborators are invaluable in shaping an environment of trust, collaboration and co-ownership. Intentionally prioritising the perspective of learners and caregivers supports educator understanding of learner needs and can empower learners to contribute to meaningful decision making and to take an active role in their learning. Valuing staff and collaborator feedback can facilitate closer co-working and productive communication.

In a H&S context, this can be incorporated through gathering comprehensive feedback in the event of an incident or a concern. Transparent communication and troubleshooting are encouraged and where appropriate, feedback will be incorporated. Feedback that is not incorporated will be responded to in a constructive way.

Processes

Safe places

For many building safety and maintenance elements, the policies and procedures are the prevue of the premises management, and it is the responsibility of the NEST staff to be familiar with and adhere to them as required. These include:

- Fire safety
 - o Fire evacuation plan
 - o Reviewed annually
- Gas safety
 - o Regular servicing last inspected in July 2025
 - o Valid for 1 year
- Legionella control
 - Professional water temperature and pressure checks conducted monthly
 - o Risk assessment conducted in 2025
 - o Valid for 2 years
- Electrical safety and inspection
 - o All electrical equipment PAT tested annually
 - o Electrical installation certificate signed off in 2022
 - o Valid for 5 years
- Waste disposal arrangements
 - o Waste collection contract with Reading Borough Council

 Storage and disposal arrangements for cleaning products and COSSH

Health and safety inspections

The Health and Safety Lead will carry out half termly inspections and spot checks. The purpose of these inspections is to monitor the effectiveness of our policies and procedures. All staff are expected to inspect all equipment before use and to refer to risk assessments as working documents.

Environmental safety and welfare

Considerations will be made for environmental factors including temperature, lighting, washing facilities, toilets, food preparation areas, cleanliness of spaces, safe storage and general safety. Noise levels will also be considered as well as other stimuli which can be noxious to neurodivergent individuals.

Workspaces should be kept tidy and in the safest conditions possible. Any damage or wear and tear to premises and property including furniture should be reported.

Fire safety

All users of the premises must be aware of the premises fire safety protocols and use the space in a way that reduces risk of fire including preventative housekeeping, avoiding unnecessary accumulation of combustible materials and keeping combustibles separate from ignition sources.

Anyone on site has a responsibility to report a fire immediately by using the fire alarm and to report to the Fire Warden.

The Health and Safety Lead, in the role of Fire Warden will ensure that:

- Staff are trained in fire prevention practices and emergency procedures
- Fire extinguishers are available, and staff are trained in their use
- Fire doors are not blocked or jammed open
- Fire exits are not blocked or used as storage space
- Use of controlled fire is supervised (e.g., stove, candles, etc.)

Evacuation procedures

In the event of a fire alarm or other evacuation emergency, everyone must leave the building by the nearest available exit and assemble at the fire assembly point. Staff are responsible for the safe evacuation of learners in their group and must take a register to ensure all learners are accounted for.

Emergency exits and assembly points are clearly identified by safety signs and notices. Emergency evacuations will be explained to learners each half term. Practice evacuation drills will be conducted once a term.

Visitors including contractors and temporary workers

All visitors will be met on arrival and supervised throughout the duration of their visit. Learners and caregivers will be informed of upcoming visits. All visitors will be made aware of the procedure to follow in the case of a fire alarm.

Visitors who are working with the NEST will be met by a member of the NEST staff. Visitors will be required to sign in and will be given a suitable label/badge to identify them as an approved visitor. Visitors will sign out on their departure. NEST staff are responsible for these visitors. This is described in more detail in our Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.

Contractors and workers will agree H&S practices with the Dee Space management before commencing work. A representative from Dee Space will greet contractors and other visitors. Dee Space staff are responsible for these visitors.

The NEST will work closely with the Dee Space management to ensure clear communication and to ensure we are informed of any planned work. Interaction between learners and contractors will be minimised.

Working from another organisation premises

Local H&S rules must be followed when working in premises under the control of other organisations. If an accident happens while on a different premises it should be reported to the responsible person of that site. This should also be reported to the NEST as soon as possible.

Safe people

Provision of H&S information

All staff will be aware of this policy and its associated processes. Information will be made available in accessible formats for learners and caregivers. Instructional information will be included with materials where necessary.

Wellbeing and stress

The NEST promotes a culture of mutual respect where the health and wellbeing of staff and learners are paramount. Risk assessments will include considerations for identifying emotional and psychological stressors. Measures to reduce these stressors will be implemented.

Staff will be supported in accessing mental health support.

See the <u>HSE guidance around stress and mental health at work</u> for more information.

Safe learner

Learner safety and wellbeing is central to our work. It is the duty of all staff to ensure the safety of learners and to communicate with learners about their needs. We will support learners to develop H&S and welfare knowledge and understanding following the safe learner principles.

See the Skills Funding Agency Safe Learner Blueprint for more information.

Safe activities

Alcohol and illegal drugs

Staff consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs before or during work hours is strictly prohibited. Any staff known to be under the influence will not be permitted to carry on working. Use may result in immediate dismissal.

Learners known to be under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances while on site will be removed from activities and the relevant safeguarding procedures will be followed. Expectations around learner drug and alcohol are included in our Behaviour Policy.

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

The use of hazardous substances will be minimised and adequately controlled. Where harmful substances cannot be eliminated, safe working practices will be employed. Details of hazardous materials will be included in risk assessments for activities in which the substance is used (Appendix D). The associated hazards will be identified using the Manufacturer's Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) and logged in a COSSH Register (Appendix G). All staff and learners will be instructed as to safe usage. PPE will be provided where necessary. Emergency procedures including procedures for spillages will be displayed near hazardous products and in areas where they are routinely used.

Hazardous products will be stored in a locked cupboard with controlled access, in original containers with clear legible labels and in accordance with instructions on the product label. Hazardous products will be disposed of in accordance with any specialist disposal requirements according to the MSDS.

Monitoring and review of substances will be carried out as appropriate. Details of review will be included in COSHH risk assessments.

Display Screen Equipment (DSE)

Display screen users will be provided with equipment and furniture to minimise the impact of regular screen use. Proper layout and management of work areas will support safer use. Regular breaks should be taken to minimise the impact of prolonged screen use. Workstation risk assessments will be carried out. Eye and eyesight tests will be provided for regular DSE users on request.

Electrical equipment

Electrical equipment must only be used for its intended purpose. Users should undertake a visual inspection before all uses. All users are responsible for handling electrical equipment sensibly and safely.

There will be a schedule of testing portable equipment (Appendix F) where devices will be examined by a competent person. Personal electronic devices can only be used on the premises if they have been PAT tested.

The use of electrical extension cables and adaptors should be kept to a minimum. These should be laid safely, stored safely and not overloaded.

Any damage must be reported immediately. Defective equipment should not be used

Equipment and tools

All equipment and tools must meet suitable safety standards. Equipment will be maintained to safe standards. Maintenance schedules will be implemented as necessary. All new equipment will be checked to ensure it meets appropriate education setting standards.

Adequate instruction and information will be provided to ensure safe use of equipment and tools. Some tools will only be available to competent users.

All equipment and tools will be stored appropriately with safety information displayed prominently.

Exclusion periods for infectious diseases

The NEST staff will follow recommended exclusion periods outlined by the UK Health Security Agency and other government guidance. In the event of an epidemic/pandemic, we will follow advice from the UK Health Security Agency about the appropriate course of action.

First aid

Suitable first aid equipment will be provided. Materials other than those specified for first aid may not be stored in the first aid box.

Sufficient staff will be trained in first aid. Details of first aiders will be clearly disseminated to learners and clearly displayed throughout the premises. First aid details will be made clear to new staff members.

In the event of an incident, trained staff will provide immediate first aid assistance. If first aid is required, the individual should be referred to a doctor

for minor injuries. If an injury or illness is considered sufficiently serious to require medical attention, emergency services should be called. If in doubt, the emergency services should be called. The following information should be included:

- Type and seriousness of injury or illness
- Location and directions for vehicle access
- Brief description of the accident and any special rescue equipment needed
- Remain on the line until you are sure that the emergency services have all the information they need
- It is important to ensure that the injured person, and others, are protected from further danger by shutting off any equipment if this can be done safely, cordoning off the area and by warning any other persons undertaking similar operations
- Do not use any equipment that has been involved in an accident until it has been checked for safety, and any investigation has been completed

Learners vulnerable to infection

Some medical conditions can make learners more vulnerable to infections that would rarely be serious in most young people. Some such situations include a vulnerability to chickenpox, measles and parvovirus B19 (slapped cheek disease). Caregivers are expected to share relevant information about such vulnerable young people. Caregivers will be informed immediately if a vulnerable learner is known to have been exposed to such risks.

Manual handling

Manual handling operations will be avoided as far as reasonably practicable where there is risk of injury. Under no circumstances should one person attempt to lift any object that is too heavy or bulky to be lifted by one person. Where available mechanical aides, e.g. trolley, will be used. Risk of injury can also be used by reducing weight of loads, making multiple trips and by asking for assistance.

Approved access stools or steps will be used to reach items above comfortable handling height. Under no circumstances should wheeled chairs be used for this purpose.

Where manual handling operations do occur, all possible steps will be taken to reduce risk of injury. Risk assessments will be carried out and will consider the task, load, environment and capabilities of the individuals. Manual handling training will be provided and included in induction for new staff and learners.

Outdoor activities

Outdoor activities such as walking, field trips, playground use, require their own risk assessment prior to the activity. More adventurous activities such as climbing, kayaking, etc. must be arranged with appropriate qualified third-party instructors.

Sun protection (e.g. hats, sunscreen, sunglasses, etc.) will be encouraged during summer months. Staff will provide sunscreen for the use of learners and role model its use.

See Trips and Visits Policy for more information.

Pregnancy and new birthing parents

Risk assessments will be carried out when any staff member or learner discloses that they are pregnant. Appropriate measures will be put in place to control risks identified.

Responding to aggressive or abusive caregiver behaviour on site

Generally, caregivers will have permission to be on the premises. However, in instances where a caregiver is behaving in an aggressive, abusive or threatening way towards learners, staff or visitors, staff may need to ban that caregiver from the premises. According to the Education Act 1997 it is an offence for someone to cause a disturbance on education setting premises and police will be called to assist if needed. More can be found in our Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.

Responding to learner violence and aggression

Violence can include physically and verbally aggressive or threatening behaviour by a colleague, learner, caregiver or member of the public. These incidents must be reported immediately to the NEST Directors. Procedures for responding are included in more detail in our Behaviour Policy.

If a learner carries out a physical assault on a member of staff, the learner must be removed from the situation until the matter is resolved. The member of staff assaulted must complete a report of the incident and provide a medical statement should they suffer actual bodily harm. Police should always be informed in the case of a serious assault.

Risk assessments

Risk assessments (Appendix D) will be carried out for all activities, locations and materials including those off site. Risk assessments will identify potential risks and who may be impacted by them, identify mitigation measures and seek to reduce the risk to as a low as reasonably practicable. The assessment will include the following:

- Identify hazards
- Identify who may be harmed
- Give potential harm a score
- Describe mitigation measures
- Amend potential harm score accordingly
- Use as a working document
- Maintain transparent and accessible records
- Update at regular intervals, at least annually and following any changes

The Health and Safety Lead is responsible for conducting these assessments, for ensuring they are used as working documents during activities and for reviewing and updating as appropriate. All staff will be trained in the interpretation of risk assessments and all will be expected to follow safe working practices and follow manual instructions.

Severe cold weather

In the event of snow or ice conditions the directors will determine whether staff and learners will be expected to travel to the premises. The directors will communicate the decision to open or close before 08:30 on the day impacted by the weather.

When it is decided to open, staff will ensure a clear path from the main road to the premises entrance. Paths must be maintained in a safe condition. Warm layers will be provided by the NEST for those who have not arrived with warm clothes.

Smoking and vaping

Smoking or vaping is not permitted within enclosed areas including inside company vehicles and vehicles used for NEST purposes. There will be a dedicated smoking/vaping area with appropriate bins. Staff are not permitted to smoke or vape when teaching or supervising young people.

Sun protection

Learners are encouraged to wear clothes that suitably protect form the sun in hot weather including hats, sleeves, sunglasses. SPF skin protection is also encouraged. Where a learner has not provided their own it will be provided by the NEST.

Trips and visits

All such activities, e.g. gaining experience with public transport, must have an approved risk assessment completed beforehand. Learners and caregivers will be informed of trips and visits in a timely manner. Detailed processes are included in our Trips & Visits Policy.

Record keeping and information sharing

Recording an accident

Details of all accidents, incidents and injuries, including near misses and the administration of first aid must be recorded in the Accident and Incident Log (Appendix A). The record should include accidents to learners, staff, visitors, external contractors and members of the public. The accident report should be completed by the injured person or a staff member on their behalf such as a witness or the person who administered first aid. The record should be as detailed as possible.

What to consider when recording:

- Details can be recorded by the casualty or by a staff member, often the first aider, on their behalf.
- The report should be completed in one sitting.
- Use a pencil rather than a pen.
- The casualty may want to take a photocopy of the report.

The following information should always be included in the report:

- The name, address and occupation of the casualty
- The name, address, occupation and signature of the person who completes the report
- The date, time and location of the accident
- A factual description of what happened
- Full details of the injury
- Was first aid required
- Was the incident reported to an external body

All accidents will be investigated by the Health and Safety Lead to establish root causes and identify necessary precautions. Risk assessments till be reviewed to ensure they are optimised.

Incident reporting

Any accident involving a young person under 16 requiring first aid must be reported to their caregiver and any other relevant parties, e.g. social services.

The Health and Safety Lead will be responsible for keeping a record of reportable injury, disease or dangerous occurrence as defined in RIDDOR 2013 regulations.

Reportable injuries, diseases or dangerous occurrences include:

- death
- specified injuries including:

- o fractures, other than to fingers, thumbs and toes
- o amputations
- o any injury likely to lead to permanent loss of sight or reduction in sight
- o any crush injury to the head or torso causing damage to the brain or internal organs
- o serious burns (including scalding)
- o any scalping requiring hospital treatment
- o any loss of consciousness caused by head injury or asphyxia
- any other injury arising from working in an enclosed space, which leads to hypothermia or heat-induced illness, or requires resuscitation or admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours
- injuries where an employee is away from work or unable to perform their normal work duties for more than seven consecutive days
- where an accident leads to someone being taken to hospital
- where something happens that does not result in an injury, but could have done
- near-miss events that do not result in an injury but could have done.
 Examples of near-miss events relevant include, but are not limited to:
 - the collapse or failure of load-bearing parts of lifts and lifting equipment
 - o the accidental release of a biological agent likely to cause severe human illness
 - o the accidental release or escape of any substance that may cause a serious injury or damage to health
 - o an electrical short circuit or overload causing a fire or explosion

These incidents will be reported to the Health and Safety Executive as soon as possible after the incident or within 10 days of the incident. Reports will be made following the <u>Health and Safety Executive guidance on making a RIDDOR</u> report.

Training

Staff training, learning and development are highly encouraged and facilitated by the NEST. All staff are expected to complete minimum training requirements as outlined in our Staff Training Plan and additional learning and related continued professional development are strongly supported.

All staff receive induction training that consists of internally and externally delivered elements. Induction training includes the following H&S elements:

• Safe working principles

- Risk assessments
- Fire safety basics
- Manual handling basics
- Incident reporting
- Record keeping

The Health and Safety Lead will also complete additional training pertinent to the role:

- Health and Safety Level 1
- Blended paediatric and emergency first aid at work (and at least two other members of staff, ensuring sufficient first aiders on site)
- Administration of Medication
- Asthma Awareness
- Food Safety in Educational Settings
- Food Safety and Hygiene Level 2
- Fire Warden training

All staff training is logged and stored in our staff records. Refresher courses are facilitated according to best practice.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually at a minimum. Updated policies will be made available locally and on our website (www.thenest-ed.uk). Ad hoc amendments will be made as new information becomes available and to align with any legislative changes as they arise. Stakeholder feedback, particularly that of learners and caregivers, will be invited and incorporated as much as is practicable. Where quantitative data are available these will be analysed and embedded in policy updates.

A review will be conducted following every incident. The data logged in the Accident and Incident Report Book will be analysed and reviewed by the H&S Lead and cross referenced with the relevant Risk Assessment. Any minor amendments that can be made to processes and mitigation strategies will be made within 10 working days of the incident.

Broader analysis will be conducted annually where all relevant incident data are analysed and trends identified. Processes will be updated according to recommendations from these annual analyses and this policy amended accordingly.

Appendices

Appendix A – Accidents and Incidents Log

Appendix B – Medications Log

Appendix C – Food Management Systems

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