

Code of Practice Health and Safety in Primary Curriculum

Operational Guidance and Risk Assessment



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ABOUT THIS CODE

This Code of Practice contains the best practice for Primary school curriculum activities and has been devised with reference to documents produced by Curriculum Advisory Bodies. It should be read in conjunction with the guidance and procedures outlined in the Health and Safety Manual.

The Code outlines the safe working practices which are necessary to ensure the risks associated with Primary school curriculum activities are adequately controlled.

All Governing Bodies and Headteachers will be required to ensure their school is operating to the requirements of this Code.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The process of risk assessment is required by health and safety legislation. Health & Safety has created a procedure for carrying out risk assessments in educational establishments.

The procedure splits the process up into two distinct areas i.e. general and curriculum activities. This Code has been created on the basis of an assessment of the risks inherent in Primary school curriculum activities. It indicates the main hazards and the protective and preventive measures necessary to control the risks.

The law requires risk assessments to be recorded. Generic assessments are recorded in this Code of Practice, but there must be evidence that these assessments have been consulted and that the protective and preventive measures required have been taken into account.

Headteachers must, therefore, complete the form 'Record of Procedural Arrangements (Primary Curriculum Activities)' which is Appendix 1 of this Code. The form should be reviewed annually for performance monitoring purposes or whenever significant changes occur.

PART ONE: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This part of the Code covers the basic work carried out in science and technology in most Primary schools. However, schools should also refer to the main Codes of Practice for Science and Design and Technology work for Comprehensive schools if they undertake anything other than this basic work.

ELECTRICITY

Hazards:

The main hazards associated with electricity are electric shock, burns and fire.

Controls:

Mains Electricity

- Teach pupils the dangers and emphasise that they must never experiment with mains electricity
- Teachers will have to decide whether they consider pupils competent to plug in and/or to switch on mains electricity. Pupils may well be doing this at home, but they need to be aware of the dangers and how to do it safely and correctly.
- All mains plugs must be of the type with an insulated sleeve on the live and neutral pins. Any plugs not of this type should be changed by a competent person.
- Ensure that the socket is switched off before unplugging or plugging in electrical appliances
- All portable electrical equipment, i.e. with a mains electrical plug attached, must be tested, usually annually. Any frequently used equipment not tested within the last twelve months should not be used. Before use, all equipment should be inspected visually for damage to the casing or the plug, frayed leads, naked wires or exposed inner insulation i.e. blue, brown, green/yellow showing, usually at the plug grip. The cable should also be firmly attached to the equipment. Any equipment not passing this test should be removed from general use until the necessary repairs have taken place and it has been retested.
- The use of adapters is not recommended. There should be sufficient sockets to supply the portable appliances used. Where, exceptionally, more outlets are required, a purpose made 3 or 4 way trail type adapter may be used as a temporary measure (reel extension cables should use should be avoided).
- Always use the correct fuse rating when wiring plugs.

- Keep trailing leads tidy and away from water. Avoid walkways or use the proper protectors to prevent people tripping over them.
- Extension leads should be used fully extended to avoid overheating
- Do not accept donated equipment without checking with the Authority as to its suitability. If you bring in your own electrical equipment to use this should be tested and used only with the approval of the headteacher.
- It is recommended that all mains powered soldering irons have silicon rubber cables and be used in a circuit controlled by an RCD (Residual Current Device). Low voltage soldering irons should be used wherever possible.

Batteries or Low Voltage Power Supplies

- The normal dry cell type of battery is suitable for most electrical work with pupils
- Dispose of batteries when they become old as they may leak
- Rechargeable batteries can also be used, but if they are short circuited they can become very hot. Use only the recommended charger; the charging should only be carried out by a member of staff. High capacity, rechargeable batteries are not recommended.
- Do not mix rechargeable and non-rechargeable cells as this could lead to the wrong type being recharged causing a possible explosion
- Car batteries are not appropriate for use in Primary school teaching activities
- Do not allow pupils to cut open batteries as the contents can be corrosive and poisonous
- Tiny batteries, such as those used in watches, are not suitable for use in Primary school teaching activities
- Low voltage power supplies (up to 12 volts) are a suitable alternative to batteries. Although initially more expensive, they last for many years and can prove to be cheaper and more convenient.

USE OF TOOLS

Hazards:

The main hazards associated with the use of tools are cuts, bruises, dusts, fumes and electrocution.

Controls:

Competence

- The Design and Technology Association (DATA) has created national standards and an accreditation scheme for health and safety training in Design and Technology aimed at D&T coordinators in Primary schools. This also includes guidance for non-specialist Primary teachers. It is recommended that D&T coordinators gain the Primary Health and Safety accreditation.

Details of the standards and the accreditation scheme can be found on the DATA website.

Other Controls:

- Pupils must be taught how to use tools safely
- Pupils should be encouraged to keep their work area tidy and to return tools to their storage point
- Cutting tools present fewer hazards when they are kept sharp, but pupils should be warned that they are very sharp
- When sawing ensure that the blades are firmly attached to the saw. The material being cut should be firmly attached to the bench using a vice, G-cramp or bench hook.
- Avoid the use of wood chisels and tin snips with young pupils
- Craft knives should be used only by responsible pupils and even then only when under supervision. A metal safety rule should be used as a guide. Keep hands behind the cutting edge. Use retractable blades if possible.
- Check periodically that the heads of hammers are secure in their shafts
- Pupils should not use powerful, electric hand tools which work from the mains voltage or rechargeable cells
- If cutting expanded polystyrene with a hot wire cutter the area should be well ventilated to avoid the build up of styrene. Machine sanding or cutting should not be carried out. Hand cutting with hacksaw and manual sanding must be carried out in well ventilated area.

- Although dusts can be dangerous, manual sanding of softwood or Balsa by pupils is unlikely to produce a serious problem. Dust should be removed with a damp cloth or vacuum cleaner
- If sufficient dust is produced to be considered a problem then a face mask should be worn, or an extraction system should be available
- Protect eyes from sawdust and splinters
- Sharp pointed scissors are not recommended for use in nursery and reception classes

GLASSWARE

Hazards:

The main and obvious hazard is cuts from contact with broken or sharp edged equipment.

Controls:

- Where possible use plastic containers rather than fragile glassware
- Teach pupils to handle glassware safely
- When collecting material outside use plastic containers and never glass bottles or jars
- Chipped or broken glassware should be disposed of. The school should have a procedure for dealing with such broken glass (it should not be disposed of in the waste paper bin).
- Do not use ordinary glass containers for heating substances or for transporting hot liquids. Use ovenware glass, ceramic or metal containers instead.

USE OF GLUES AND ADHESIVES

Hazards:

The hazards associated with the use of glues and adhesives are inhalation of toxic vapours, irritation of the skin, burns to the skin and fire due to the flammable nature of some solvent based adhesives.

Controls:

- * Solvent Based Glues (They should be used only where there is not a safer alternative)
- * These glues can be both toxic and flammable. Most are hazardous substances and therefore must comply with COSHH Regulations
- * Understand the hazard warning symbols on containers and follow the instructions
- * If used they must be well ventilated and quantities should be kept to a minimum
- * They must be stored in flammable cupboards when not in use (see Storage of Chemicals later in this section)
- * Wallpaper paste containing a fungicide is not suitable for use by young pupils

Super Glues

- * Super glues are not considered suitable for use in Primary school curriculum activities

Hot Glue Guns

- * Hot glue guns should be of the low temperature type (usually stated on the gun) and only used under supervision
- * Read the manufacturer's instructions before use and ensure all staff are aware of the instructions
- * Hot glue guns should be used over a piece of hardboard or other similar place mat. Stands are available to support them.

Burns from hot glue can be more serious because the glue remains in contact with the skin and pupils could make matters worse by trying to remove it and burn their hands.

In the event of a burn immerse the area in cold water for several minutes.

It is recommended that a container of water, or access to water, is available so that any burns can be immediately immersed in water.

USE OF CHEMICALS

Hazards:

The hazards associated with the use of chemicals are inhalation, ingestion, skin irritation and entry into the eyes by toxic substances. Flammable chemicals also pose a fire and explosion hazard.

Controls:

Acceptable Chemicals

The following chemicals can be used by pupils but care must still be taken because any substance can be harmful in sufficient quantity:

Alum	Epsom Salts	Steel Wool
Bath Salts	Food Colouring	Sugar
Bicarbonate of Soda	Glycerine	Tea (contains tannic acid)
Borax	Health Salts	Vaseline
Carbonated Drinks	Lemon Juice	Vegetable Oil
Chalk	Milk	Vinegar
Charcoal	Salt	Vitamin C
Citric Acid Crystals	Slaked Lime	Washing Soda
Cream of Tartar	Soap	Water Glass
Detergents	Sour Milk	(Sodium Silicate)

Unacceptable Chemicals

The following chemicals should **not** be used by pupils in Primary school science:

Bleach	Hydrogen Peroxide	Pesticides
Caustic Soda	Insecticides	Scale Removers
De-rusting Solutions	Lavatory Cleaners	Weed Killers
Dishwasher Detergent	Oven Cleaners	Washing Machine
Dry Cleaning Fluids	Paint Strippers	Powders

In addition to the above the following may be used for the specific purpose:

Growing Crystals

- Chrome Alum (chromium potassium sulfate, 12-hydrate)
- Potash Alum (aluminium potassium sulfate, 12-hydrate)
- Salt (Sodium Chloride)

These will provide a reasonable range for most Primary schools. They can be used safely by pupils provided the handling procedures outlined below are followed. Other substances can be used but an assessment must be made to ensure they are suitable for use by pupils. Copper Sulphate (copper (II) sulfate) and Manganese Sulphate (manganous sulfate monohydrate), for example, can be used but they are

harmful and should only be handled by teaching staff. Suitable steps must be taken to ensure pupils cannot ingest them.

Chemicals used as Solvents

- Methylated Spirits (highly flammable)
- Surgical Spirits (highly flammable)
- White Spirit (irritant and flammable)

These chemicals must be kept away from naked flames or other sources of ignition. Only very small quantities should be available and it should be used under the direct supervision of the teacher.

Iron Filings

Iron filings are used to demonstrate magnetic fields. There have been a number of incidents when iron filings have entered pupils' eyes. This can be quite serious because the iron filings oxidise.

It is strongly recommended that for demonstrations of magnetic fields the iron filings are kept in clear plastic containers. Proprietary containers specifically for this purpose are available. Alternatively, other suitable containers can be used.

Pupils Handling Chemicals

- * Consider the need for eye protection; during pouring of chemicals, chemicals spitting from a test tube and chemical contaminated fingers rubbed into eyes. If eye protection is required it should comply with BS EN 166:2002
- * Consider the risk of chemicals irritating the skin; use spoons for transferring solid chemicals; use droppers for transferring liquids; consider using protective gloves
- * Consider the possibility of ingestion; inform pupils of the dangers of putting fingers near mouths; ensure hands are washed at the end of the activity
- * Wipe up any spillages at once
- * Only tip out small quantities so it is never necessary to return excess chemicals to their containers

Staff Handling Chemicals

- * Always follow manufacturers' instructions and wear necessary protective clothing/equipment

Storage of Chemicals

- * Keep chemicals in properly labelled containers
- * Never use old food or drink containers to store chemicals

- * Only keep small quantities sufficient for needs
- * Keep a record of all hazardous chemicals stored
- * Lock hazardous chemicals safely away
- * If more than 1/2 litre of flammable liquid is kept it must be stored in a fire resistant cupboard
- * No more than 50 litres of flammable liquids are permitted in any fire resistant cupboard in a workroom

HEATING THINGS

Hazards:

The hazards associated with heating things are burns to pupils and staff from contact with hot surfaces, fire and possibly the production of toxic vapours and fumes.

Controls:

Acceptable Heat Sources

A number of practical activities require the use of heat. The following are suitable and acceptable sources but must be closely supervised by an adult:

- * Naked flame from a correctly fixed Bunsen Burner
- * Hot water (from a tap or kettle)
- * Electric cookers and boiling rings
- * Candles/night lights
- * Hairdryers

Unacceptable Heat Sources

The following heat sources are unacceptable for use in Primary school science activities:

- * Picnic stoves
- * Portable liquid gas burners
- * Spirit burners
- * Hot air paint strippers

Heating Liquids in Test Tubes

- * Always use a test tube holder to hold the hot test tube
- * Never fill to more than a fifth of the test tube
- * Slope the tube and point the open end away
- * Gently shake the tube to ensure even heating
- * Do not use bungs in test tubes when heating
- * Remove the tube from the flame whenever vibrations are felt and return when they die down

General Precautions: Heat Sources

- * Naked flames, when considered essential, should only be used by the teacher
- * Warm or hot water prepared by the teacher is suitable for most purposes
- * If transporting hot water use a kettle rather than a saucepan.
- * Wear eye protection if there is a risk of spitting
- * Correctly installed gas points with Bunsen Burners may be used by older pupils with adequate training and supervision. Teachers should know where the mains gas cut-off tap is.
- * Always turn off the gas at the mains tap when an activity is finished and at the end of the day
- * Use spirit thermometers in preference to mercury filled ones. The 150 mm stirring type are stronger and more stable than the 300 mm type.
- * Beware of hot containers falling over and spilling the contents
- * When using candles stand them in sand in a metal baking tray or foil container
- * Make sure long hair is tied back and loose clothing is not worn
- * Never leave a naked flame unattended
- * If fumes are given off when heating, ventilate the room by opening the doors and windows. Never burn materials which give off harmful fumes.
- * When heating things it is safer for young pupils to stand in order that they can move away quickly in case of an emergency
- * Do not use electrical items near water unless they are designed for that purpose

- * Do not heat glass unless it has been made for that purpose
- * Ensure all heating activities take place under close adult supervision

ANIMALS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Hazards:

The hazards associated with the keeping of animals are the transmission of disease, poisonous bites or stings. There is also the hygiene aspect to consider from animal waste products.

The CLEAPSS document 'Bringing Pets and Other Animals into Schools' (PS 55) provides guidance on the kinds of animals that are and are not acceptable in schools.

Both documents can be found on the [CLEAPSS website](#).

The lists below are not exhaustive but serve to illustrate types of animals that are and are not acceptable in Primary schools.

Animals typically kept in schools include:

- Cold or tropical water fish
- Small mammals
- Giant African snails
- Stick insects
- A variety of other animals such as brine shrimps, toads and non venomous snakes

Terrapins are sometimes considered but are not normally suitable for the inexperienced as they are not the easiest animals to maintain, grow to a large size and have been reputed to be carriers of salmonella. Good hygiene, however, will resolve the issues of infection if these animals are kept.

Tortoises, also reputedly salmonella carriers, are now very expensive and not often readily available.

The following animals are **unsuitable** for keeping in school either because it is illegal or because they typically present unacceptable risks (for example, of injury or the transmission of disease):

- Monkeys and apes
- Parrots or parakeets
- Crocodiles and alligators
- Poisonous reptiles
- Mammals and birds taken, even if 'legally', from the 'wild'
- Endangered species – legally protected species include doormice, bats, great crested newts, natterjack toads, smooth snakes, sand lizards and a variety of invertebrates.

Controls:

Some animals may not be suitable for all circumstances. For example, small mammals are less suitable for use in infant classrooms since the pupils may have difficulty in handling them with sufficient care. It is important that staff assess the needs of the animals and their suitability for the particular class.

Children known to have allergic reactions to animals must have restricted access to animals that may trigger a response.

General Precautions: Animals

- * Proper planning regarding the care and maintenance of animals is essential before deciding to keep animals in a school environment. Consult a reliable reference book before keeping any animal.
- * Always use reputable suppliers
- * Whole, or parts of, dead animals should not be brought into school
- * Dead animals are likely to be infected and should be removed from the school as quickly as possible. They should be placed in a plastic bag and then in newspaper and put in the dustbin for disposal.
- * If animals run free on the floor or on tables, ensure that the surfaces are cleaned afterwards
- * Pupils must wash their hands before and after handling animals
- * Keep animal housing clean and disinfect at regular intervals
- * Ensure animals are correctly fed
- * Make suitable arrangements for holiday periods
- * Injured animals should be removed from school as soon as possible. Consult the local Vet, RSPCA, etc. for advice.

USE OF PLANTS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Hazards:

The main hazards associated with the use of plants are that many plants are poisonous or irritants. Some pupils may be particularly vulnerable, for example those with allergies or asthma.

Controls:

Suitable Plants

The following plants are suitable for use in Primary schools. The list is not exhaustive but gives a broad general cross section.

General Use	Plants to illustrate growth from seeds	Plants with interesting growth forms
Begonia Busy Lizzy	Broadbean Cress	Bromeliads Cacti
Cissus Antarctica Coleus Exacum Affine Fuchsia Geranium Grevillea Robusta Mother of Thousands Philodendron Rhoicissus Rubber Plant Swiss Cheese Plant Tradescantia Umbrella or Nilegrass	Dwarf bean Maize Mongbean Mustard Oats Pea Runner bean Wheat Edible fruit pips Avocado Date Lemon Orange Peanut	Succulents

Unsuitable Plants

The following plants are either poisonous or irritant and therefore should not be used for Primary school science activities.

Black Bryony Black Nightshade	Henbane Holly	Red Kidney Beans Rhubarb (except leaf stalks when ripe)
Caster Oil Seeds Cuckoo Pint Deadly Nightshade	Laburnum Monkshood (Aconitum) Potato (except tubers when not green)	Spindle Tree Tomato (except fruits) White Bryony
Giant Hogweed Hemlock	Privet Ragwort	Woody Nightshade Yew

General Precautions: Plants

- * Teach pupils to avoid touching their eyes while handling plants
- * Teach pupils never to taste a plant unless they are absolutely sure that it is safe
- * Attractive fruits and seeds are often poisonous; ensure pupils are aware of this
- * Pupils should always wash their hands after handling plants
- * Avoid using seeds dressed with pesticides

MICRO-ORGANISMS

Hazards:

The main hazard associated with work with micro-organisms is that of infection through inhalation, ingestion or entry through the eyes or cuts to the skin.

Controls:

Suitable Materials for use in Primary Schools

Micro-organisms studied in Primary schools are limited to mould of one sort or another and yeast. It is important that only microbes which are known **not** to be a hazard to humans are used. The following materials are suitable:

- Mildews and rust on weeds and garden plants
- Soil
- Baker's Yeast
- Pond Material
- Mouldy Cheese, bread or fruit yoghurt
- Hay or Grass infusion in rain water
- Milk

Unsuitable Work in Primary Schools

Growth of Cultures on Special Growth Media - the culture of micro-organisms requires special skills and hygienic techniques to prevent contamination and the risk of infection. Therefore this should not be attempted in Primary schools unless the person has been trained in these skills and has the necessary knowledge to be able to do so safely.

General Precautions: Micro-Organisms

- * All material used for growing microbes should be in enclosed containers. Pupils should **NOT** have direct contact with these microbes and should only observe through the sealed container. The spores produced by many microbes e.g. moulds, may cause allergic reactions
- * When growing yeasts, the container should **NOT** be completely sealed. Carbon dioxide is produced and therefore the container should only have a cotton wool plug fitted. This will allow the carbon dioxide to escape but prevent spores from entering or escaping.
- * Wipe up spills immediately. Use a disinfectant and rubber gloves.
- * Date all cultures left for long term study
- * Do **NOT** leave cultures any longer than necessary and dispose of if they start to smell
- * Never use material from dustbins or contaminated water for investigations

- * Cover all cuts and abrasions before starting work with microbes. Check that pupils are also protected
- * Teach pupils to wash hands thoroughly before and after working with micro-organisms
- * Teach pupils never to put anything into their mouths during this work

Disposal of Cultures

Disposal of cultures should only be undertaken by teachers using the following procedures:

- * Wear disposable gloves
- * Carefully open the container so as not to disperse the spores and add 1% freshly prepared Milton solution
- * Soak overnight
- * Seal the culture in a plastic bag and place in the dustbin
- * Glassware can be washed up after overnight soaking and re-used
- * Keep the Milton in a secure and safe place as it is also a hazard

LIGHT AND SOUND

Hazards:

The main hazards associated with light and sound are the sun's rays causing damage to the eye or fire if shone through convex lenses and hearing damage caused by exposure to loud noise.

Controls:

- * Teach pupils never to look directly at the sun
- * Be aware that the focusing of the sun's rays with a convex lens can cause a fire. Lenses, especially large ones, should be stored out of direct sunlight.
- * Teach pupils that when using binoculars and telescopes to take care not to look directly at the sun, even accidentally
- * Special care should be taken when viewing an eclipse of the sun. The sun's image should be projected on to a screen and **NOT** viewed through sunglasses, smoked glass or plastic.
- * Care should be taken when pupils hold things close to their eyes
- * Warn pupils that very loud noises can permanently damage their hearing;

e.g. i-Pods, personal stereos, disco music, shotguns, machinery, etc.

SCIENCE EXPERIMENTS INVOLVING PUPILS

Blood and Cheek Cell Sampling

The County Council has banned all experiments involving the use of human blood.

FOOD PREPARATION

Hazards:

The hazards associated with pupils preparing food are contaminated equipment and worktops; potentially the food itself; and dirty or contaminated hands and clothing, all of which may lead to infectious disease and food poisoning.

Kitchen areas also present serious burn, scald, fire and explosion hazards due to the number of hot surfaces and the use of gas cookers. The use of knives and power mixing equipment provides further hazards such as cuts, punctures and trapping of fingers and hands.

Controls:

Staff Competence

Staff involved in teaching any aspect of food handling must be suitably competent.

The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) Foundation Certificate in Food Hygiene was superseded, with effect from 31 March 2007, by Level 2 Awards in Food Safety. These awards are now the recommended qualifications for all food handlers. Go to the [CIEH's course finder database](#) to find a local training provider.

Hygiene

- Warm water, soap and towels (preferably disposable) must be available
- Staff and pupils must wash hands before and after handling food
- If a member of staff or a pupil has a skin, nose, throat or bowel infection they must **NOT** handle food
- Pupils should not wear jewellery or nail varnish when handling food
- Blue waterproof dressings should be used on cuts or abrasions
- All dry foods must be stored in suitable airtight containers in clean cupboards suitably protected against vermin, flies etc.
- Regular checks should be carried out on 'best before' dates

- A refrigerator operating at temperatures below 5°C is essential for storing perishable and cooked foods; a thermometer should be available
- Keep meat, fish, or dairy products either below 5°C or, if they are cooked and waiting to be eaten hot, above 63°C
- Do not store uncooked meat, poultry or fish above or near cooked foods
- Cracked or chipped china should be disposed of
- Storage areas should be cleaned regularly with appropriate cleaning materials (at least every half-term)
- Food waste should be allocated a separate bin with polythene liner and bins must be emptied immediately after cookery sessions
- Food preparation surfaces must be cleaned before use. If possible, specific tables should be kept solely for food use.
- Wooden chopping boards or other wooden equipment should not be used. Only polypropylene or polyethylene chopping boards are suitable.
- Pupils should wear clean aprons and tie back long hair
- Fridges and freezers used for the storage of food should not be used for any other purpose

Use of Cookers

- * Only teachers should light a gas cooker. Use an automatic igniter if fitted, or a spark generator.
- * Always turn off the gas at the mains tap when an activity is finished and at the end of the day
- * The cooker should be located in an area on its own away from other equipment, doors, passageways, etc. The area around it should be uncluttered and the floor should be kept clean.
- * The area around the cooker must be free from combustible materials; there should be no wall displays, pinboards, etc. nearby
- * Pupils should be discouraged from wearing loose clothing. A fire blanket should be kept in the area and staff should know how to use it. Portable cooker trolleys should have a fire blanket. Staff should know the means of exit from the cooking area and how to raise the alarm if necessary.
- * Handles should not stick out over the edge of cookers

- * A Microwave oven is safe as long as the door and the seal are working properly. However, items being taken out can be deceptively hot - use oven gloves.
- * Pupils should be closely supervised at all times. Frying should not be carried out in Primary Schools.
- * Cookers used for food should not be used for other purposes

General Precautions: Food Preparation

- * Pupils must be made aware of the hazards associated with cooking and that special care is needed
- * Pupils must not carry bowls or other containers of hot water
- * Personal possessions other than those necessary for the activity should be kept clear of food preparation areas
- * With very young pupils avoid activities involving boiling sugars or oils
- * Dry oven gloves must be used when moving hot tins, dishes, etc. Oven gloves in need of repair should not be used.
- * When lifting lids from boiling pans, kettles, etc., care should be taken to avoid contact with the steam
- * Teach pupils to test if something is hot by placing a hand over the top rather than touching it
- * Saucepan handles should be positioned safely
- * Know how to isolate gas and electric supplies
- Ensure you check your equipment before use and on a regular basis (see maintenance schedules in 'Provision and Use of Work Equipment' guidance contained in Section B27 of the Health and Safety Manual).

PART TWO: USE OF COMPUTERS BY PUPILS

Hazards:

The main hazards associated with work with display screens include, musculoskeletal disorders (e.g. upper limb aches and pains caused by poor posture), eyestrain and fatigue and stress. There are also tripping hazards from cables and manual handling hazards from transporting equipment around the school.

Controls:

- * Use a specially designed trolley to house and transport portable computer systems wherever possible

- * Ensure equipment is secure on the trolley, particularly when it is being moved
- * Keep leads and cables tidy
- * Lay out the bench/trolley to ensure there is sufficient working space in front of the keyboard
- * When computer equipment is left unattended it must be switched off unless it is being used for a specifically designed task; in which case it should be in a safe location.
- * Provide adequate space around workstations for unhindered staff and pupil movement
- * Position the screen to avoid reflections
- * Encourage pupils to adopt postures which do not impose a strain or require awkward movements

In most tasks natural breaks occur as part of the inherent organisation of the work. Where natural breaks do not occur, rest pauses should be introduced to prevent fatigue. In the classroom projects using computers will not generally involve intensive keyboard work. However, some tasks may be visually demanding and teachers should ensure that such work is alternated with less visually demanding tasks.

Section B18 of the Health and Safety Manual – ‘Working with Visual Display Units’ - gives detailed guidance on workstation set up and recommended user posture.

PART THREE: ART WORK

INTRODUCTION

This part of the Code covers the basic art work carried out in most Primary schools. However, schools should also refer to the main Code of Practice for Art if they undertake anything other than this basic work.

Several of the hazards associated with Art have already been dealt with in Part One of this Code or Practice, i.e use of tools, glues and adhesives. You should refer to that part of the guidance when making your assessment of art work.

Hazards:

The hazards associated with art work are many and include toxic vapours from paints, solvents and fumes from kilns. The risk of fire is significant when using kilns, batik boilers etc. and also from flammable liquids such as paints and solvents. Hazards are also present from sharp objects such as craft knives, guillotines etc. Toxic dusts can be produced by certain clays and glazes.

Controls:

Spray Paints

- * Most ordinary paints used in school art lessons are of low toxicity and do not present a risk in use. Some schools use spray paints. These contain solvents which can be highly flammable and they also present health risks. They should be used only in well ventilated areas and for short duration. There should be no sources of ignition.

Guillotines and Rotary Trimmers

- * Guillotines may only be used by staff
- * They must be guarded and should be stored away from pupils with the blade left down
- * Rotary trimmers may be used by pupils provided they have been shown how

Kilns

Fire Precautions:

- * Under no circumstances should flammable material be stored or used in or adjacent to the kiln within 2 metres.
- * Fire fighting equipment must be available, i.e. carbon dioxide extinguisher, and must not be obstructed

General Precautions:

- * It is recommended that a device to control the temperature of operation is fitted
- * Where kilns are located in open areas they should have protective cages which prevent access except through a gate which can be locked. It must be borne in mind that the exterior of a kiln can become very hot.
- * An indicator to show that the kiln is in operation should be fitted. This indicator would normally be a light, sited where it can be readily seen from the normal working area.
- * The operating instructions should be clearly displayed in the kiln room and must include start-up, operating, shut down and emergency procedures
- * It should be noted that severe burns can be inflicted and considerable damage to a kiln can result if a kiln is suddenly opened at a high temperature. Kilns should not be opened at temperatures above 250°C or unloaded until the fired items have cooled completely.

- * Great care should be exercised when viewing through spy or bung holes. The procedure for dealing with burns should be known by all appropriate staff.

Inspection:

In order to ensure they are maintained in a safe condition, regular formal inspections are required. Before use and termly visual checks should be carried out by a member of staff and a formal inspection will be required by a specialist maintenance contractor on the following schedule: -

- * Use at least once a week: - yearly inspection
- * Use at least once a fortnight: - two yearly inspection
- * Use less frequently (e.g. monthly, termly yearly): - three yearly inspection

Schools must ensure that suitable arrangements have been made with a specialist contractor to carry out these inspections.

Door Interlocks:

Kilns **must** have an interlock to prevent the door being opened when the power supply is switched on. There are a number of methods of interlocking including:

Captive Key: the key is fixed to the door. It enters the lock when the door is closed; when it is turned the power is switched on.

Trapped Key: e.g. Castel Key - the same key fits the door lock and the power supply switch; it is trapped in the door unless it is locked shut. Only then can it be used to switch on the power.

Limit Switch: a switch is operated by the door and the power is switched off when the door is opened.

Temperature Control:

- * Although some potters use traditional methods(e.g. cones) to measure the temperature, school kilns should, as a minimum, have a pyrometer
- * A more sophisticated method is a 'programmable controller' which controls the temperature of the kiln through the full firing cycle, raising and lowering the temperature as required. The controller also minimises the risk of over-firing the kiln and will switch off if any fault develops. The fitting of 'programmable controllers' is **strongly recommended**. Much, however, will depend on the experience of the teacher. The controller would be particularly beneficial if the teacher is not a specialist potter.

Clay Dusts and Glazes

Clay dusts and clay glazes contain silica which can be harmful to health. The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH) therefore applies. The risk is controlled by the following methods:

- * Floors should be swept by a wet method or using an industrial vacuum cleaner
- * All working surfaces should be cleaned by a wet method
- * Clay dropped on the floor should be removed at once
- * Hands should be washed after using clay
- * Only glazes approved for use in schools should be used

Batik Boilers

Batik boilers are used in art to melt wax for use in batik work. The most significant hazard is hot wax. In addition the equipment is electrically operated. To minimise the risk of burns and prevent electric shock the following precautions must be taken:

- * Ensure the plug is wired correctly and fitted with the correct fuse. The boiler should be visually inspected by a member of staff before use and termly and be included in the annual combined inspection and test of portable electrical equipment.
- * Avoid the use of extension leads where possible
- * Position equipment so that trailing leads cannot cause equipment to be pulled over. If possible secure the boiler to the work surface
- * Place equipment on a fire proof surface
- * Do not operate the boiler near highly flammable liquids or in damp rooms
- * Ensure the boiler is used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions
- * Use the type of wax recommended by the manufacturer
- * Ensure there is sufficient wax in the boiler before switching it on. Generally this is between half and three quarters full, but check manufacturer's instructions.
- * Wear safety spectacles or goggles
- * Do not move the boiler while the wax is in liquid form
- * Do not leave the boiler switched on or unattended

- * Remove wax from lid and side of the boiler with a cloth immediately after use. Do not wash or immerse in water.
- * Ensure pupils work under the supervision of an adult

PART FOUR: PHYSICAL EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

This part of the Code covers basic PE work carried out in most Primary schools.

Schools should also refer to the current (2012) edition of 'Safe Practice in Physical Education and School Sport' published by The Association for Physical Education which the County Council has adopted as its standard for safe practice in PE and issued to all schools. Schools should be familiar with Part 1 of the afPE guidance and with Part 2 (activity specific) as appropriate.

Other sources of advice are on the [afPE website](#).

Hazards:

Hazards in PE can be reduced through careful management, i.e. by balancing appropriate challenge and acceptable risk. Schools should plan under the three broad headings of *People*, *Context* and *Organisation*, as detailed in the afPE risk assessment guidance adopted by the County Council.

The main hazards associated with PE work are slips, trips and falls, equipment collapsing, insufficient space, hard surfaces and manual handling of equipment. Further hazards are drowning and infection in swimming pools.

Controls:

Schools must create and maintain a risk assessment for each PE work area.

Inspection of Equipment (Indoor/Outdoor)

- * All indoor physical education facilities (gymnasium, halls, sports halls etc.) and outdoor play equipment must be inspected regularly.
- * Further guidance on outdoor play equipment can be found in the document Outdoor Play Equipment Guidance for Schools. WIRED link Health & Safety > Document library > PE (Practices and Equipment), Play Equipment > Outdoor Play Equipment Guidance for Schools

Clothing and Footwear

- * This must be appropriate to the activity. It is not acceptable to work in stockinged feet because they do not grip the floor. Bare foot work is acceptable when floor conditions are suitable, i.e. smooth, clean and without splinters. Bare feet should always be used for work in gymnastics and dance.

- * Wherever possible clothing allowing freedom of movement should be worn, appropriate to the activity.

Personal Effects (Jewellery etc)

- Schools are recommended to include a section in their prospectus / school rules which explains the rationale for the removal of personal effects
- The following principles should be applied –
- (page 30 - 31 of afPE guidance refers)
 - a) all personal effects should be removed
 - b) if they cannot be removed, staff need to take action to try to make the situation safe
 - c) if the situation cannot be made safe, the individual pupil(s) concerned should not actively participate.
- Some pupils may need to wear personal effects such as glasses or hearing aids. In these circumstances, the adult in charge should determine whether it is more hazardous for them to actively participate wearing such items, both in terms of their own safety and that of the other pupils.
- Taping over ear studs is sometimes used to make the situation safe. However, the adult in charge should be confident that this strategy will be effective.
- Teachers must not remove or replace earrings. Parents cannot transfer this responsibility to teachers.

Use of Equipment

- * Trampolines and trampettes which give high rebound must not be used in Primary schools
- * Before use all apparatus should be checked by the teacher to ensure it is securely fixed and stable
- * Apparatus should be placed taking account of all the activities in the room and any obstacles, for example, pianos, doors and radiators
- * Broken and dangerous items must be removed from use, marked as defective and reported immediately
- * Basic rules on the use of apparatus should be established, e.g. numbers who may use it, height or weight restrictions etc.

Ball Games

- * The appropriate ball must be used for each activity. This should, wherever practical, be the appropriate size and weight for the maturation of the pupils taught.
- * The correct rules for the game must be observed. However, to play some games safely indoors or in small areas, the numbers of players will need to be reduced and extra modified versions/rules applied. The teacher must assess the activity and take account of these factors.
- * Many ball games have adapted rules to encourage the development of skills in younger players, e.g. High Fives, Netball, Mini Soccer and Tag Rugby. Teachers should make themselves aware of these or seek guidance from the PE Adviser.
- * If necessary, restrictions should be introduced to prevent damage to lights, doors and windows, etc.

Storage

- * Items should be stored so as to minimise risk of injury to those using the store room or area

Mats

- * Mats with cellular (polyurethane) foam give off toxic fumes in a fire. PE mats should be stored away from possible sources of flame.
- * Where there are suitable storage areas, mats should be stored in them and where the stores have doors these should be kept closed
- * Where the covering of mats is torn the mats should be recovered or repaired
- * Mats should always be regarded as a piece of apparatus. In gymnastics they are primarily used to provide a cushioned area for floor work; and to identify areas where pupils will plan to land feet first when jumping from apparatus.
- * Typical 25 millimetre thick mats are adequate for most landing needs in school gymnastics
- Mats should **never** be placed under wall bars to 'protect' children from falling. Mats are inadequate for this purpose and can lead to pupils forming an incorrect view of their own safety which may lead to risk taking and dangerous actions. (Pages 118 - 120 of afPE guidance refer).

Free-Standing Goal Posts

- Free-standing goal posts should:

- a) be obtained from recognised sports equipment manufacturers
- b) be assembled in accordance with manufacturer's instructions
- c) be regularly inspected and maintained
- d) not have any sharp edges
- e) be properly stabilised when in use so that they do not fall over when struck (Page 112 of afPE guidance refers).

Individual and Special Needs

Pages 80 - 87 of afPE guidance give detail on safe practice in PE for pupils with speech and language, sensory, physical, behavioural, and cognitive or a combination of two or more of these special needs.

First Aid

- Provision for those working off site should also be made. A travelling first aid kit and clear, effective procedures for contacting the emergency services is considered to be the minimum requirement.

Swimming

Emergency Procedures:

Health & safety has produced Operational guidance on Health & Safety Management of Swimming Pools. All schools with a pool must comply with its requirements. The following points must be noted when operating a pool:

- * There must be a clearly defined emergency procedure known to all pool users
- * An emergency alarm or telephone should be available at the poolside
- * A long pole and life saving apparatus must be readily available to assist a swimmer in difficulty
- * The pool depth must be clearly indicated

Supervision and Competence:

- * Part One of the Swimming Operational guidance gives details of the required supervisory and competence levels of staff during school swimming. No form of school swimming can occur unless at least one member of supervisory staff holds a valid swimming pool lifesaving award. This applies regardless of the pool depth.
- * For swimming lessons or recreational swimming the ratio of pupils in the water to teachers or instructors should normally be limited to 20:1. However, in varying the pupil/teacher ratio the size and design of the pool, depth, and pool visibility (e.g. glare) and temperature of water as well as age and competence of the class must all be taken into account by the head of the establishment or delegated representative. For pupils with special needs the ratio should be reduced according to the severity of their disability.

- * The teacher or swimming instructor in charge of a group in the water must instruct and supervise from the pool side from positions where everyone in the group can be watched. However, where an additional adult is available, it is permissible for this person to enter the water to assist in teaching.
- * Teachers accompanying pupils to and from public pools for teaching by a swimming instructor are responsible to the head of the establishment for the welfare of pupils. Where these groups exceed 20, the accompanying teacher should be capable of teaching or supervising the remainder. If they are unable to do so they must inform the swimming instructor so that the lesson can be organised accordingly. Page 206 of afPE guidance refers.

Hygiene:

- * Changing room floors should be cleaned regularly and kept as dry as possible
- * Pupils should not be allowed to share towels or exchange footwear
- * Pupils should be encouraged to use the toilets before swimming and this should be part of the induction for pupils. When available, showers should be used before and after swimming.
- * Food and drink must not be allowed in the pool area
- * The wearing of outdoor shoes at the poolside where swimmers stand and move about should be discouraged
- * Pupils should be trained to dry themselves thoroughly, paying particular attention to hair, ears and feet

PART FIVE: FURTHER INFORMATION

The following documents provide further advice:

Title	Author	Date	Publisher
Topics In Safety 3 rd Edition	ASE	2001	ASE
Make It Safe!	NAAIDT	2001	NAAIDT
A Guide to Safe Practice in Art & Design	NSEAD	2004	DfES
Safe Practice in Physical Education and School Sport	afPE	2012	Coachwise Ltd

Appendix 1

RECORD OF PROCEDURAL ARRANGEMENTS (PRIMARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES)	
1. COMMUNICATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES: This form should be completed by the Headteacher <div style="float: right; text-align: right;">Initial</div>	
a) All members of teaching staff are familiar with the relevant aspects of Code of Practice 'Primary School Curriculum Activities'.	<input style="width: 80px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
b) The control measures described in the Code and associated texts are in place or alternative control measures/variations are outlined below.	<input style="width: 80px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
2. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES: a) Potential emergency situations have been identified and appropriate procedures adopted. <div style="float: right; text-align: right;"><input style="width: 80px; height: 20px;" type="text"/></div>	
3. ALTERNATIVE /ADDITIONAL CONTROL MEASURES/VARIATIONS <div style="float: right; text-align: right;"><input style="width: 80px; height: 20px;" type="text"/></div>	
These arrangements and assessments will be reviewed annually and whenever there is a significant change in the work activity or personnel. Name: _____ (Headteacher) Signature: _____ Date: _____	

REVIEW OF PROCEDURES AND ASSESSMENTS

Review Date	Procedures still valid?	Signed	Name