Contents

1. Introduction – Equal Opportunities and Scope....2
2. Headteacher Responsibilities....2
3. Employee Responsibilities....2
4. Thermal conditions....2
4.1 Temperatures in indoor workplaces....3
4.2 Work in hot or cold environments....4
4.3 Ventilation....4
5. Lighting....4
6. Access / Egress....5
7. Space....5
8. Floors / Stairs / Traffic routes....5
9. Glazing / Windows....7
10. Doors and Gates....7
11. Escalators and Moving Walkways....7
12. Storage....7
13. Electrical Equipment....8
14. Photocopiers / Laser Printers....9
15. Cleanliness and Waste Materials....9
16. Welfare....9
16.1 Sanitary Conveniences and washing facilities....9
16.2 Drinking Water....10
16.3 Accommodation for clothing and facilities for changing....10
16.4 Rest Facilities....10
16.5 First Aid Rooms....10
17. Smoke Free....10
18. Workplace Safety Inspections....11
19. Refurbishments and New Workplaces....11

1. Introduction – Equal Opportunities and Scope

The environment in which people work can have a significant effect on productivity, morale, health and wellbeing. Individuals react differently to different stimuli (some being extremely sensitive to light, others more sensitive to temperature). User control of the working environment should be encouraged where possible.

Workplace conditions need to meet the health, safety and welfare requirements of each member of the workforce, and this should include people with disabilities. This document deals with general workplace requirements, however headteachers and premises managers must consider the individual needs of people with disabilities and ensure their working environment does not introduce additional health and safety hazards (See Risk assessment guidance - considering employees with a disability (G661).

Managers must ensure that all reasonable adjustments or supportive measures are considered to allow equality of access and opportunity regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, faith or religion, gender identity, pregnancy or marital status, in line with obligations under equality legislation.

2. Headteacher Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of headteachers to ensure risk assessments for their employees' working environment are undertaken. An assessment of the workplace, the risks within that workplace and the way it is used will have a bearing on any actions required to ensure any problems with conditions can be addressed. Headteachers are also responsible for ensuring inspections are undertaken to ensure maintenance and safety issues are monitored and identified for action as appropriate.

Premises Managers should speak with their normal building maintenance contact (this is NPS for schools in the BMP) where failures in any systems are evident.

3. Employee Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all employees to follow the guidelines within this policy.

4. Thermal conditions

A poor thermal environment can have an adverse effect on employees' health and well -being. It is important, therefore, to achieve comfortable levels of temperature and heating in premises, and to ensure measures/advice are available concerning comfortable levels for those working outside (see Severe weather compliance code (P647). As individuals, we will all have perceptions of what comfort levels suit us, but as a general rule the following should apply:-

4.1 Temperatures in indoor workplaces

Environmental factors (such as humidity and sources of heat in the workplace) combine with personal factors (such as the clothing a worker is wearing and how physically demanding their work is) to influence what is called someone's 'thermal comfort'.

For parts of the building where there are normal levels of occupant activity e.g. classrooms, the temperature should normally be at least 18°C.

A sufficient number of thermometers should be provided so that people can monitor the temperature inside their workplace building. Temperature readings should be taken close to workstations, at working height and away from windows.

If the temperature has not reached 18°C within the first hour of working, Premises Managers should investigate any failure in the heating system and contact their normal contact for building maintenance where they have one (this is usually NPS for schools in the BMP)..

If portable heaters are to be used (these should only be used in emergency situations), then it is vital that:-

- They do not obstruct walkways or fire escape routes / exits
- They are sensibly located away from any combustible materials / substances
- Any cables do not present a tripping hazard
- There is no risk of people being burned by coming into contact with a hot surface.
- Portable heaters that burn oil or paraffin are not to be used - they present an increased fire risk.

Although there is no legal maximum temperature specified, it is important to take measures to minimise discomfort during very hot weather conditions. In extreme hot weather, fans and opening windows to increase ventilation may be used.

Premises managers should speak with their normal building maintenance contact where failures to air conditioning/cooling plants are evident.

Where the warm conditions are not as a result of any mechanical failures, premises managers should investigate if there are any cooler areas within the building where employees and pupils may feel more comfortable. Consider allowing more frequent comfort breaks and ensuring there is a plentiful supply of water. Where this is not practical, headteachers may need to make local decisions as to whether alternative working arrangements may be necessary , especially for those who may be more prone to heat

stress. Guidance on steps that can be taken to assist more comfortable conditions can be found in the Severe weather policy and procedure P647.

4.2 Work in hot or cold environments

The risk to the health of workers increases as conditions move further away from those generally accepted as comfortable. Risk of heat stress arises, for example, from working in high air temperatures, or high levels of humidity. Cold stress may arise, for example, from working in the open air during winter and similarly for heat stress during the summer.

Assessment of the risk to employees' health from working in either a hot or cold environment needs to consider both personal and environmental factors. Personal factors include body activity, the amount and type of clothing, and duration of exposure. If the work is outside, sunlight, wind velocity and the presence of rain or snow are factors which affect the workers thermal comfort.

4.3 Ventilation

Legislation requires ventilation to be adequate. In many cases, windows or other openings will provide sufficient ventilation in some or all parts of the workplace. Natural ventilation caused by the movement of air through windows or doors is preferable, but this can be supplemented with the use of fans/ducting systems or air conditioning where natural ventilation is not sufficient. Ventilation should also remove and dilute warm, humid air and provide air movement which gives a sense of freshness without causing a draught. If the workplace contains processes or heating equipment or other sources of dust, fumes or vapours, more fresh air will be needed to provide adequate ventilation.

5. Lighting

There should be sufficient and suitable lighting to allow people to move about and see what they are doing and where they are going. This applies inside the building as well as outside to allow a safe way in and out, especially during the winter season and hours of poor visibility and darkness. In addition, lighting should not be so bright or dazzling that it causes eye strain or discomfort.

If lighting level or provision is causing concern, managers could consider providing task lighting (e.g. desk lamps are designed to increase illuminance on the reading / writing area) or replacing fluorescent lighting with daylight bulbs (these simulate natural daylight and can assist in reducing eyestrain as they result in less glare)

Stairs should be well lit in such a way that shadows are not cast over the main part of the treads. Windows and skylights should be cleaned regularly.

Workstations should where possible be sited to take advantage of natural light.

6. Access / Egress

The way in and out of the building must be kept free of obstructions at all times. This will be especially important in times of emergency if the building needs to be evacuated quickly. During winter months, it is important that consideration is given to keeping paths, steps, ramps etc as free from icy conditions as practically possible. Arrangements should be in place to deal with winter maintenance. See guidance on clearing access routes and gritting in the Severe Weather policy mentioned above.

7. Space

The space requirements for different teaching areas will depend on the subject being taught in that area and the age of the pupils. Increased pupil numbers places pressure on schools which may have little additional space/capacity available to accommodate these demands. Your building surveyor should be able to assist you in assessing your available teaching space against education guidelines.

Where additional accommodation needs to be created, you should ensure the design considers any impact on fire escape routes and their capacity and ability to ensure these can continue to safely evacuate any proposed increase in occupancy. Further guidance on maximum occupancy levels and fire escape route capacity is available in the *Fire Safety Policy and Procedure*

For office areas, 11 cubic metres per person is a minimum and may be insufficient depending on the layout, contents, and the nature of the work. If you are concerned about the space available or want more detailed advice please contact the Health Safety and Wellbeing Team.

No room should be so congested to ensure that easy and free access around working/teaching areas and walkways/escape routes is denied.

8. Floors / Stairs / Traffic routes

The main problems here are slips, trips and falls. Regular inspections should be carried out to ensure that all floors and stairs are kept free from slip, trip and fall hazards. In particular: -

- Avoid trailing cables
- Floors and stairs should be kept free of obstacles, clean and tidy
- Report any damage to carpets / floor surfaces immediately and alert employees
- Instil in employees the need to clear up any spillages immediately and provide them with the means to do this

- Instil in employees the need to look where they are going, especially on stairs and around corners, and never to read whilst they are walking.

- Instil in employees the need to open doors carefully, especially if there is no vision panel

See Slips, trips and falls guidance G651

There should be sufficient traffic routes, of sufficient width and headroom, to allow people and vehicles to circulate safely with ease. 'Traffic route' means a route for pedestrian traffic, vehicles, or both, and includes any stairs, fixed ladders, doorways, gateways, loading bays or ramps. In a school setting, particular attention should be paid to areas of high activity such as car parks and areas where school buses operate.

To allow people and vehicles to move safely, the best approach is to keep vehicles and pedestrians apart by ensuring that they use entirely separate routes. If people and vehicles have to share a traffic route, consider the use of kerbs, barriers or clear markings to designate a safe walkway and, where pedestrians need to cross a vehicle route, consider providing clearly marked crossing points with good visibility. Make sure the shared route is well lit.

It is often difficult for drivers to see behind their vehicle when they are reversing; as far as possible, plan traffic routes so that drivers do not need to reverse. This can be achieved by using one-way systems and drive through loading areas.

Loading bays should have at least one exit point from the lower level, or a refuge should be provided to avoid people being struck or crushed by vehicles.

Where a load is tipped into a pit or similar place, and the vehicle is liable to fall into it, barriers or portable wheel stops should be provided at the end of the traffic route.

Floors and traffic routes should be sound and strong enough for the loads placed on them and the traffic expected to use them. The surfaces should not have holes or be uneven or slippery, and should be kept free of obstructions or anything else which may cause a person to slip, trip or fall.

Criteria for identifying and assessing defects such as subsidence, unevenness, pot holes and collection of surface water, cracks and ruts should be determined and set. Maintenance systems should be developed to undertake timely repairs.

Open sides of staircases or loading bay access points should be fenced with an upper rail at 900 mm or higher, and a lower rail. A handrail should be provided on at least one side of every staircase and on both sides if there is a particular risk. Additional handrails may be

required down the centre of wide staircases. Access between floors should not be by ladders or steep stairs.

9. Glazing / Windows

Glazing must be safe for the area it is installed in, taking into account any impact it may be foreseeably subject to. You must undertake an assessment of the risk of glazing becoming damaged and identify areas that require protection to reduce the risk. This may require existing glass to either be replaced (e.g. for toughened glass) or to be protected with safety film. Further guidance on glazing safety can be found in the *Glazing safety guidance document (G665).* There is also a *Workplace Conditions Inspection Form F651*, which includes a section to confirm you have checked the condition of safety glazing as part of your routine health and safety monitoring checks.

Ensure any broken glass is reported without delay. All low level glass should be made of safety material or protected against breakage to prevent someone from falling through it. Based on your risk assessment other areas may also need protecting. If you have any doubts as to whether there is protection, seek advice from your normal building maintenance contact.

If you have windows which open onto a walkway or path and which may present a risk to people walking into them, you will need to consider ways of eliminating or reducing such risks to an acceptable level. For example, restricting opening, marking or having features to make it apparent are some measures you could consider.

Openable windows and skylights should be capable of being opened, closed or adjusted safely.

10. Doors and Gates

Doors and gates which swing both ways and conventionally hinged doors on main traffic routes should have a transparent vision panel. Power operated doors and gates should include safety features which will prevent people from being struck. Upward opening doors or gates should be fitted with a suitable device to prevent them from falling back (providing they are maintained, counterbalanced springs or similar ratchet devices to hold them in the open position are acceptable)

11. Escalators and Moving Walkways

Escalators and moving walkways should be fitted with one or more emergency stop controls.

12. Storage

Everything should be stored safely. In order to avoid manual handling injuries, store frequently used or accessed items at waist height wherever possible. If there is a need

to

store at high levels, try to ensure that these are items which are infrequently used, that they are not heavy to handle, that they are stored in such a way to prevent them from falling and that the proper equipment is available to access them (e.g. steps). Chairs are not to be used to stand on.

The storage furniture must be kept in good repair and racking must be secure.

Filing cabinets should preferably be of the type that will not allow more than one drawer to be opened at once. Filing cabinet drawers must not be left open when unattended.

Flammable liquids / substances must be appropriately stored according to hazardous substance assessments and manufacturers' instructions. See Hazardous Substances Compliance Code P610

Storage is to be in appropriate areas at all times. Switch and boiler rooms are not suitable places to store items and need to be kept free of obstruction for access especially in emergencies. They are high fire risk areas and should not contain combustible materials. Similarly protected routes for use during emergency evacuation, such as stairwells, should not be used to store items unless they are stored in such a way so as not to increase the risk of fire starting or spreading, e.g. in fire proof containers.

Gangways, stairs, entrances etc are not suitable places to store anything.

Be economical with your storage, store amounts you need. Don't store excessive amounts of anything unnecessarily.

13. Electrical Equipment

Electricity is useful, but the dangers associated with electricity are obvious. All portable appliances should be checked in accordance with the Portable electrical equipment - testing and inspection guidance note for Headteachers (P606). In addition, visual checks by staff, each time they use electrical equipment are essential. The visual check is the most likely way identifying a fault. Visual checks will quickly identify any problems such as broken plugs or exposed wires, frayed cables, bent plug pins, evidence of overheating such as burn marks or discoloration etc.

If there are any doubts as to the safety of any electrical equipment, it is not to be used until replaced or repaired by a person qualified to do so. Dispose of any equipment to be thrown away immediately and any to be repaired must be taken out of circulation and clearly marked or otherwise dealt with, so that no-one can attempt to use it.

Do not overload sockets, and do not use multi - way adapters. Their weight can damage the socket.

Unplug equipment where appropriate before cleaning and where it is to be left unattended for long periods.

14. Photocopiers / Laser Printers

This equipment can produce low levels of ozone which, if levels are sufficient, can lead to symptoms such as dry throats and sore / dry eyes. However, provided they are placed in a well ventilated area and are regularly maintained, they should not present a problem.

15. Cleanliness and Waste Materials

All workplaces and their furniture, furnishings and fittings must be kept clean. Cleaning and the removal of waste should be carried out as necessary. Waste should be stored in suitable receptacles.

16. Welfare

16.1 Sanitary Conveniences and washing facilities

Suitable and sufficient toilet and handwash facilities should be provided to enable everyone at work to use them without undue delay. These should be kept clean and the room adequately ventilated and lit. For requirements for adults and visitors please refer to Toilet facilities minimum numbers (G651a).

Washing facilities should have both hot or warm and cold running water, soap and the means to dry hands. Men and women should have separate facilities, unless the facility is in a separate room with a lockable door and is for use by only one person at a time.

Toilet paper should be provided in a holder / dispenser. A coat hook(s) should also be provided. In toilets used by women, suitable means for the disposal of sanitary dressings should also be provided.

The numbers of toilets needed for children are determined by the Education (School Premises) Regulations 2012. Separate toilet facilities for boys and girls aged 8 years or over must be provided except where the toilet facility is provided in a room that can be secured from the inside and that is intended for use by one pupil at a time.

The *Standards for schools premises* guidance published by the Department for Education gives the following guidance on numbers of facilities for pupils:

“The regulations do not set the minimum number of fittings to be provided in relation to the ages and numbers of pupils. Generally the needs of younger pupils are likely to be greater than those for older ones. So, for example, a provision of one toilet and washbasin for every ten pupils under 5 years old would be adequate, while that ratio could be doubled for pupils aged 5-11 to one toilet and washbasin for every 20 pupils. For pupils over 11 one toilet per 20

pupils would be sufficient, but there is scope to reduce the number of washbasins where the washing facilities are shared."

16.2 Drinking Water

An adequate supply of potable drinking water with upward pointing jets or suitable cups should be provided. Water should only be provided in refillable containers where it cannot be obtained directly from a mains supply. Bottled water / water dispensing systems may be provided as a secondary source of drinking water.

16.3 Accommodation for clothing and facilities for changing

Adequate, suitable and secure space should be provided to store employees own clothing and any special clothing. Changing facilities should also be provided for employees who change into special clothing.

16.4 Rest Facilities

Rest facilities should be provided. This can be a separate room or area, but equally could be part of the work area. Work areas can be counted as rest areas and as eating facilities providing they are clean and there is a suitable surface on which to place food. For example employees can eat their lunch at their desk as long as they are not required to work at the same time.

Facilities should include for preparing or obtaining a hot drink. For workers who work during hours or at places where hot food cannot be obtained in, or reasonably nearby, provision should be made for them to heat their own food within their workplace.

Suitable rest facilities should be provided for pregnant women and nursing mothers. They should be near to sanitary facilities and where necessary include the facility to lie down.

16.5 First Aid Rooms

First Aid rooms will usually be necessary where there are more significant hazards or in large premises some distance from medical services. Schools should assess their individual circumstances when considering whether a first aid room may be required (see First aid compliance code (P608).

The Education School Premises Regulations 2012 require that suitable accommodation is provided for the medical examination and treatment of pupils; and the short term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility.

17. Smoke Free

From July 2007, it has been against the law to smoke in virtually all enclosed public places and workplaces in England, including most work vehicles. For further information on this, please refer to the Smoke free premises policy (P627)

18. Workplace Safety Inspections

Safety monitoring and inspection is one of a manager's normal functions and should be done informally at all times. In addition, formally recorded periodic inspections concentrating solely on safety must also be carried out.

It is the responsibility of Premises managers to ensure premises related safety inspections are carried out according to risk but at least on a six monthly basis and that formal records are kept. Inspections may be required more frequently, e.g. where workplaces have inherent higher risks, when substantial changes in the conditions of work occur or new information is published.

A Workplace conditions inspection form (F651) should be completed for all inspections.

The Premises manager must ensure that remedial action is taken and should complete the relevant parts of the Workplace Inspection Form. Where it is not possible to take immediate action, a note should be made for the reason, together with the anticipated time scale.

19. Refurbishments and New Workplaces

Reference should be made to the Property design guide (G637b) if you are considering changes to your workplace in order to ensure that workplace conditions and facilities align with these requirements.