

Health and Safety Policy

The Health and Safety at Work information is on display for all staff and visitors to Early Education.

What we do:

- provide adequate control of the health and safety risks arising from our work activities
- consult with our staff on matters affecting health and safety
- provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions, safe equipment and systems of work
- ensure safe handling and use of substances
- provide toilet and washing facilities and drinking water
- provide information, instruction and supervision for staff
- ensure that all staff are competent to do their tasks, and give them adequate training
- prevent accidents and cases of work-related ill health
- review and revise this policy at regular intervals.

All staff must cooperate on health and safety matters, and must not interfere with anything provided to safeguard their health and safety. They must take reasonable care of their own health and safety, and that of their colleagues, and must report any health and safety concerns to the responsible person.

Risk assessments are undertaken regularly, and the findings are reported to the whole staff. The responsible person will ensure that the approved required action is taken.

The responsible person will identify all equipment needing maintenance and ensure that effective maintenance procedures are drawn up and implemented. All new equipment will be checked for health and safety standards before purchase. The responsible person will ensure that a regular visual inspection is made of all electrical equipment, cabling and sockets.

The responsible person will identify all substances that need a COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) assessment and ensure that all actions identified in the assessments are implemented.

The responsible person will ensure that a fire risk assessment is undertaken and implemented, fire escape notices are displayed and fire exits are kept free of impediment. Fire alarms are tested each week by the landlord. Emergency evacuation is tested regularly.

Under RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) all incidents and accidents should be recorded in the Accident Book by the injured party (whenever possible) or by the person to whom the accident was reported. The responsible person should ensure that all incidents, actual and potential, are investigated as soon as reasonably practicable and action taken to avoid recurrence. All injuries resulting from accidents at work which cause incapacity for more than three working days must be reported direct to the Local Authority Environmental Health Office.

Stress in the workplace

We ensure that adequate procedures and practices are in place to support staff in their roles and reduce workplace stress. Measures include:

- regular support meetings
- training and development support as appropriate

- easy access to line manager for appropriate support as required
- ensuring that staff take breaks during the day
- ensuring that staff take annual leave in a regular manner
- providing an adequate and comfortable office environment
- consideration of flexible working where possible

Moving and handling

When moving and handling, staff will be encouraged not to lift or carry where they are unable to manage the task alone. Staff should familiarise themselves with the proper procedures for carrying items of equipment. It is essential that staff who manually handle are aware that they can be held personally and legally accountable for their actions or in-actions.

Principles of safe manual handling:

- never manually handle unless you have no other option
- know your own handling capacity and do not exceed it
- make a good stable base with your legs and feet and position your feet correctly to reduce spinal rotation
- keep the object to be transferred as close as possible
- make sure of a good handgrip and test your grip and the weight if necessary before attempting the manoeuvre
- maintain a natural, upright posture, keeping your spine in line and never twist during a manoeuvre
- raise the head on commencing the manoeuvre
- bend the knees when lifting – not the back

Lone Working

A person is working alone when that person works in any environment where there are no other workers who have knowledge of the work and work place, and who are available to respond effectively to unusual occurrences or emergencies.

Although every effort should be made to minimise the likelihood of lone working, it is not always possible to eliminate it; therefore the following guidance will always be considered when a member of staff is working alone:

- all staff working alone must be made aware of a contact number in case of emergency
- when working alone out of normal opening hours in Early Education premises the main entrance door must be locked
- staff working alone must not answer the door to anyone not known to them and that they are not expecting
- staff will be made aware of the contact details of the premises caretaker in the case of an emergency
- be careful not to tell anyone that you are alone in the work place - this applies to people who telephone or e-mail you as well as to visitors
- close the window blinds.

Violence towards staff

In the event of violence or threats of violence being made to any member of staff, the following procedure must be followed:

- in the first instance emergency help should be sought through dialling 999

- all accidents of violence or threats of violence must be entered in the accident book and reported immediately to the manager
- the manager will investigate any incidents of violence or threats of violence to staff on or near the organisations premises
- any further control measures Identified by the investigation will be introduced, after consultation with the Early Education staff and the Board of Trustees

Working With VDUs

The Health & Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 implemented an EC Directive and came into effect from January 1993 (amended in 2002). The regulations require employers to minimise risks in VDU work by ensuring that workplaces and jobs are well designed.

The regulations apply where staff habitually use VDUs as a significant part of the normal work. This is generally held to be four hours or more a day.

Early Education provides for users to request an eye test every two years. Early Education will pay for the eye test. If the test shows that you need to wear glasses specifically for computer use, then Early Education will pay for the lenses and frames (basic model). You may choose to upgrade the frames at your own expense.

Workstations should be inspected to assess and reduce risk. This includes: the whole workstation including equipment, furniture and the work environment and any special needs of the individual. Any user experiencing persistent discomfort is entitled to ask for an assessment of the workstation by Occupational Health and should be provided with any support recommended by the assessment. If more than one person uses the same workstation the manager should ensure that each person is able to make adjustments to suit their needs.

Breaks - As the need for breaks depends on the nature and intensity of the work, the Regulations require breaks or changes of activity but do not specify their timing or length. Guidance suggests short frequent breaks are better than longer, less frequent ones. Breaks of 5-10 minutes every hour are recommended.

Health & Safety of Persons Who May Need Special Consideration

Specific risk assessments will be made of Young People (i.e. under 18); the risks specific to young people must be assessed, taking into account the following:

- immaturity: incompletely developed strength, skills or dexterity, psychologically less able to cope with aggression, stress etc
- lack of knowledge or awareness of risks
- inexperience: over- or under-confidence
- fitting-out and layout of the workplace and workstation
- organisation of processes and activities
- extent of health and safety training provided

Specific risk assessments will be made of New and Expectant Mothers, taking into account the following:

- when a member of staff becomes pregnant, or has given birth within the last six months or is breastfeeding, they should inform their manager in writing as soon as possible. It is not until written notification is received that Early Education obliged to take any specific action with respect to that staff member
- on receipt of written notification, managers will ensure that a risk assessment specific to the staff member's job is carried out, taking into account any medical advice provided
- if there are any risks related to work which cannot be removed then the following steps should be followed:

- i working conditions or hours of work will be adjusted.
- ii if step i is not possible then suitable alternative work should be given on the same terms and conditions.
- iii if step ii is not possible then the staff member will be suspended from work on paid leave for as long as necessary to protect their health and safety, or that of their child.

This assessment should be monitored and reviewed every six to eight weeks to take into account risks that may occur at different stages of pregnancy.

Illness: pregnancy related illnesses are excluded from disciplinary rules related to sick leave. New and expectant mothers should inform managers of any change in their health.

Specific risk assessments will be made of People with Disabilities, taking into account the following:

- the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) defines a person as disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities
- early Education will not discriminate against any person with any disability
- if reasonable adjustments are necessary then it is the responsibility of the staff member to disclose their disability and provide their manager with enough information to make such adjustments
- confidential information provided in this way will not be disclosed to others without consent
- as part of the Annual Risk Assessment, managers will ensure that any changes in the needs of their current staff are addressed
- it should not be assumed that the person's disability will have health and safety implications but if their disability does involve risks which are not already controlled for then a specific risk assessment will be undertaken. This may involve requesting information from medical professionals, with the staff member's consent.
- measures taken to control risks will involve making reasonable adjustments, which could include the following:
 - i adjustments to the workplace to improve access or layout
 - ii giving some of the disabled person's duties to another person
 - iii changing the working hours, eg flexi-time, job-share, starting later or finishing earlier;
 - iv time off, eg for treatment, assessment, rehabilitation
 - v training for disabled workers and their colleagues
 - vi getting new or adapting existing equipment, eg chairs, desks, computers
 - vii modifying instructions or procedures, eg by providing written material in bigger text or in Braille
 - viii improving communication, eg providing a reader or interpreter, having visual as well as audible alarms
 - ix providing alternative work (this should usually be a last resort).

Health & Safety of Persons Other Than Early Education Staff

Visitors

For the purposes of this policy, 'visitors' denotes anyone who is not a member of staff. This will include agency workers, contractors and members of the public.

Visitors should be informed of anything on site which could affect their health and safety, for example any work currently being carried out by contractors or any temporary condition of the building or environment.

Contractors

Early Education has a responsibility under health and safety law to protect contractors from harm caused by work activities. Similarly, contractors must ensure they don't do anything that puts themselves or others at risk, including members of the public. A contractor may be undertaking work connected with building management but could also be delivering a course or service.

When engaging contractors the following requirements must be met:

- provide full project specifications and requirements to contractors before they tender
- ensure competent contractors are engaged by using appropriate selection criteria
- assess risks to contractors, staff and others prior to and during the activity, paying particular attention to any work that will produce heat or sparks and make all those whose health and safety could be affected aware of hazards created by contract activity
- inform contractors of day-to-day work hazards on site, together with emergency procedures, site rules and welfare facilities
- ensure work is coordinated and controlled, with communication on a regular basis during the contract period.
- monitor Health and Safety performance. All injuries, near misses and cases of ill health should be investigated.
- maintain records of the activity and of the risk assessment and any reviews.
- when the contract ends, review the activity with all parties, discuss what went well and what areas could have been improved.
- decide if the contractors should go on an approved list for future contracts.

Signed _____ Date _____