



WORK AT HEIGHT POLICY

HEADTEACHER CHECKLIST

- Avoid work at height wherever possible
- Where avoidance is not possible, risk assessments should be carried out by a trained risk assessor
- Devise a safe system of work for each work at height activity
- Provide sufficient and suitable access equipment with proper and secure storage arrangements
- Train staff and keep training records
- Keep a ladder inventory
- Ladders and stepladders to be formally inspected every 3 months

- Ensure that access towers are erected, dismantled and checked and used by competent people
- Ensure that school access towers are formally inspected annually
- Document your local health and safety procedure for preventing falls whilst working at height

Introduction

Falls from height are the single biggest cause of workplace deaths and one of the main causes of major injury. Injuries can also be caused by 'low falls', by, for example, using inappropriate equipment to reach storage shelves.

WBC schools have a responsibility to do all that is reasonably practicable to prevent anyone from being exposed to harm from falling.

The Work at Height Regulations 2005

The Regulations apply to all work at height where there is a risk of a fall liable to cause injury and place duties on employers, the self-employed and any person who controls the work of others e.g. facilities managers.

The overriding principle is that duty holders must do all that is reasonably practicable to prevent anyone falling.

The Regulations set out a simple hierarchy for managing and selecting equipment for work at height.

Duty holders must:

- avoid work at height where they can;
- use work equipment or other measures to prevent falls where they cannot avoid working at height; and
- where they cannot eliminate the risk of a fall, use work equipment or other measures to minimise the distance and consequences of a fall should one occur.

Definitions

A place is 'at height' if a person could be injured falling from it, even if it is at or below ground level.

'Work' includes moving around at a place of work but not travel to or from a place of work.

Requirements

Headteachers should ensure that:

- work at height is avoided wherever possible i.e. no work at height is done if it is safe and reasonably practicable to do the work other than at height. For example, it is possible to use long handled tools to clear certain types and heights of guttering;
- where work at height is necessary, a documented risk assessment, carried out by a trained Risk Assessor, is conducted and a written safe system of work is developed in conjunction with the staff who will undertake the task. In some cases, the risk assessment might determine that the task should be carried out by competent contractors using specialist equipment e.g. a mobile elevated work platform. Please refer to appendix 1 our risk assessment;
- any work carried out at height is properly planned, appropriately supervised and carried out in a safe way;
- if outdoors, the work is postponed if weather conditions are hazardous or the light is poor;
- everyone involved in the work is competent or, if under training, is supervised by a competent person. This includes anyone involved in the organisation, planning, supervision and maintenance of equipment. See below for further information on training for staff;
- the place where work is done at height, including the means of access, is safe and has features to prevent a fall;
- any equipment for work at height is suitable for the work taking into account the working conditions and risks to safety of all those at the place where the work equipment will be used. Domestic grade ladders and stepladders are not considered suitable for work situations;
- where reasonably practicable to do so, each individual place at which work is to be done at height is checked by a competent person prior to work commencing;

- no-one under their control goes onto or near a fragile surface unless that is the only reasonably practicable way for the worker to carry out the work safely and a risk assessment has been carried out and suitable control measures put in place;
- appropriate warnings signs are in place to prevent anyone working under their control going onto or near a fragile surface;
- the risks from falling objects are properly controlled;
- ladders are only used for low-risk, short-duration work, or where there are site conditions that cannot be changed. Short duration is taken to be between 15 and 30 minutes depending upon the task. If a ladder is used for any work at height, the risk assessment must demonstrate that the use of more suitable work equipment is not justified;
- the school holds a register of access equipment and has in place a regime of routine inspections. Users are to be instructed that they must undertake a visual inspection prior to every use and must be told what to look for. Formal ladder and stepladder inspections should be undertaken by a competent person; the frequency will vary dependent on the equipment's usage and the environment where it is used, however, the minimum standard is every three months. Suitable storage arrangements are in place for access equipment;
- where contractors who will be working at height are employed, the contractor's method statements and risk assessments are reviewed before allowing the work to commence; during the work the contractor's activities should be monitored to ensure that the agreed safe working practices are being adhered to. Because of the level of risk involved, formal daily checks are required for scaffolding.

Safe use of ladders

When using ladders, the ladder should be:

- prevented from slipping;
- prevented from moving before it is stepped on;
- long enough to do the job safely;
- have a handhold available to allow the worker to maintain 3 points of contact where possible;
- used without needing to overreach; and

- inspected and checked regularly.

Retrieving items from roofs

A safe system of work based on an assessment of the risks should be developed for retrieval of items that have been thrown or kicked onto single storey flat roofs by pupils or students. As good practice generally, and especially where fragile roofs are concerned, means of retrieving items without accessing the roof should be adopted, for example, using a long handled tool like a push stick or similar object to move or dislodge items close to the roof edge; the need to overreach or overstretch must be avoided.

Non essential items such as footballs and, if at all possible, pupil or student belongings such as bags, shoes etc. should be retrieved on a planned basis with the frequency pre-determined. No attempts should be made to retrieve articles from two storey flat roofs. Pupils and students should be made aware of the school's policy for retrieval of items and warned against retrieving their possessions themselves. Ladders for roof access should be secured against unauthorised use with a 'booking out' system set up.

Employee responsibilities

All employees must ensure that they:

- carry out a visual inspection of ladders, stepladders and other access equipment before each use;
- do not use any damaged or repaired ladders or access equipment, reporting the matter to their Headteacher or line manager so that the defective equipment is immediately taken out of service;
- report to their Headteacher or the appointed Safety Co-ordinator any activity or defect relating to work at height which is likely to endanger them or another person;
- use any equipment or safety device supplied for work at height properly and comply with any training and instructions;
- report to their Headteacher or their line manager any health issues that may affect their safety or that of others. Where working at height is concerned, examples of health issues that should be reported include recurring dizziness or a fear of heights. Medication with recommendations not to operate machinery could also be a problem and should be reported by the staff member.

Training and competence

The WBC standard for all staff who use ladders and other high access equipment is that they must be competent i.e. have attended a suitable training course before using the equipment for the first time. Email: HREnquiries@wokingham.gov.uk or telephone HR Enquiries on (0118) 974 6116 for details of the ladder safety courses being run by WBC or for advice on the selection of an alternative competent training provider.

When considering the hiring in of specialist access equipment, for example, a mobile tower scaffold, it is important to ensure that adequate training is provided to the staff using the equipment; the hire company or manufacturer will be able to provide details of what is required. Those responsible for installing, maintaining, inspecting and dismantling the equipment on site are also required to be competent, for example, trained to the methods approved by the Prefabricated Access Suppliers' and Manufacturers' Association (PASMA).

Low falls

Injuries that result from using unsuitable means of access when working at low height can sometimes be serious; examples include falls from desks or chairs while putting up displays on classroom walls or staff accessing storage shelving. The risk assessment for these types of activities should consider not only the most suitable type of equipment e.g. kick step type stools but also the amount of equipment required to ensure that there is sufficient available for school use, at key locations that are conveniently accessible. Staff should be instructed to always use appropriate equipment.

Adventure activities

The Work at Height (Amendment) Regulations 2007 applies to those who work at height providing instruction or leadership in caving or climbing by way of sport, recreation, team building or similar activities.

Guidance on the application of these Regulations can be downloaded from the HSE website, click to link to [HSE falls/adventure activities](#)

Further information and guidance

Visit the [HSE microsite - falls from height](#) for amongst other things, examples of generic good practice in the planning and assessment of tasks requiring work from height and the following leaflets which may be helpful:

'Safe use of ladders and stepladders – an employers' guide'

'Top tips for ladder and stepladder safety' a handy guide for users.

'Keeping safe when working at height' (low falls guidance aimed at schools)

Several worked examples of work at height risk assessments and safe systems of work are available in the Health and Safety Manual for Schools; they are purely guidance documents and if used, should be developed further locally to suit the task, the site and conditions.

For advice on work at height issues, email: Email: HREnquiries@wokingham.gov.uk or telephone HR Enquiries on (0118) 974 6116.

Reviewed: 21st June 2021

Ratified: 21st June 2021

Review period: biannually

Next review: May 2023

Responsibility: Sites & Building Committee

Appendix 1: Working at height risk assessment

COLLETON PRIMARY SCHOOL

RISK ASSESSMENT

LOCATION/ACTIVITY/ISSUE BEING ASSESSED:	Working at Height Colleton Primary School
SERVICE/TEAM:	Site Control/Facilities
NAME OF ASSESSOR(s):	
DATE OF ASSESSMENT:	
DATE FOR REVIEW:	
APPROVED BY:	Name/Role:

SUMMARY (* delete as appropriate)

Risk level without additional controls:	LOW* MED* HIGH*
Additional control measures required:	YES NO*
Risk level with additional controls:	LOW* MED* HIGH*

What are the significant hazards?	What could go wrong? Who could be harmed and how?	What's already being done to control risks?	What additional controls are needed?	By who?	By when?	Date completed
<i>Fall from height</i>	<p><i>Bruises, fractures other major injuries</i></p> <p><i>Employee, contractor, visitor to school site, students</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ladders provided for different height work as identified in SSOW document</i> • <i>Ladder to be fitted with stand off device</i> • <i>Working in school hours on roof, office to phone site operative every 30 mins</i> • <i>Ladder to be secured in place at access point when undertaking work</i> • <i>Work to be supervised during school hours when children could access ladders or interfere in stable platform</i> • <i>Instruction on safe working at height practices</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Safe system of work to be documented for gutter cleaning and channel cleaning</i> • <i>Appropriate ladders to be purchased to support work</i> • <i>Long handled or extendable tools/brush to be provided to conduct work away from roof edge</i> • <i>Site controller to alert teacher of any work</i> • <i>Site controller to seal off area with tape as additional precaution</i> 			
<i>Object falling from height</i>	<p><i>Bruises, fractures other major injuries</i></p> <p><i>Employee, contractor, visitor to school site, students</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Work to be supervised during school hours</i> • <i>Cordon off surrounding area</i> • <i>Ensure that the work area is clear and the surface of the ground is firm and clear of debris</i> • <i>Tools to be kept stored away from building edge and secured when work complete</i> 				
<i>Collapse or failure of equipment</i>	<p><i>Bruises, fractures other major injuries</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Visual inspection and checks on ladders prior to work.</i> • <i>Visual checks on tools and</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ladder inspections to be recorded</i> 			9

Description of Location/Activity/Issue being assessed

Cleaning of guttering along edge of school properties and cleaning and roof rainwater gully channels requiring access to the roof surface

The reason to access the roof for this work is primarily for general maintenance to clear the channel outlets which is completed every 3 months (4 times a year). All surrounding guttering can be accessed from a step ladder.

There is no access to the main area of channel outlets from the ground via a stepladder, you have to go on the roof to clean these. The exception being the channel to the rear of the building which can be accessed via step ladder and long handled tools/brushes to maintain this channel.

REVIEWS AND REVISIONS

Review date	Name of Assessor	Is assessment still valid?	If not, list adjustments with details of who will action and by when	Approved by Manager	Date of next review