

Health and safety checklist for classrooms

How this checklist can help you

School premises are a valuable resource for local communities and are increasingly being used for extended services.

Health and safety in a school is about taking a sensible and proportionate approach to ensure the premises provide a healthy and safe place for all who use them, including the school workforce, visitors and pupils.

Because written risk assessments are not required for every classroom activity, this checklist is being made available for use as required. It is not mandatory, but is intended as a helpful tool. Schools may choose other ways to comply with health and safety legislation and ensure staff and children are safe.

School-wide measures should be in place to deal with the real risks, so that teachers and support staff do not need to produce written assessments for an ordinary classroom – unless new activities lead to additional risks.

Members of staff can use this checklist to help ensure ordinary classrooms meet minimum health and safety standards. However, the results and findings from completed checklists will provide a useful resource to the school management team when reviewing their whole-school risk assessments.

The checklist is a tool for school staff to raise awareness of areas of concern in a classroom. Employers in the education sector, whether they are a local authority, governing body, trust or proprietor, have wider responsibilities under health and safety law (see www.hse.gov.uk/services/education for further advice).

Using the checklist

This checklist covers the most common areas of concern/risk in ordinary classrooms, but is not exhaustive. It does not cover drama and sports facilities or specialist classrooms, including laboratories, art, IT, design and technology facilities or pupil referral rooms.

It can be used by class teachers, teaching assistants, premises staff or department heads – those running the school can decide how best to use the checklist in their school. It can be used as required, for example at the start of a term to provide reassurance to teaching staff that the most common areas of risk in the classroom are being adequately controlled.

It is designed to be helpful and quick and easy to use but there is no obligation on staff to use it. If an issue is not relevant to a classroom, simply mark it as 'N/A' (not applicable) and move to the next question. There is space at the end to list any additional issues.

Further information

HSE's homepage (www.hse.gov.uk/) has information on general topics to help employers and teaching staff comply with health and safety law. We have specific web pages for education, which provide guidance on the common types of risks within the sector (www.hse.gov.uk/services/education).

The Department for Education, Welsh Assembly Government and Scottish Government have guidance for schools on health and safety:

- **England:** www.education.gov.uk/schools/adminandfinance/healthandsafety
- **Wales:** www.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/allsectorpolicies/healthandsafety
- **Scotland:** www.scotland.gov.uk/topics/education/schools

The Health and Safety Executive has developed this checklist, through a public consultation, to help schools comply with health and safety law. It has been produced in consultation with:

- Department for Education (DfE), England;
- Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS), Welsh Government;
- Learning Directorate, People and Places (LDSG), Scottish Government;
- Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), England;
- trade unions.

Questions you should ask:		Yes	Further action needed	N/A
Movement around the classroom (slips and trips)	Is the internal flooring in a good condition?			
	Are there any changes in floor level or type of flooring that need to be highlighted?			
	Are gangways between desks kept clear?			
	Are trailing electrical leads/cables prevented wherever possible?			
	Is lighting bright enough to allow safe access and exit?			
	Are procedures in place to deal with spillages, eg water, blood from cuts?			
	For stand-alone classrooms: <input type="checkbox"/> Are access steps or ramps properly maintained? <input type="checkbox"/> Are access stairs or ramps provided with handrails?			
Work at height (falls)	Do you have an 'elephant-foot' stepstool or stepladder available for use where necessary?			
	Is a window-opener provided for opening high-level windows?			
Furniture and fixtures	Are permanent fixtures in good condition and securely fastened, eg cupboards, display boards, shelving?			
	Is furniture in good repair and suitable for the size of the user, whether adult or child?			
	Is portable equipment stable, eg a TV set on a suitable trolley?			
	Where window restrictors are fitted to upper-floor windows, are they in good working order?			
	Are hot surfaces of radiators etc protected where necessary to prevent the risk of burns to vulnerable young people?			
Manual handling	Have trolleys been provided for moving heavy objects, eg computers?			
Computers and similar equipment	If you use computers as part of your job, has a workstation assessment been completed?			
	Have pupils been advised about good practice when using computers?			
Electrical equipment and services	Are fixed electrical switches and plug sockets in good repair?			
	Are all plugs and cables in good repair?			
	Has portable electrical equipment, eg laminators, been visually checked and, where necessary, tested at suitable intervals to ensure that it's safe to use? (There may be a sticker to show it has been tested.)			
	Has any damaged electrical equipment been taken out of service or replaced?			
Asbestos	If the school contains asbestos, have details of the location and its condition in the classroom been provided and explained to you?			
	Have you been provided with guidance on securing pieces of work to walls/ceilings that may contain asbestos?			
Fire	If there are fire exit doors in the classroom, are they: <input type="checkbox"/> unobstructed; <input type="checkbox"/> kept unlocked; and <input type="checkbox"/> easy to open from the inside?			
	Is fire-fighting equipment in place in the classroom?			
	Are fire evacuation procedures clearly displayed?			
	Are you aware of the evacuation drill, including arrangements for any vulnerable adults or children?			
Workplace (ventilation and heating)	Does the room have natural ventilation?			
	Can a reasonable room temperature be maintained during use of the classroom?			
	Are measures in place, for example blinds, to protect from glare and heat from the sun?			

This is not an exhaustive list and you should identify any other hazards associated with the daily use of the classroom in the space overleaf, including any further actions needed. If necessary, discuss this with your head teacher or employer.

Additional issues		Yes	Further action needed	N/A

Further action needed

Hazards noted:	Action taken and when:

Name (and position):	Signature:	Date:
Location/name of classroom:		

For information about health and safety, or to report inconsistencies or inaccuracies in this guidance, visit www.hse.gov.uk/. You can view HSE guidance online and order priced publications from the website. HSE priced publications are also available from bookshops.

This checklist can be found online at: www.hse.gov.uk/risk/classroom-checklist.htm.

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