

Ormiston Academies Trust

Ormiston SWB Academy Work at Height Policy

Policy version control

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Contents

1. Introduction and Context	4
2. Scope	4
3. Definitions	4
4. Responsibilities	4
5. Procedure	5
5.1 Management Principles	5
5.2 Risk Assessment	6
5.3 Control Measures	7
5.4 Training	8
6. Related Documents	8
7. Monitoring and Review	8
Appendix I: Working at Height Risk Assessment	9

1. Introduction and context

Ormiston Academies Trust (OAT) recognise that there may be an increased risk to the health and safety of employees when working at heights. This policy has been established to identify risks and manage the risks accordingly.

The school has a duty under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees. The school also has obligations under The Work at Height Regulations 2005 (as amended).

2. Scope

Within this policy, 'working at height' refers to situations where staff, in the course of their duties, work at heights and are physically isolated from colleagues, possibly without immediate access to assistance.

3. Definitions

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines work at heights as any place where, if there were no precautions in place, a person could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury or death.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 Principal

The Principal is responsible for ensuring suitable procedures are in place for undertaking risk assessments for all situations requiring work at height. These procedures must ensure that all involved are aware of the precautions and methods of work to be followed, including emergency action to be taken if necessary.

4.2 Headteacher and Senior Staff

Responsible for ensuring that an adequate Risk Assessment has been completed and recorded for all identified activities and equipment requiring working at height in their area of responsibility.

Responsible for the review of incidents involving working at heights.

Will monitor compliance with working at height procedural requirements.

4.3 All Staff

Shall ensure that suitable and sufficient precautions are in place prior to starting work, when involved in any activity involving work at height.

5. Procedure

5.1 Management Principles

Working at height should be avoided, where it is practicable to do so, but where work at height cannot be avoided, the risk and consequences of falls should be prevented, using either an existing place of work that is already safe or the right type of equipment. This includes:

- Taking into account weather conditions that could compromise safety
- Undertaking as much work as possible from the ground
- Checking that the place where work at height is to be undertaken is safe. Each place where people will work at height needs to be checked each time, before use
- Preventing materials or objects from falling or, if it is not reasonably practicable to do so, taking suitable and sufficient measures to make sure no one can be injured
- Ensuring that workers can get safely to and from where they work at height
- Ensuring equipment is suitable, stable and strong enough for the job, maintained and checked regularly
- Storing materials and objects safely to ensure they won't cause injury if they are disturbed or collapse
- Workers ensuring that they don't overload or overreach themselves when working at height
- Taking precautions when working on or near fragile surfaces
- Considering emergency evacuation and rescue procedures.

An approved list of work at height activities will be established, outlining situations where work at height may be authorised, and the necessary precautions and work methods to be followed.

Providing the activity is on the approved list, work at height may be deemed 'authorised'.

Unless explicitly stated on the approved list, work at height must only be undertaken following authorisation from the headteacher.

It is the responsibility of the individual concerned to ensure all necessary precautions and methods are adhered to at all times, in accordance with their instructions and training.

Any person, who becomes aware of circumstances involving work at height, where the existing control methods are ineffective, must inform the headteacher as soon as possible.

Risk assessments must cover all work currently undertaken at heights (or proposed to be), where the risk may be increased by the work activity itself, or the lack of available assistance should something go wrong. Once relevant tasks are identified, the following must be considered:

- Plant and equipment: Plant and equipment used by individuals working at height will be assessed for suitability and safety
- Access and egress: Some work at height may require access to locations that are difficult to access or egress. Assessments will consider whether these tasks are safe
- Lone working: Work at height will not be undertaken when working alone

Work equipment should be assembled and/or installed according to the manufacturer's instructions and in keeping with industry guidelines.

Where the safety of the work equipment depends on how it has been installed and/or assembled, the headteacher should ensure it is not used until it has been inspected in that position by a competent person.

Any equipment exposed to conditions that may cause it to deteriorate, and result in a dangerous situation, should be inspected at suitable intervals appropriate to the environment and use.

A record will be maintained of any inspection for types of work equipment, including guard rails, toe-boards, barriers or similar collective means of protection, and working platforms, both fixed and mobile.

Working platforms used for construction work and from which a person could fall more than two metres must be inspected:

- After assembly/installation in any position
- After any event liable to have affected its stability
- At intervals not exceeding seven days.

Where it is a mobile platform, a new inspection and report is not required every time it is moved to a new location on the school/academy premises.

Any equipment, such as a mobile elevating work platform (MEWP), which has come from an external supplier, must be accompanied by a clear indication to everyone involved, when the last thorough examination has been carried out.

5.2 Risk Assessment

The school's risk assessment will include the following considerations:

- Safety of the pupils, staff, visitors, contractors and the general public

- Hazardous nature of any general work at height on the site (i.e. environmental conditions)
- Required competency level of staff to undertake work at height
- Required level of competence and ability to use access equipment
- Required level of supervision
- The safest equipment to use on site
- The condition of access equipment and its maintenance
- Other methods of safe access for higher risk or time-consuming jobs at height.

5.3 Control Measures

In order to manage general risks, the following control measures have been put place. Members of staff working at height must:

- Not undertake work for which they are not trained
- Take reasonable care of their health and safety
- Not put themselves in danger
- Know, and follow, safe working procedures
- Never rush or cut corners
- Follow reasonable targets
- Stop for regular breaks and, if possible, change activity after prolonged periods
- Inform the Principal of any relevant medical conditions
- Inform the Principal of any hazards or accidents encountered.

The following communication procedures will also be put in place:

- Carry a mobile telephone at all times when working at height
- The worker will inform someone when they are working at height, how long they will be, and when they expect to be finished
- In the event that a worker has an accident or falls into difficulties, they are to use their mobile telephone to contact the Principal, their nominated person, or the emergency services.

First aid kits will be made available throughout the premises. There locations will be communicated to all members of staff.

5.4 Training

The school business manager will ensure that only individuals with sufficient skills, knowledge and experience are employed to perform a task at height, providing, where necessary, the appropriate training by an accredited trade organisation.

Where staff members are currently undergoing training, they should work under the supervision of somebody competent to work at heights.

Where a working at height activity is low-risk and of a short duration, competence requirements may be no more than making sure an employee receives instruction on how to use the equipment and appropriate on-the-job training.

Where a member of staff finds that they are required to use an item of access equipment on which they have not had instruction/training, or where they are unsure of correct or safe use, then they are to contact the school business manager prior to use.

The school business manager will maintain an up-to-date record of all instruction and training given to staff members.

6. Related Documents

- OAT Health and Safety Policy
- Risk assessments
- The Health and safety at Work, etc., Act 1974
- The Work at Height Regulations 2005 (as amended)

7. Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed annually by the headteacher in conjunction with the governing body; any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff.

All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with this policy as part of their induction programme.

Appendix I

Working at Heights Risk Assessment

Assessment conducted by:	Job title:	Covered by this assessment: Teachers, teaching assistants/volunteers/ supervising adults and pupils.
Date of assessment:	Review interval: Annually	Date of next review:

Related documents

Health and Safety Policy, First Aid Policy, Working at Heights Policy, Accident Reporting Procedure.

Risk rating		Likelihood of occurrence		
		Probable	Possible	Remote
Likely impact	Major Causes major physical injury, harm or ill-health.	High (H)	H	Medium (M)
	Severe Causes physical injury or illness requiring first aid.	H	M	Low (L)
	Minor Causes physical or emotional discomfort.	M	L	L

Areas of concern	Risk rating prior to action H/M/L	Recommended controls	In place? Yes/No	By whom?	Deadline	Risk rating following action H/M/L
Use of equipment		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment is used in line with the school’s Health and Safety Policy and Working at Heights Policy. • All staff members are trained to correctly use equipment, such as ladders, as part of their induction training, including moving, supervising, and maintaining equipment. • As much work as possible is undertaken from ground level before using equipment. • Equipment for undertaking work at height is easily accessible to staff members, but securely stored when not in use to avoid unauthorised use. • All equipment is suitable for purpose and checked for defects before use. • All equipment is used in accordance with the instructions displayed on the equipment or that given by the site manager. • The site manager ensures equipment is well maintained and in good condition. • The site manager undertakes checks on the condition of equipment on a termly basis and maintains an up-to- 				

Areas of concern	Risk rating prior to action H/M/L	Recommended controls	In place? Yes/No	By whom?	Deadline	Risk rating following action H/M/L
Use of equipment continued.		<p>date record of the findings of these checks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any defects or problems identified with the equipment are reported to the site manager immediately. • Equipment found to be defective is removed and disposed of immediately. • Staff members are instructed not to use makeshift steps, such as using tables or chairs. • A range of equipment is available, allowing staff members to reach a variety of heights in order to reduce overstretching. • A kick stool is used where necessary, ensuring the environmental and surface conditions are suitable. • Maximum working height is not exceeded – with the user’s waist not rising above the top step. • Staff members re-position steps rather than overstretch. • Equipment such as ladders are used for a short duration of time, with a maximum of 30 minutes per use. • Staff members are advised to wear appropriate footwear when using equipment, such as shoes with a flat sole. • Equipment is not left unsupervised in order to avoid unauthorised use. • Suitable personal protective equipment is available to use, where necessary. 				

Areas of concern	Risk rating prior to action H/M/L	Recommended controls	In place? Yes/No	By whom?	Deadline	Risk rating following action H/M/L
Manual handling		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff members are trained in appropriate techniques for moving and handling equipment. • A safe system of work is in place and effectively communicated to staff members during induction training. • When working at heights, staff members are supervised and assisted by a fellow colleague at ground level. • Team handling is used where necessary. • When moving equipment, staff members are advised to obtain help where needed. • If a task involves a member of staff carrying more than 10 kg up the ladder or steps, a detailed manual handling risk assessment is undertaken prior to starting the task. 				

Areas of concern	Risk rating prior to action H/M/L	Recommended controls	In place? Yes/No	By whom?	Deadline	Risk rating following action H/M/L
Stability		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working at heights equipment is only used where floor surfaces are suitable, such as firm and even flooring. The need to work on/near/pass across a fragile or uneven surface is avoided wherever possible. Maximum weight limits of equipment are abided by. Three points of contact are maintained at all times, in order to avoid overreaching. Tools are not balanced on the equipment. A tool belt is used in order to allow both hands to be kept free when using equipment. The staff member supervising the task is to pass any tools needed to the person working at height. The staff member supervising the task is to place their foot at the bottom of the ladder in order to steady the equipment. 				
Slips, trips and falls		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the event of an injury, first aid is administered by the school nurse or a trained first-aider. Accidents and injuries are reported to the school nurse in line with the school's Accident Reporting Procedure Policy. Risk assessments are undertaken prior to all work at height activities. All slips, trips and falls involving staff members are recorded in the Minor Injuries to Staff Record. Work at height is only undertaken when pupils, other 				

Areas of concern	Risk rating prior to action H/M/L	Recommended controls	In place? Yes/No	By whom?	Deadline	Risk rating following action H/M/L
		<p>people and obstacles are not in the immediate area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff members who do not feel well, or are tired, are not to undertake work at height. • To avoid overreaching, staff members are to move the equipment they are using closer to the task being undertaken. 				
Falling objects		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Items are stored in a secure fashion, ensuring that nothing being stored can fall from height. • Tools, materials and debris are not thrown from height, but carefully passed to another staff member instead. • Areas where there is a risk of falling objects are clearly indicated. • Staff use tool belts to reduce the risk of items falling. 				
Electrocution		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before undertaking work at height, it is ensured that any overhead cables are secured and out of the way. • Hand tools and battery operated tools are used wherever possible. • Equipment is inspected before and after use, with any defects reported to the site manager immediately. • All portable equipment is PAT tested on an annual basis. 				
Environmental conditions		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No work at height is undertaken outside during poor weather conditions, including rain, snow and strong winds. • No work at height is undertaken inside during poor 				

Areas of concern	Risk rating prior to action H/M/L	Recommended controls	In place? Yes/No	By whom?	Deadline	Risk rating following action H/M/L
		<p>weather which affects the condition of the flooring, such as rain creating slippery floors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration is given to the high probability that the wind speed may be greater at the point of work than that which is prevailing at ground level. • In all weather conditions, as much work as possible is undertaken from ground level. • Each area in which work at height needs to be carried out is inspected before undertaking any tasks, including checking the condition of floor surfaces. • Emergency evacuation and rescue procedures are taken into account each time work at height is undertaken. 				