

Where do I Start?



NEW STARTER – Health & Safety Coordinator role in schools.

This is a guidance note for those staff that have been given the day to day role of overseeing health and safety in the workplace. Ultimately it will be the person in control of the premise who can delegate the tasks but they will still be accountable.

To be able to get started it is advisable to obtain a copy of the Annual Health and Safety Self-Monitoring Checklist (SMC). The updated version is available on the Shropshire Learning Gateway.

1. Use the SMC as the starting point. This contains all the Health & Safety areas of relevance to the majority of schools. Note this is not exhaustive but should be sufficient to begin the process. Some schools and colleges have specialist areas and would require additional guidance for this.
2. You need to work through the question sets to see if you and/or others can provide the information and documentation to support the systems that should be in place. For instance, at staff inductions basic health & safety information should be provided including fire procedures, first aid, where to find the policies and records, etc. Records should be kept for this training and information sharing.
3. **Part 1 Management of the Self monitoring Checklist** asks about:
 - The Governing Body – the Headteacher will have the details.
 - The Health and Safety Policy. The majority of schools have adopted the Shropshire Council School's Health & Safety Policy Example (SCSH&SPE) and adapted it to suit their needs. The sections should be checked to see whether they are applicable to the school. Secondary Schools have Laboratories and Design & Technology Workshops, which will require more detail or have separate policies.
4. It is important to have a **health and safety policy** in place because this should cover all health and safety aspects within the school premises. The policy should have three main sections:

First section -The health and safety policy contains the **statement of intent** that all staff need to be made aware of. This is normally a one-page document stating the commitment of the Employer e.g. Governors/Headteachers to ensuring the safety of the workplace and activities for their employees and others that frequent the site. See SCSH&SPE for an example.

Second section - The **organisation section** – identifies in detail the health and safety responsibilities of appropriate personnel. The post rather than a named person should be used to ensure the policy does not have to be reviewed too often when people leave. Everyone has some health and safety responsibilities to a greater or lesser degree depending on their position.

Third section - The **arrangement section** – should cover all procedures and activities that takes place on the premise e.g.

- Access/Egress – Transport versus pedestrians
- COSHH
- First Aid Arrangements
- Fire safety*
- Manual Handling
- Accident Reporting
- Visits and Journeys
- Working at Height

*(Importantly the school must have a **fire risk assessment**. The fire safety policy can be encompassed within the health and safety arrangements).

The arrangements in the SCSH&SPE can be used to formulate your own arrangements or be referred to if felt the procedures are appropriate for your school. The health & safety arrangements in primary schools will not need to be as detailed as secondary schools due to the lower level of risk.

5. **Part 2 The Premise** looks at all aspects of a premise including the maintenance and inspection regimes that are required for work equipment and main services systems etc. As you work through the

self-monitoring checklist, assess what actions are required. There is a risk rating for the question sets high, medium and low. All areas rated as high will need to be dealt with more urgently than those rated as low risk. An action plan should be drawn up to identify what will be necessary for the improvements and a reasonable time scale to resolve the issues. (The 'reasonable' time scales are shown on the results sheet of the self-monitoring checklist.)

6. Some areas of particular importance, which have been identified in the past to be insufficient is not having a fire risk assessment, regular health & safety training for staff and appropriate risk assessments in place for work activities and the workplace.
7. You will need to ascertain for those staff who have been given health and safety responsibilities whether they are aware of exactly what they are required to do and ensure all areas are covered. For example in Part 2 it states fire warning systems are audible throughout the premises and are tested weekly and details recorded. The caretaker/site manager normally undertakes this task and this should be listed in their job specification.
8. A walk around the site will be necessary at some point to ensure the site is in good order. Checking to see the fire signage is sufficient (if unsure seek expert advice see no. 9). There are no obvious trip hazards; the carpets, stairs, walkways are in a good state of repair; etc. Electrical testing is undertaken e.g. Portable appliance testing (PAT), spot check some items of equipment to ensure they are still in date, check the records. Some issues may be easier to address than others.
9. As you go through the process, if there are areas you are unfamiliar with and need more detail, check the health and safety information on the Shropshire Learning Gateway, or the HSE website. If you need any further clarification or assistance you can contact the following:
 - Health and Safety Team 01743 252819
 - Crime Prevention Officer Ian Bartlett 01743 252819
 - or email your query to health.safety@shropshire.gov.uk and the duty officer can assist.
10. Useful links:
<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/healthandsafety/responsibilities/>
11. Useful guidance documents and risk assessments are available from Shropshire Learning Gateway – Administration\Occupational Health and Safety\A-Z..... –
 - **CLEAPPS** Science Advisory Body for Science and Design and Technology in Primary and Secondary Schools. The Council subscribe to this service and it is available to all Shropshire Schools. This is a very useful resource website with guidance documentation on a vast range of topics, which are all downloadable. Health and safety aspects of these subjects are included. Each year they provide a new password, which is contained in the newsletters or bulletins that are sent to the schools termly. Contact the Education Improvement Service via phone 01743 254556 or email education.improvement.service@shropshire.gov.uk if you have not received any information on this service.
 - **Outdoor play equipment safety arrangements.** This document explains what is required when purchasing play equipment. It describes what regular checks and inspections are required.
 - **Event guidance** – This is a short guide and checklist to enable you to assess what is required when organising an event, e.g. Fete, concert, disco, etc.
 - **Shropshire Council's Guidelines for Safe Practice in Physical Education and Sport.** The guidance provides a clear framework for the assessment and management of risk and to regulate safe practice across the full range of physical education and sport, which may be included in the work of schools, colleges, clubs, centres and in youth centres. Available on the Shropshire Learning Gateway under the curriculum section.
 - **Educational Visits and Journeys Regulations and Guidance**
Available on the Shropshire Learning Gateway under the curriculum section.