



NORLAND PLACE SCHOOL

SCIENCE HEALTH and SAFETY POLICY (Whole School)

Reviewed: September 2020	Next Review Date: September 2021
Responsibility: LB	
Location (s): SMT/ Staff Drive, Science Dept, Staff Room Policy Folder	

1. Scope of this policy

This policy is concerned with health and safety when teaching science. It has been produced with the approval of the school's Health and Safety Committee (it should be read in conjunction with the school's overall health & safety policy including the guidance for field trips and school visits).

This policy is not concerned with the *teaching* of health and safety, although that is a requirement of the Programmes of Study for Science [and Technology] in the National Curriculum.

2. Duties of staff

The employer has the ultimate responsibility to ensure the health and safety of employees and others at this school. Within science this task has been delegated to the Head of Science.

It is the duty of all staff:

- to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and others who may be affected by their acts or omissions;
- to be familiar with this policy by periodic reference to it;
- to implement the provisions of this policy
- to cooperate with the employer and with other members of staff in promoting health and safety in science lessons.

3. Advice on health & safety matters in science

This is the responsibility of the Head of Science, guided by the Headmaster and the Site Manager/Deputy Head. In addition, at any time information can be sought from CLEAPSS (Brunel University, Uxbridge UB8 3PH Tel: 01895 251496; Fax: 01895 814372; E-mail: science@cleapss.org.uk; Web site: www.cleapss.org.uk) CLEAPSS is an organisation which the Science Department at Norland Place School subscribes to for the purpose of obtaining risk assessments and for general advice on health & safety matters in science.

4. *Be safe!* booklet

We believe science in primary schools to be a very safe activity. The school's health & safety policy for teaching science is largely contained within *Be safe! Health and safety in primary school science and technology* (4th edition, Association for Science Education*).

[A copy of *Be safe!* is kept by one of the two parallel teachers alongside their science planning. All teachers must check *Be safe!* from time to time and use it when planning their science activities. Where relevant guidance cannot be found in *Be safe!*, staff should consult [CLEAPSS (see section 3)].

5. Risk assessment

It is the duty of the Head of Science, and ultimately the employer, under the *COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) Regulations* to carry out a risk assessment of teaching areas and activities, particularly before microorganisms (eg, moulds) or hazardous chemicals (including some 'kitchen' chemicals) are used. Under the *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations* the employer must carry out a risk assessment before hazardous activities are undertaken. Following guidance in the *Management Regulations Approved Code of Practice*, this school has adopted model risk assessments from *Be Safe!* for the activities normally undertaken in teaching science.

[For the purposes of model risk assessments, the school also uses a range of CLEAPSS guides which give information on a more-extensive range of activities than is covered in *Be safe!*. Examples include L5p *Safe Use of Household and Other Chemicals*, L86p *Electrical Safety*, L190 *Studying Microorganisms in Primary Schools*. In specialist areas, other guides may also be useful.]

If the proposed activities, chemicals or equipment are NOT covered by *Be safe!* [or relevant CLEAPSS guides, etc] so far as risk assessment is concerned, a Special Risk Assessment must be agreed with the Head of Science.

At Norland Place School when drawing up schemes of work and lesson plans, staff should note down any relevant and important health & safety information extracted from *Be safe!* or elsewhere in the planning template. This can be very brief comments and will only be necessary for certain activities but will satisfy the requirement that the “significant findings of risk assessment should be recorded” and demonstrate that individuals acknowledge the risk involved. Teachers may occasionally find that they want to note down more detail about particular techniques.

6. Close supervision

On some occasions, *Be safe!* states that an activity should be carried out “under close adult supervision”. We interpret this as meaning that a small group of children (up to about 6) should have the undivided attention of the supervising adult. Such adults need not be teachers but, if they are parents, assistants etc, they must have been well briefed before the activity on the nature of the risk by the teacher in charge and be aware of guidance in *Be safe!* etc.

7. Purchasing and storing resources

When purchasing equipment or materials, and especially mains-powered electrical equipment, staff must ensure that it is safe and appropriate for use by children of the relevant age. CLEAPSS (see section 3) produces guides to particular types of equipment. The guides in print may change, but a list of those currently available appears on page 8 of its termly *Primary Science & Technology Newsletter* and on its web site, www.cleapss.org.uk. CLEAPSS staff members are very willing to discuss other equipment, not at present covered by guides. Copies of relevant guides can be obtained, free of charge, by contacting CLEAPSS. Our stock of guides is kept in the science area in the resource room. Staff are expected to consult the relevant guide (or CLEAPSS itself) if they are considering purchasing mains-operated electrical equipment [or any expensive item for use in science.]

Similar considerations apply when equipment, chemicals or other items are given to the school, eg, by parents, local companies, etc or brought in from home. They may not be sufficiently safe for school use. In general, our policy is **not** to accept such donations. Any mains-electrical equipment donated or borrowed from home must undergo a portable-appliance test before being used. Testing should be carried out in accordance with the employer’s policy which in this school involves waiting until the regular check by our own contractor.

Equipment and materials must be stored safely. Chemicals and any other hazardous items are locked away from children in the chemical cupboard in the science room, with the key obtainable from the Head of Science.

8. Living organisms

We believe that the responsible use of suitable animals, plants and microorganisms in the classroom not only enhances the curriculum, but also helps to promote respect for living things. Classroom uses of living organisms may raise issues about the health & safety of pupils and teachers (which are dealt with in *Be safe!* and other model risk assessments) and, in the case of animals, about their welfare and the need to care for them humanely. We follow advice given in CLEAPSS publications, eg, L52 *Small Mammals*, L56 *Housing and Keeping Animals*, L124 *Aquaria in Primary Schools: Electrical Safety*, L181 *Cold-Water Aquaria*, L190 *Studying Microorganisms in Primary Schools*, L197 *Giant African land snails*, L201 *Giant millipedes*, L206 *Tadpoles*, L227 *Stick Insects*, PS55 *Bringing Pets & Other Animals into Schools*.

9. Training

We devote part of a yearly science meeting to reminding colleagues about this policy and the pivotal role of *Be safe!*. We review the policy and consider if changes are needed.

When new staff, especially newly-qualified teachers, join the school, it is the duty of the Head of Science to inform them about this policy.

10. Monitoring

From time to time the Head of Science monitors that this policy is being implemented. This will involve checking documentation, observing lessons and joining in planning meetings. Minutes will be kept of staff meetings at which health & safety matters are discussed.