



Working at Heights Policy

Created: February 2018

Updated: August 2022

Review by: Summer 2024



Statement of Intent

At St Mary's Catholic High School, we 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).

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.

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Work at Height Regulations 2005 (as amended)

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school documents:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Working at Heights Risk Assessment

Working at heights procedure

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

Working at height will be avoided where possible, but where work at height cannot be avoided, control measures will be implemented to ensure the risk and consequences of falls are prevented as much as possible. These measures will be implemented on a case-by-case basis, but may include:

- 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 is likely to 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, and maintained and checked regularly.
- Storing materials and objects safely to ensure they will not cause injury if they are disturbed or collapse.
- Workers ensuring that they do not 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 will only be undertaken following authorisation from the headteacher.

It is the responsibility of the individual concerned to ensure all necessary precautions and safety measures 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 will 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 will 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 will 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 will 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, will 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 will be inspected:

- After assembly or 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 will not be required every time it is moved to a new location on the school premises.

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

Risk assessment

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

- The safety of pupils, staff, visitors, contractors and the general public
- The hazardous nature of any general work at height on the site, e.g. environmental conditions
- The required competency level of staff to undertake work at height
- The required level of competence and ability to use access equipment
- The 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

Control measures

In order to manage general risks, the following control measures will be put in place. Members of staff working at height will:

- 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 line manager of any relevant medical conditions.
- Inform their line manager 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 headteacher, their nominated person, or the emergency services

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

Training

The 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 are currently undergoing training, they will 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 and/or training, or where they are unsure of correct or safe use, they will be required to contact the SBM prior to use.

The business manager will maintain an up-to-date record of all instruction and training given to staff members. Refresher training will be provided every three years.

This policy will be circulated to every staff member working at height, who will annually sign a statement which affirms that they have:

- Received a copy of the policy.
- Read and understood the policy.
- Agreed to comply with the policy.
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This policy will be included in the publication scheme on the school's website and will be made available to the public.

Approved list of Working at Height Activities

This document has been created to ensure its users can map out the risks associated with working at heights. In addition to explaining the risks and the steps that will be taken to mitigate them, this list should also detail: the person carrying out the activity; any training or supervision the person requires; who is responsible for overseeing the works are carried out safely; who has approved the works and when.

In accordance with the HSE webpage 'Work at Height – Frequently asked questions', a person is considered working at height if they:

- Work above ground/floor level.
- Could fall from an edge, through an opening or fragile surface.
- Could fall from ground level into an opening in a floor or a hole in the ground. ¹

The examples in the table below have been completed in line with this definition and pertain to activities including changing a lightbulb, inspecting a leak in a roof and changing a wall display. This is an approved list and should be updated and maintained regularly to help ensure the safety of those carrying out the works, and to help identify any risks associated with working at height activities.

This document should be used alongside a Working at Heights Policy and Working at Heights Risk Assessment (both available in the related documents section of the article page) and should not be utilised in place of a risk assessment.

Activity	Equipment required	Main risks associated	Safety precautions	Person(s) carrying out the activity	Relevant documents	Training and/or supervision required	Responsible person	Approved by	Date of approval
Changing a lightbulb in the school hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elevated platform to carry out the works Lightbulb removal tool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Falling from the platform Slipping due to choice of footwear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guard rails to be fitted to the platform. Adequate safety footwear to be worn when completing works. 	Third-party contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and Safety Policy Working at Heights Policy Site Safety Checklist Contractors Policy 	Site manager to review school hall and structure before works proceed.	Site manager	Headteacher	16/02/2018
Retrieving a football from the school roof	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extension ladder for access to roof Hard hats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ladder slipping if not properly secured Injury from overstretching if ladder isn't long enough Falling from the ladder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rubber feet fitted to the bottom of the ladder before use, and the ladder is held by the caretaker during use to ensure stability. Ladder is adequately extended before use. Site manager to wear a hard hat to mitigate risk of injury if they fall. 	Site Supervisor and Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working at Heights Policy Working at Heights Risk Assessment Health and Safety Checklist Stepladder safety checklist 	Site Supervisor and Assistant to review equipment and site before undertaking activity.	Site manager	Health and safety officer	16/02/2018

Activity	Equipment required	Main risks associated	Safety precautions	Person(s) carrying out the activity	Relevant documents	Training and/or supervision required	Responsible person	Approved by	Date of approval
Changing a wall display in a classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Step ladder to reach highest parts of the display 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Falling from the stepladder Injury from overstretching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The stepladder is secured on the ground with rubber feet. The stepladder is placed directly and evenly on the ground. The health and safety officer checks the stepladder before use. The stepladder used is adequate for the classroom teacher to reach all parts of the wall display. 	Classroom teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working at Heights Policy Working at Heights Risk Assessment Health and Safety Checklist Stepladder Safety Checklist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and safety officer will ensure the stepladder is secure before use. 	Health and safety officer	Site manager	16/02/2018
Clearing the gutters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renting a mobile elevating work platform (MEWP) to avoid use of the roof as an access point. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Damaging the gutters Falling from the MEWP Injury from overstretching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Third party contractors will be harnessed on to the MEWP to minimise the risk of falling from the platform. 	Third party contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working at Heights Policy Working at Heights Risk Assessment Health and Safety Checklist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site manager and health and safety officer to remain in close proximity to the works while they're 	Site manager and health and safety officer	Headteacher	16/02/2018

Activity	Equipment required	Main risks associated	Safety precautions	Person(s) carrying out the activity	Relevant documents	Training and/or supervision required	Responsible person	Approved by	Date of approval
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Damaging the roof and gutters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The platform will be positioned close to the relevant gutters to avoid overstretching Third party contractors will remove the leaves and other debris from the gutters to avoid damage to the roof. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stepladder Safety Checklist 	being carried out.			
Investigating a leaking roof	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extension ladder Hard hats Safety net installed underneath roof 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Falling from the ladder Falling from the roof Falling through the roof 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rubber feet are fitted to the ladder to minimise the risk of slipping. Perimeter edge protection is fitted to the roof to mitigate the risk of falling. Safety nets are installed under the ceiling in question to 	Site Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working at Heights Policy Working at Heights Risk Assessment Health and Safety Checklist Stepladder Safety Checklist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site manager and caretaker to undertake refresher training in working at heights. Health and safety officer to supervise the works. Trained first aider to be in close proximity to 	Site manager, health and safety officer and first aider	Headteacher	16/02/2018

Activity	Equipment required	Main risks associated	Safety precautions	Person(s) carrying out the activity	Relevant documents	Training and/or supervision required	Responsible person	Approved by	Date of approval
			<p>minimise the risk of injury should anyone fall through the roof.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The roof will only be accessed at the lowest points possible to minimise injury should anyone fall through it. 			the works at all times.			

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Acknowledgement

Name: _____ Position _____

I declare that I have

1. Received a copy of the policy
2. Read and understood
3. Agreed to comply by the Working at Heights Policy

Signed _____ Dated _____