

Health and Safety Policy

Legislation and Guidance that inform this document

- Health and Safety at Work Act (1974)
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (1995)
- Health and Safety : Advice on Legal Duties and Powers for Local Authorities, Head Teachers, staff and Governing Bodies (DfE 2013)

Other Red Balloon policies to be read in conjunction with this one

- Staff Code of Conduct
- First Aid
- Exclusions
- Use of Reasonable Force
- Risk assessment
- Fire
- Safeguarding

Statement of intent

Red Balloon aims to ensure that all its workplaces and practices are such that the risk of harm to any staff, student, visitor or member of the public is kept to the lowest possible level.

Responsibility for Implementation

The chair of trustees is legally responsible for ensuring health and safety compliance. S/he delegates that responsibility to the headteacher who is responsible for ensuring that there is a trained practitioner leading health and safety practice within their centre. That person must ensure that all elements of this policy are complied with.

General directions from the updated guidance (upheld by Red Balloon)

Children should be able to experience a wide range of activities. Health and safety measures should help them to do this safely, not stop them.

It is important that children learn to understand and manage the risks that are a normal part of life.

Common sense should be used in assessing and managing the risks of any activity.

Health and safety procedures should always be proportionate to the risks of an activity.

Staff should be given the training they need so they can keep themselves and children safe and manage risks effectively.

Key elements of health and safety law:

The chair of trustees is responsible for health and safety, though tasks may be delegated to staff.

Employees have a duty to look after their own and others' health and safety.

The chair of trustees, centre staff and others have a responsibility to care for the safety of their colleagues and any other people in contact with Red Balloon.

The chair of trustees, centre staff and others have a duty under common law to take care of students in the same way that a prudent parent would do.

Where a claim is made for negligence, that is most likely to be brought against the chair of trustees (who must have public liability insurance), not individual members of staff.

To meet the requirements of the law and DfE guidance, Red Balloon Centres will implement the following policy.

General guidelines

As far as is reasonably practicable, Red Balloon Centres and offices will:

- identify a member of staff who has direct responsibility for the management of health and safety at each place of work;
- establish and maintain a safe and healthy environment throughout each place of work;
- make arrangements for ensuring safety and absence of risks to health in connection with the use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances;
- ensure that sufficient information, instruction and supervision are available to enable all staff, students and volunteers to avoid hazards and contribute positively to their own health and safety;
- ensure all staff access required health and safety training;
- maintain all areas of the workplace (both internal and external) in a condition that is safe and without risk to health;
- provide and maintain means of access to and egress from all places of work that are safe and without risk;
- formulate effective procedures for use in case of fire, and ensure clear, known procedures are in place for evacuating premises if such action is deemed necessary (Red Balloon has a separate 'Fire Policy');
- lay down procedures to be followed in case of accident;
- ensure that a thorough system of risk assessments is interwoven into all practice;
- ensure that issues of health and safety are covered within the curriculum accessed by students.

Responsibility of the trustees and coordinator with regard to health and safety in learner centres

The chair of trustees and headteacher of each centre are jointly responsible for implementing this policy within the centre. In particular they will:

- identify a member of staff who has direct responsibility for the management of health and safety at the centre;
- monitor the effectiveness of the safety policy and the safe working practices described within it and revise and amend it, as necessary, on an annual basis (in practice the director of education amends the policy annually, based upon feedback from each of the centres);

- prepare an emergency evacuation procedure and arrange for periodic practice evacuation drills to take place and for the results of these to be recorded;
- ensure that all staff, volunteers and other adults who use the centre are aware of health and safety practices including evacuation procedures;
- make arrangements for the implementation of the accident reporting procedure approved by Ofsted and ensure all staff and volunteers are familiar with and implement the requirements;
- ensure that safety inspections are undertaken at least twice per year either by a trustee or by a representative of 'Group' (central employees);
- arrange for the withdrawal, repair or replacement of any item of furniture, fitting or equipment identified as being unsafe by the designated person;
- deal with all aspects of maintenance of the premises and identify and remedy any situation which is unsafe or hazardous.

Responsibilities of staff towards students and others in their care

All staff are responsible for the health and safety arrangements in relation to staff, volunteers and students. In particular, they must monitor their own work activities and take all reasonable steps to:

- exercise effective supervision over all those for whom they are responsible;
- be aware of, and implement, safe working practices and set a good example;
- identify actual and potential hazards and introduce procedures to minimise the possibility of mishap;
- ensure that all equipment and tools used are appropriate for use and meet accepted safety standards;
- ensure written instructions, warning notices and signs are provided as appropriate;
- evaluate promptly and, where appropriate, take action on, any criticism of health and safety arrangements;
- provide the opportunity for discussion of health and safety arrangements;

- investigate any accident (or incident where personal injury could have arisen) and take appropriate corrective action if deemed to be required;
- provide for adequate instruction, information and training in safe working methods within any learning area for which they are responsible;
- ensure, when transporting students, that all legal requirements are followed including the wearing of seat belts;
- ensure that any perceived issue or problem is discussed promptly with the designated person for health and safety.

Responsibilities of employees

All employees have a responsibility to:

- take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and of any person who might be affected by their actions at work;
- make themselves aware of all safety rules, procedures and safe working practices applicable to their posts... when in doubt they must seek immediate clarification from the coordinator;
- ensure that all tools and equipment are in good condition and report any defects to the coordinator;
- use protective clothing and safety equipment as required and ensure that these are kept in good condition;
- ensure that offices and general accommodation are kept tidy;
- ensure that any accidents, whether or not an injury occurs, and any potential hazards, are reported to the coordinator;
- draw the attention of the designated person for health and safety to any perceived potential hazards or failings in health and safety arrangements;
- ensure that effective risk assessments are carried out for all necessary activities.

Responsibilities of students

All students are expected, within their expertise and ability, to:

- exercise personal responsibility for their own safety and that of their fellow students;

- observe standards of dress consistent with safety and hygiene;
- observe all the safety rules of the centre and, in particular, the instructions of teaching staff in the event of an emergency;
- use items provided for safety purposes.

Risk Assessments

The headteacher will ensure that appropriate and effective risk assessments are carried out for the following areas:

- each room within the centre;
- entry and exit points to and from the centre;
- all activities;
- any work that takes place outside the centre;
- each student that is referred to the centre.

In ensuring appropriate and effective risk management practice is pursued, centres will take heed of the following advice in the DfE's 2013 guidance:

“Sensible management of risk does not mean that a separate written risk assessment is required for every activity.”

Centres should always take a common sense and proportionate approach, remembering that risk assessment and risk management are tools to enable children to undertake activities safely, not to prevent activities from taking place.

Sensible risk management cannot remove risk altogether. Good risk management should avoid needless or unhelpful paperwork. Some activities, especially those happening away from school, can involve higher levels of risk. If these are annual or infrequent activities, a review of an existing assessment may be all that is needed. If it is a new activity, a specific assessment of significant risks must be carried out. Coordinators must ensure that the person assigned with the assessment task understands the risks and is familiar with the activity that is planned.

Where a risk assessment is carried out, the significant findings of the assessment must be recorded.

However, centres need not carry out a risk assessment every time they undertake an activity that usually forms part of the school day, such as taking students to a frequently used local venue. Any risks of these routine activities

should already have been considered when agreeing the centre's general health and safety policies and procedures. A regular check to make sure the precautions remain appropriate is all that is required.

Risk assessments will:

- be completed for each student during their induction period, and updated as required;
- have been completed for all rooms / teaching areas and 'trips', but will be reviewed annually - should any new accommodation become available, a risk assessment will be completed before it is made available for use;
- be dated and carry clear indication as to who completed the assessment.

The person with ultimate responsibility for ensuring all elements of this policy regarding risk are 'met with' is the headteacher, but s/he may devolve responsibility to the health and safety officer for the centre: the person actually completing the assessment will vary eg for room usage it will be the most frequent user of that room, for a student it will be the person who will 'keywork' that student and for trips it will be the lead person for the activity.

NB A headteacher may elect to ask one member of staff to produce all 'final' risk assessments (based upon conversations with appropriate staff and students) or employ a person specifically for that purpose.

Specific areas pertaining to health and safety:

Reporting of accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences:

Parents / carers will always be informed of any accident or medical issue pertaining to their child.

The health and safety lead person will decide whether there is a need (see 'First Aid Policy') to make further referral to RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regs).

Occupational health:

It is the responsibility of headteachers, trustees and the charity's managers to ensure that staff are not exposed to workplace stress to a degree that may

damage their health. Any indication that this may be the case will be discussed between the headteacher and the staff member, or the chair of trustees and the headteacher, should it be the headteacher who is suffering from stress.

Red Balloon managers will always seek to modify the work environment to reduce that stress or to modify working hours if that appears appropriate and supportive.

Where such action does not reduce workplace stress to an acceptable level (as identified by the member of staff, or by their line manager), then a referral will be made to occupational health to seek medical guidance on the best way forward. Appropriate action will be taken in line with the advice received.

School security:

Red Balloon Centres are based in individual buildings (often previously private houses) and thus have limited points of access. Measures will be taken at each centre to ensure that entry through the 'front door' is always monitored by staff and that no unauthorized persons are allowed access to the building. Where there is a rear entrance, it will be made certain that there is no direct access to this, hence unlawful entry cannot be made.

Violence to staff:

Such action will not be tolerated. The organisation has an exclusions policy that details what action will be taken when the rights of any member of the community are transgressed and a Use of Reasonable Force Policy to describe how staff should respond should action be required.

Manual handling:

Staff are not expected to lift or handle heavy or bulky items. If it becomes apparent, that such action will be required within a person's required activities, then appropriate training will be sought and provided.

Slips and trips:

The health and safety representative will ensure that the risk of tripping is kept to an absolute minimum. Risk assessments are carried out for every room and part of the building... such assessments should identify any such risks that exist, assess the likelihood of them occurring and describe action to ameliorate the risk if required.

The organisation has a separate snow and ice clearance policy for use under such weather conditions.

Management of asbestos:

All centres undergo building safety inspections prior to their purchase by Red Balloon. Should there be any existence of asbestos within the building, then it will be removed prior to any use being made of the building.

Workshop ventilation:

Centres do not have workshop areas, but headteachers and / or their health and safety representatives seek advice from building experts regarding appropriate lighting and ventilation throughout their buildings. Through that advice we ensure that all regulations are met (eg any fume cupboards in rooms used for science). Should there be need for action to meet regulations, that will be taken.

Drinking water:

Regular checks are made re the quality of drinking water available in centres. The health and safety lead person is responsible for ensuring that taps providing water suitable for drinking are clearly marked, that such 'outlets' are sufficient in number and that they are kept clean.

Hot water:

Any taps that are outlets for hot water will be appropriately marked and water will be periodically tested to ensure that there is no risk of scalding (maximum temperature will be 50 degrees centigrade).

NB see section headed 'management of threat of legionella's disease' re other water checks.

Areas for play:

Where possible centres have 'back garden' space for leisure use. In some centres such space is very limited. Under such circumstance staff will seek to provide supervised indoor areas that can be used during lunch and other breaks, but will also supervise students who want to use nearby park, or other suitable, areas. In such cases appropriate risk assessments will be carried out and supervision made.

Management of threat of legionella's disease:

All centres pursue strict hygiene arrangements in their kitchens, eating areas and sanitary facilities (eg any toilets not used regularly will be checked and flushed; water temperature will be checked frequently) .

Each centre will contract an external agency to carry out a risk assessment every two years.

Each centre will maintain a water hygiene log book detailing all checks made and actions taken.

All Red Balloon kitchens are inspected by the FSA (food standards agency) and any actions identified as being required are responded to promptly.

Students are taught the importance of good hygiene in terms of handwashing, and staff are asked to uphold high standards in these areas.

Whilst it is never possible to guarantee that there will be no occurrence of infection, daily practice is strong and reduces the risk to the lowest possible level. Should there be any indication of infection, immediate action will be taken:

- students and staff sent home until the building is deemed (by medical staff) to be free from infection;
- parents/carers and all involved agencies notified immediately;
- health authority notified;
- appropriate de-infection actions pursued as directed by health authority personnel.

Regular testing of equipment:

Red Balloon Centres are small and house little in the way of large equipment, however, the health and safety officer will ensure that any equipment requiring regular testing will be subject to whatever testing is required to meet guidance or statute. Most obviously all electrical equipment will be tested on an annual basis (PAT testing) and will be marked to indicate that such testing has been carried out. Also a 'periodic test of wiring' will be carried out by a qualified engineer every five years.

As indicated elsewhere in the policy, checks on water supply equipment and any equipment used in the kitchen will be pursued and recorded. Checks on fire safety equipment will be carried out as described in the 'Fire Policy'.

Any boilers or gas appliances will be serviced on an annual basis to ensure safe and efficient service.

Emergencies:

Each centre holds and annually updates a business continuity plan (available on request). This provides a risk assessment 'level' for identified emergencies, appropriate action to minimise the risk and action to take should the emergency occur.

Guidance on all Health and safety issues can be found at:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/http://www.hse.gov.uk/>

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/index.htm>

Policy updated Sept 2019 by Bob Sproson, Director of Education - for annual review.