

Code of Practice for health and safety in Design and Technology in Primary Schools

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1. Purpose

This guide should be read in conjunction with guide L235, Managing Risk Assessment in D&T and GL171 Using Model Risk Assessments D&T available to members on the CLEAPSS web site.

This Code of Practice, is concerned with health and safety when teaching design and technology in primary schools, including primary and special schools with primary-age pupils (or with secondary-age pupils where the type of work is more comparable to that carried out in primary schools). A characteristic of the schools covered by this Code is that D&T is generally taught in ordinary classrooms, largely by non-specialist staff.

2. Scope

This Code of Practice should be read in conjunction with the councils Health & Safety Policy, the school's own Health & Safety Policy (Part 4) and any other relevant Codes of Practice that the council may issue from time to time.

This Code is not concerned with the teaching of health and safety, although that is a requirement of the National Curriculum.

3. Advice on health and safety matters

General advice on health and safety matters is available from the Health and Safety Team contact healthandsafetyhelp@oxfordshire.gov.uk

In addition, the council maintains a subscription to CLEAPSS, The Gardiner Building, Brunel Science Park, Kingston Lane, Uxbridge UB8 3PQ, (Tel: 01895 251496; Fax: 01895 814372; E-mail: dt@cleapss.org.uk; Web site: www.cleapss.org.uk), for the purpose of obtaining model (general) and special risk assessments under Regulations such as *COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health)*, *the Management of Health and Safety at Work*, and others, and general advice on health & safety matters in design and technology and, indeed, advice on practical design and technology generally.

4. Be safe! booklet

The council's safety policy for teaching D&T in primary schools is largely contained within *Be safe! Health and safety in school science and technology for teachers of 3- to 12-year-olds* [4th edition, 2011, Association for Science Education (ISBN 978 0 86357 426 9)]. [Be safe! - Health and safety for primary schools - Millgate \(millgatehouse.co.uk\)](http://millgatehouse.co.uk)

All primary schools should have at least one copy of *Be safe!* (and larger schools will need several copies) and all teachers must be made aware of its existence and reminded of it from time to time. It should be kept in a readily accessible place so that teachers may easily use it in planning their D&T activities. Where relevant guidance cannot be found in *Be safe!* staff should consult CLEAPSS (see section 3).

5. Risk Assessment

This council acknowledges that good D&T teaching involves a significant amount of practical work. It recognises the excellent health & safety record of school D&T and is determined that spurious concerns about health and safety should not be allowed to inhibit good teaching.

Under regulation such as *COSHH* and the *Management of Health and Safety at Work* the school must carry out a risk assessment before hazardous materials are used or hazardous activities are undertaken. Following guidance in the *Management Regulations Approved Code of Practice*, the council has adopted *Be safe!* as containing model risk assessments for the activities normally undertaken in teaching D&T in primary schools. **A school which follows guidance in *Be safe!* will be complying with both sets of Regulations.**

For the purposes of model risk assessments, the council also recognises a range of CLEAPSS guides which give information on a more-extensive range of activities than is covered in *Be safe!* Examples include: P028 D&T Cutting materials, P030 D&T Hammers, pliers, screwdrivers and wire strippers.

If the proposed activities, materials or equipment are **not** covered by *Be safe!* or relevant CLEAPSS guides so far as risk assessment is concerned, then a Special Risk Assessment must be obtained by contacting CLEAPSS.

When drawing up schemes of work and lesson plans, any relevant and important health & safety information extracted from *Be safe!* or elsewhere should be noted down. This can be a very brief comment and will only be necessary for a few topics but will satisfy the legal requirement that the “significant findings of risk assessment should be recorded” and demonstrate that individuals acknowledge the risk involved.

6. Close Supervision

P015 Levels of Supervision exemplifies what the levels of supervision that are sometimes included in CLEAPSS resources. This can range from two or three pupils to one adult, up to 10-15 pupils per adult. Such adults need not be teachers, but if they are parents, teaching assistants, etc., they must have been well briefed by the teacher in charge on the nature of the risk before the activity and be aware of guidance in the CLEAPSS materials or *Be safe!*

7. Purchasing and storing resources

When purchasing equipment or materials, and especially mains-powered electrical equipment, schools must ensure that it is safe and appropriate for use by children of the relevant age. CLEAPSS produces a number of guides to particular types of equipment. All current guides, and other relevant publications, are available on the primary CLEAPSS web site: www.cleapss.org.uk CLEAPSS staff members are very willing to discuss equipment, not currently covered by guides. Schools should always consult the relevant guide (or CLEAPSS itself) when considering purchasing mains-operated, electrical equipment for use in D&T, and are advised to do so before purchasing any expensive item.

Similar considerations apply when equipment is given to schools, e.g., by parents, local companies, etc. or brought in from home. It may not be sufficiently safe for school use. Schools must check before accepting such donations and are generally advised to refuse them. Any mains electrical equipment donated or borrowed from home must undergo a portable-appliance test before being used.

Equipment and materials must be stored safely. Chemicals and any other hazardous items must be locked away from children.

8. Health and safety policies

This council does not require primary schools to have a D&T health & safety policy. However, the key features of this *Code of Practice* (and especially the pivotal roles of *Be safe!* and CLEAPSS) should be incorporated either into the school's overall health & safety policy or into the school's D&T policy.

9. Training

From time to time, staff will need reminding of this *Code*, of the school's own health & safety policy and about good, healthy and safe practice in primary D&T. The head teacher and/or D&T coordinator should ensure such training takes place.

10. Monitoring

The head teacher and/or D&T coordinator is expected to monitor that this *Code of Practice* is being followed. This may involve checking documentation, observing lessons and joining in planning meetings. Suitable records should be kept, e.g., in the minutes of staff meetings, in notes of lesson plans and schemes of work or of lesson observations.

The council has a responsibility to monitor that its health & safety policies are being implemented. This monitoring will be carried out by the H&S Team through monitoring visits to schools.