

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

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1	Aug 2024	Paul Lundy	This code of practice uses the model guidance available from CLEAPSS.

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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.

The Code is concerned with health and safety in design and technology departments in secondary schools (with and without sixth forms), and special schools with secondary-age pupils, unless the type of work is more comparable to that carried out in primary schools (in which case the Code of Practice for Primary Schools should be observed). A characteristic of the schools covered by this Code is that D&T is taught by specialist staff in specialist accommodation. However, the Code still applies even if, exceptionally, D&T is taught in ordinary classrooms and/or by non-specialist staff, including in Pupil Referral Units or Home & Hospital Teaching Schemes. The Code applies not only to D&T teachers but also to others who work within the D&T department, including technicians, teaching assistants and other support staff and trainees.

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. Suitable national health and safety publications

The school's health & safety policy for teaching D&T in secondary schools is largely contained within the following nationally published documents:

- CLEAPSS publications generally and specifically the Model Risk Assessments for Design and Technology and art & design;
- BS 4163:2021 Health and safety for design and technology in schools and similar establishments (BSI 2021).

- Health and Safety Training Standards in Design and Technology (The Design and Technology Association 2008).

CLEAPSS publications are available on the CLEAPSS web site (log-in is required to access them, contact healthandsafetyhelp@oxfordshire.gov.uk to obtain details).

All D&T staff should, at all times, have access to the Internet to be able to find and use them. All H&S documentation should be kept in a readily accessible place so that teachers may easily use them in planning their D&T activities and technicians can consult them.

Where relevant guidance cannot be found in these publications, staff should consult CLEAPSS or the Health and Safety Team.

5. D&T department health and safety policy

This council and Headteacher regards a Head of D&T (or equivalent) as the local manager for health and safety within the D&T department and hereby delegates a range of health & safety functions to that person. The council/school requires that every D&T department should have its own *Design and Technology Department Health & Safety Policy*. This should spell out the organisation of, and procedures for, health and safety within the department (including emergencies) and define the roles of various post-holders. It should state where health & safety documents are located and how the department deals with risk assessment (see below). There should be D&T rules for students and guidance for staff. The policy should outline procedures for the induction of new staff (teaching and technical). Certain regular health & safety checks are required (see below) and the timetable and procedures for these should be stated.

The council recommends Schools use L260, *Model Health & Safety Policy for Design and Technology Departments* from CLEAPSS. D&T departments should further adapt it to the details of their particular situation. To assist in this, an electronic version of the CLEAPSS L260 *Model Policy* can be obtained on its web site.

6. Close Supervision

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 (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health)* 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 the publications listed in section 4 as containing model risk assessments for the activities normally undertaken in teaching D&T in

secondary schools. If the proposed activities, materials, chemicals, equipment, etc. are **not** covered by any of these publications, a Special Risk Assessment must be obtained by contacting CLEAPSS.

When drawing up schemes of work and/or planning lessons, D&T departments should review the advice given in the above model risk assessments and consider whether it needs to be modified to meet the needs of their situation, either for the department as a whole or for a particular class or room. Warnings about any hazards and guidance on control measures to reduce the risks from them, together with any other relevant health & safety information, should then be included in the scheme of work and/or written into teachers'/technicians' guides, lesson plans, pupil worksheets, etc., following the detailed guidance in the CLEAPSS guide L235, *Managing Risk Assessment in Design and Technology* and in the guidance leaflet GL171 *Using Model Risk Assessments in school D&T*.

There are no materials or procedures specifically banned by the council, other than the very few prohibited nationally. However, schools must follow the guidance in the publications listed in section 4, including the use of any control measures.

Risk assessment must also cover the activities carried out, for example, by technicians, such as lifting and carrying, preparation of materials for use by students, maintenance of machines and equipment, clearing up, etc. Departments should base such risk assessments on guidance in the CLEAPSS *Model Risk Assessments for Design and Technology* suitably customised. These should then be formally adopted as part of the *D&T Department Health & Safety Policy*.

7. Emergency procedures

If an accident happens in a D&T teaching or preparation room, it may be necessary to take Immediate Remedial Measures to prevent injury while waiting for the arrival of a qualified first aider. Guidance on suitable measures is given in the CLEAPSS Model Risk Assessments and in other publications listed above. This should be copied to individual teachers and technicians and/or posted in prominent places in teaching and preparation rooms. In-house training in these measures should be provided through discussion at departmental meetings. Similarly, procedures should be in place for dealing with fires, for instance in food technology, and chemical spills. Guidance should be given in the *D&T Department Health & Safety Policy*.

8. Security or, access to, D&T teaching rooms, prep rooms etc.

The council considers that, under the *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations*, D&T Teaching rooms, prep rooms, etc. must be regarded as 'danger areas' to which access must be restricted to those with appropriate training. **This means that pupils must not be permitted in a D&T teaching room or prep room without proper supervision (see section 9) and that D&T teaching rooms and prep rooms must be kept locked when not occupied.** If circumstances in a particular school do not permit this (e.g., because a fire-exit route is through a D&T

room), then the *D&T Department Health and Safety Policy* should state what steps are taken to reduce the risk arising from this situation (e.g., by giving priority to technicians in clearing away hazardous tools, materials and substances from this teaching room first). Pupils, however senior, should not be allowed to work unsupervised in any D&T room at any time.

9. Supervision of pupils / students in teaching and prep rooms

Only qualified D&T teachers should teach design and technology and only qualified D&T teachers and technicians should work in D&T teaching rooms. For the purpose of this *Code of Practice*, a qualified D&T teacher is a person with Qualified Teacher Status and a teacher's certificate, degree or equivalent qualification in which a D&T related subject formed an appreciable part of the course, normally as a main subject. Other teachers, technicians and site staff may at times make use of D&T rooms. Normally this should not be for teaching purposes. Where other staff make use of D&T rooms, the head of department must make sure that staff in question have the knowledge and expertise to use the equipment and appropriate supervision must be available.

Design and technology rooms must never be used for the teaching of other subjects. If a non-specialist member of staff has to cover a design and technology class, then the class must be moved to an alternative room. If no alternative room is available, then training or a set of rules [must/should] be given to non-D&T staff and/or supply teachers who have to teach or supervise in D&T rooms.

In the case of students on initial teacher training, the graduate training programme, 'Teach First' or similar initiatives, health and safety must form an integral part of the training provided by the school and trainees must work under the direct supervision of a qualified D&T teacher. In the case of trainees on teaching practice, if the teacher judges that s/he need not be in the D&T room at the same time as the trainee, taking into account the nature of the class, the activity to be undertaken and the skills of the trainee, then the trainee may work on his/her own. The teacher must still be within earshot and available to take over the class at any time, should the need arise.

Pupils/students should **not** normally be allowed into prep rooms. If, however, there are good reasons to permit access, pupils / students must be closely supervised all the time that they are in the prep room.

10. Training of staff

The *Management Regulations* require that adequate health & safety training must be given to staff when first taken on by a school and when their jobs change (e.g., when new work practices or new equipment are introduced). Such training must be repeated periodically. Heads of D&T (or their representatives) are expected to attend such courses or similar ones and to pass on relevant parts of their training to colleagues through departmental meetings, etc. A *D&T Department Health and Safety Policy* must outline what procedures are in place for the induction of new staff (teachers and technicians) and any particularly hazardous procedures for which school training is given before a member of staff can carry them out. Such training may be provided in house, depending on what is required, but is more likely to be

provided by external training providers. Health and safety training for design and technology can be obtained through the scheme operated by the Design and Technology Association. See www.data.org.uk. Technicians must be fully involved in training. Suitable training must be provided for any other ancillary staff who work in the D&T department, e.g., teaching assistants, language support staff, etc.

If it is necessary to employ instructors, or non-D&T staff to teach some D&T then the school must arrange adequate health and safety training. This must be provided by a competent person, normally a recognised training provider, or a person approved by the school to provide such training. This is unlikely to be in-house but will usually require regularly timetabled opportunities for discussion of potential problems, trying out practical activities, etc. Notes of the training should be recorded and made available on request, e.g., to the officers of the council, inspectors from the Health and Safety Executive, etc.

11. Purchasing, storing and disposing of 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. Equipment purchased from recognised *educational* suppliers should be safe for school use, but that from other sources might not be.

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-powered electrical equipment donated or borrowed from home must undergo a portable-appliance test before being used.

Equipment and materials must be stored safely. Hazardous materials and any other hazardous items must be locked away from children. Toxic and corrosive chemicals, and those liable to be stolen, must not be stored on open shelves in preparation or storerooms. D&T department staff may need to seek advice from science colleagues and there is useful guidance in the *CLEAPSS Laboratory Handbook*, section 7 (on the *CLEAPSS website*). Disposal of chemicals, other materials and equipment may not only raise health & safety issues but also those of environmental protection. Legislation has changed in recent years. D&T departments should follow the advice given in the *CLEAPSS* guidance leaflet *PS 31 Disposal of waste in technology*.

12. Safety checks

All equipment, including personal protective equipment must be properly maintained. Regular checks are required in a number of situations (see below), some of which may be carried out by school staff, others by outside contractors. The outcomes of such checks should always be recorded, and the records kept in a departmental *Safety Check File* or equivalent, which should be kept available for inspection by officers of the council and inspectors from the Health and Safety Executive. The

CLEAPSS auditing guides *G79 Auditing H&S in a Secondary School D&T Department*, *G79A* and *G79B* should be used when carrying out audits.

13. Pressure vessels

Under the *Pressure Systems Safety Regulations*, regular checks must be made on all pressure vessels, including air receivers on air compressors, pressure cookers and model steam engines, using a written scheme of examination (WSE). It is the policy of the council to have the examination carried out by competent persons in accordance with the WSEs provided by CLEAPSS and to have the examination carried out by inspectors from the council's insurance company. A record of the examinations must be kept in the *Safety Check File* (see section 12, above).

14. Equipment for local exhaust ventilation (LEV)

Under the *COSHH Regulations*, there must be a check on the efficiency of equipment provided for local exhaust ventilation (dust extraction, fume extraction, and extraction in food technology rooms) at least every 14 months. It is the policy of the council that these checks are carried out by suitably qualified persons, normally a specialist contractor, and the tests should comply with the requirements of the HSE publication *HSG 258 Controlling Airborne Contaminants at Work*, any failure of a LEV system to meet the requirements of the test should be reported to the Head of D&T for remedial action. The record of the check on each LEV system must be kept in the departmental *Safety Check File* (see section 12 above).

15. Portable electrical appliances

Under the *Electricity at Work Regulations*, the school is responsible for the safety of all electrical appliances. It is the policy of the council that appliances powered by the mains are checked regularly and that these checks are carried out by a competent person. Any appliance which fails to meet the requirements of the test should immediately be taken out of service and reported to the Head of D&T. The record of the check on each appliance must be kept in the departmental *Safety Check File* (see section 12 above).

16. 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.