

# Health and Safety in Science Policy



**2016-2017**

St Botolph's CE Primary School  
Rookery Avenue  
Sleaford  
Lincs  
NG34 7FE

## Scope of this policy

This policy, dated November 2015, is concerned with health and safety when teaching science and for Science Club activities. It has been produced with the approval of the school's governing body.

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

## Duties of staff

The employer, which is the governing body of St Botolph's CE Primary School has the ultimate responsibility to ensure the health and safety of employees and others at this school.

The task of overseeing health and safety in Science in this school has been delegated by the employer to the head teacher and Science Coordinators, Mrs J Morton and Miss E Green.

It is the duty of all staff (and, where relevant, non-employees such as parent helpers):

- 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; and
- to cooperate with the employer and with other members of staff in promoting health and safety.

## Risk assessment

It is the duty of the employer, under the *COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) Regulations* to make a risk assessment before microorganisms (e.g., moulds) or hazardous chemicals (including some 'kitchen' chemicals) are used. Under the *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations* the employer must make a risk assessment before hazardous activities are undertaken. This school has adopted *Be safe!*<sup>1</sup> as containing model risk assessments for the activities normally undertaken in teaching science in primary schools. These risk assessments can be found in the *Be safe!* document kept in the Community room

A model risk assessment is just that - a model, which is broadly appropriate for most classes, in most schools, most of the time. Teachers should review the advice and consider whether further modification is needed for the special circumstances of their lessons with their classes. Professional judgement is needed. For example, pupils who are early bilinguals may not fully understand the instructions and pupils with special needs may need special consideration. An activity, which is perfectly safe on a Monday morning, may be less so on a Friday afternoon or following a wet play time! Teachers must also use common sense in organising their classroom in a healthy & safe manner, e.g., by avoiding trailing electrical leads, not allowing children to use construction kits just behind the door, etc.

For the purposes of model risk assessments, this school also uses a range of CLEAPSS<sup>2</sup> guides which give information on a more-extensive range of activities than is covered in *Be safe!*. Examples include *G5p Using Chemicals safely (06/10)*, *L86p Electrical Safety*, *L190 Studying Microorganisms in Primary Schools*. In specialist areas, other guides may also be useful.

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<sup>1</sup> Be Safe! - 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition 2001 - Association of Science Education Publication

<sup>2</sup> [www.cleapss.org.uk](http://www.cleapss.org.uk)

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 obtained by contacting CLEAPSS.

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. This can be very brief comments and **will only be necessary for a few topics** but will satisfy the requirement that the “significant findings of risk assessment should be recorded” and demonstrate that individuals acknowledge the risk involved. Examples of this approach can be found in *A Scheme of Work For Key Stages 1 and 2: Science* (DfEE / QCA, 1998), although teachers may occasionally find that they want to note down more detail about particular techniques.

### 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.

### Purchasing and storing resources

When purchasing equipment or materials, particularly mains-powered electrical equipment, staff must ensure that it is safe and appropriate for use by children of the relevant age. CLEAPSS produces guides to particular types of equipment. The guides in print may change, but a list of those currently available appears on its web site<sup>3</sup>. Copies of relevant guides can be obtained, free of charge, by contacting CLEAPSS. Our stock of guides is kept in science storeroom. Staff should consult with coordinator before considering purchasing electrical equipment.

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

### 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, in the case of animals, about their welfare and the need to care for them humanely.

We follow advice given in CLEAPSS publications, e.g., L52 *Small Mammals*, L56 *Housing and Keeping Animals*, L181 *Electrical Safety*, L190 *Studying Microorganisms in Primary Schools*, L197 *Giant African land snails*, L206 *Tadpoles*, L227 *Stick Insects*, PS55 *Bringing Pets & Other Animals into School*, PS01 *Pond dipping and Weil's Disease*. All which can be found on their website.

### Training

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<sup>3</sup>[www.cleapss.org.uk](http://www.cleapss.org.uk)

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

When new staff, particularly, student teachers and newly-qualified teachers, join the school, it is the duty of the science coordinator and mentor to inform them about this policy.

### Monitoring

From time to time the Head Teacher and Science Coordinators will monitor that this policy is being implemented.

### Special restrictions

In addition to advice in *Be safe!* and relevant CLEAPSS publications, the following special restrictions will apply when teaching science.

- Thin plastic (polystyrene) cups from drinks machines should not be used to hold hot water, because of the risk that they may be easily knocked over when pouring the water or may soften and collapse, in either case spilling hot water on those nearby.
- Glass containers should not normally be used by pupils.
- Where iron filings are in use for work on magnets, these should be enclosed in clear plastic containers, sealed plastic bags or similar. Iron filings will not be used for other purposes, eg, separation of mixtures.
- Scrupulous hygiene must be observed before and after cooking activities or handling animals, etc. Younger pupils should be supervised to ensure they wash their hands properly.

- **Signed (coordinator): Julie Morton/Emma Green**

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- **Signed (Governor): K Linger**

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- **Date: November 2017**