

**ST VINCENT DE PAUL
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**



Work at Height Policy

*"We are called to be the hands and face of Jesus
as we learn, love and grow together"*

(HCC latest version: Version 3: Reviewed March 2023.
Next HCC update will be March 2025)

Document Date: Summer 2024

Review Date: Summer 2025

Reviewed by the Health and Safety Committee

Ratified at Full Governing Body meeting

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Smith', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Chair of Governors

Date ratified: 2nd July 2024

- no lone working when working at height. Activity must be carried out by two persons; one person to access the roof, one to foot the ladder.
- a suitable ladder to be used for access which **MUST** extend 1 M above the roof line. (This then acts as a handrail to access and egress the ladder onto and off the roof).
- secure the ladder via eye bolts to areas frequently used to access the school roof.
- activity carried out only when weather conditions are suitable, i.e., not in high winds, heavy rain, ice and snow on the surface, poor light, or darkness.
- consider how will tools etc be carried i.e., tool belt or bucket and rope system?
- once on the roof, care must be taken to avoid approaching the roof edge, staff to move 2 metres away from the edge once on the roof. A push stick or similar item should be used to move or dislodge items close to the roof edge.
- if relevant Sky lights to be controlled via a visual barrier or a safe net system to be put in place. (There are products such as skylight fall prevention covers to prevent falls through fragile surfaces when working on roofs).
- is there adequate communication in place in the event of an emergency i.e., mobile phone / walkie talkie.

35. See [Appendix 1](#) for additional advice on access to low roofs.

Fragile surfaces

36. All fragile surfaces should be identified on site and suitable precautions be in place to prevent inadvertent access during access / works to such areas. i.e. barriers around sky lights or safety net systems (see <https://www.skylightsafetynet.co.uk/> as an example)
37. Warning signs should be fixed at the approach to fragile roofs where access is needed or foreseeable.
Work should be arranged as far as possible to avoid working on or passing near fragile surfaces.

Information, instruction and training

38. All employees required to work at height must be competent to do so and receive relevant information and instruction in the risks of working at height and specific training in the equipment that they will be using. The level of training required should be proportionate to the risk.
39. This does not necessarily mean they need to go on a training course. In many cases, simply ensuring staff are aware of the risk assessment and the safety advice within it might be sufficient, particularly for low risk activities using kick stools and small stepladders.
40. The HSE have produced simple practical advice for users on the safe use of steps and ladders (INDG45) (see Appendix 2) for staff involved in low risk activities (accessing storage, putting up displays at low height etc. Managers should talk through the expectations of the school policy and this guidance with staff and ensure that this is understood.
41. **LA 455 Safe use of ladders and stepladders – a brief guide is jointly produced by the Ladder Association and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). This offers expanded guidance on different types of portable ladders, such as telescopic ladders and combination (or multi-purpose) ladders.**

42. Providing the HSE guidance to staff and ensuring they are aware of the simple precautions to take when using ladders and stepladders would constitute a proportionate level of instruction for low risk activities.
42. A formal training course on working at height would be advisable for higher risk work such as:
- accessing unguarded flat roofs;
 - working on unguarded flat/fragile roofs;
 - cleaning out gutters;
 - cleaning windows which cannot be reached from ground level;
 - Changing bulbs/florescent tubes at high level e.g. >3m;
43. Training in the safe use, selection and inspection of ladders are provided by the Education Health and Safety Team. Contact healthandsafety@hertfordshire.gov.uk for information.
44. Members of staff who erect or use other access equipment (mobile tower scaffold, mobile elevated working platform (MEWPs) such as scissor lifts etc.) **must** have received specific training in the use of that equipment.
45. A PASMA (Prefabricated Access Suppliers' and Manufacturers' Association) qualification is recognised in the construction industry for those operatives working at height on mobile access towers. The **training courses** are approved by HSE and the UK Contractors Group.
46. School staff assembling / dismantling mobile towers should be PASMA trained, this proves that users have undertaken training to an accredited standard and combined with experience and technical knowledge demonstrates competency. See <https://pasma.co.uk/about/> & find a training centre nearby via <https://pasma.co.uk/directory/find-training-centre/>

Further information and guidance

Health and safety guidance and support

Education Health and Safety Team - 01992 556478

healthandsafety@hertfordshire.gov.uk

APPENDIX 2 SAFE USE OF STEPLADDERS

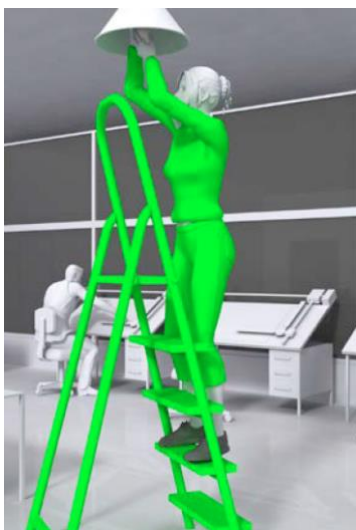
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When using a stepladder to carry out a task:

- Check all four stepladder feet are in contact with the ground and the steps are level
- Only carry light materials and tools
- Don't overreach
- Don't stand and work on the top three steps (including a step forming the very top of the stepladder) unless there is a suitable handhold
- Ensure any locking devices are engaged
- Try to position the stepladder to face the work activity and not side on. However, there are occasions when a risk assessment may show it is safer to work side on, e.g., in a retail stock room when you can't engage the stepladder locks to work face on because of space restraints in narrow aisles, but you can fully lock it to work side on
- Try to avoid work that imposes a side loading, such as side-on drilling through solid materials (e.g., bricks or concrete)
- Where side loadings cannot be avoided, you should prevent the steps from tipping over, e.g., by tying the steps. Otherwise, use a more suitable type of access equipment
- Maintain three points of contact at the working position. This means two feet and one hand, or when both hands need to be free for a brief period, two feet and the body supported by the stepladder.

When deciding whether it is safe to carry out a particular task on a stepladder where you cannot maintain a handhold (e.g., to put a box on a shelf, hang wallpaper, or install a smoke detector on a ceiling), the decision needs to be justified, considering:

- the height of the task
- whether a handhold is still available to steady yourself before and after the task
- whether it is light work
- whether it avoids side loading
- whether it avoids overreaching
- whether the stepladder can be tied (e.g., when side-on working)



Example where two hands need to be free for a brief period for light work. Keep two feet on the same step and the body (knees or chest) supported by the stepladder to maintain three points of contact. Make sure a safe handhold is available