



*'With grace and humility, glorify the Lord by your life.'*

# Fire Safety Report

This policy applies to St Thomas More Catholic Academy & Sixth Form College part of The Holy Spirit Catholic MAC

This Fire Safety Report has been approved and adopted by The Holy Spirit MAC on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Policy Ratified on: 12<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Signed by the Chair of the  
Education Standards  
Committee

Signed by the Principal

Next Review: July 2022



## **Health and Safety Report**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this report is to measure the school's compliance with the main provisions of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and other relevant legislation. It is not a full audit but a tool to establish the effectiveness of the school's interpretation and adherence to health and safety legislation as well as industry standards, such as CLEAPSS and AfPE.

This report will provide the school senior leadership team, as well as those particular departments which were visited, with clear recommendations that will allow for areas of weakness in safety management to be improved.

This report has been compiled following visits to the school on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2017 comprising a site walk and conversations with:

PE: Richard Williams, Head of Department

Science: Andrew Lilley, Head of Department and Leslie Whale, Senior Science Technician

Technology: Gez Fallon, Head of Department and Gordon Hughes, Design & Technology Technician

Site Services / Caretaking: Trevor Madden, Site Manager and Keith Ward, Caretaker

### **1.0 Findings:**

#### **1.1 Physical Education**

The management of health and safety for this department should follow the Association for Physical Education (AfPE) guidance and the guidance book currently available is out of date; the latest 2016 edition needs to be purchased. It is also recommended that the school becomes a member of the AfPE so that as with CLEAPSS, the department will receive regular updates and bulletins as well as being able to access the website which is full of valuable information resource.

The department does not currently have its own policy outlines roles and responsibilities within the team and safety arrangements. There are risk assessments for the department, which are reviewed every year, however they still refer to the LEA as opposed to the academy or AfPE guidance and also, they do not suitably assess the actual sporting activities. These risk assessments will require revision and in doing so, hopefully also reduce the amount of them.

There is no training matrix for the department. There is evidence of previous training by staff but some of the copies of certificates being held are for staff who no longer work at the school. All department staff are first aiders, have completed Level 1 qualification for rugby and three staff members are trained on safe scrummage. It appears that one member of staff is a professional rugby referee and he is able to disseminate up-to-date information to the rest of the team. The head of department believes that refresher training is required and there is a particular urgency for trampolining.



According to the head of department, children are reminded regularly about the rules of behaviour and safety; there have been some examples of children not abiding by these and they have been disciplined as appropriate.

Coat hooks and benches are relatively new and in good condition.

This year there appears to be more children in each group (25-28) and this has led to the changing rooms becoming very crowded. Also, there appears to be a concern that different age groups share the changing room and this is less than ideal, in particular when the age gap is too big. This is a timetabling issue that should to be resolved.

The showers are rarely used, mostly just for end of day sessions or evening community groups.

GM Services carries out an annual inspection of PE and sport equipment. No equipment were quarantined this year but there is a list of recommendations.

There appears to be some concerns surrounding the storage of equipment, for example the concertina door of the storeroom appears to be damaged and doesn't close, the blue mats used for exams are taking up much of the space and obstructs access to shelving.

## 1.2 Science

CLEAPSS guidance is the standard to which the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) would expect this department to follow; this the science department does. The department has its own policy based on the CLEAPSS template which is currently under review. The department follows all CLEAPSS guidance for practicals as well as the storage and handling of hazardous substances. Despite being a member of CLEAPSS, the department does not appear to be receiving bulletins and updates.

Risk assessments are based on CLEAPSS, however the department needs to check that they are school specific and not generic.

There is currently an uncertainty about how best to fulfil the inspection requirements for pressurised vessels such as autoclaves and the model steam engine.

The department does not have its own training matrix which could easily identify training gaps and required refresher dates. There does not appear to be any formal health and safety induction to staff neither the whole school, nor within the department.

Schemes of learning are currently being developed and health and safety matters will be integrated into them.

Year 7 are made aware of the new hazard warning symbols, however a great deal of items being used in the department still have the old labels; all student will need to be instructed on both old and new labelling until all the old labels are exhausted.

All Year 7 pupils are instructed on the rules of behaviour in science at the beginning of term and staff do not believe that poor behaviour is an issue in their department.

The fume cupboards are serviced every year by an external contractor.

There appears to be some concern over the effectiveness of the extraction in the chemical storerooms. Currently there is either only passive extraction or if it is active, then it is only activated once the light is turned on. Consideration should be given to installing active extraction for each chemical store and one which could be connected to a timer so that if there are long periods where nobody enters, the air is still extracted. There appears to be a method of monitoring the temperatures of the chemical stores but this is not formerly documented.

An emergency procedure for the accidental release of toxic gases such as those which are ammonium or chlorine based, needs to be agreed, written down and practiced as with a fire drill.

An inventory is carried out annually.

The science department undergoes regular monitoring but the standard and regularity of the inspections and audits can vary. It is recommended that the monitoring and audit regime is strictly followed as per CLEAPSS guidance.

As a result of the brief inspection of the labs and tech rooms, the following observations can be made:

- ✓ Safety signage and rules of behaviour is on display throughout
- ✓ The behaviour of those pupils observed carrying out practicals was excellent.
- ✓ Stepladders provided for the science prep room to access shelving need to be returned.
- ✓ Items temporarily left on the floor of the prep rooms need to be stored safely on their shelves, flammable cupboards, etc.
- ✓ The labs are kept clear of trip hazards.
- ✓ Gas isolation units are easily accessible in each lab but not clearly labelled.
- ✓ Oxidisers are kept separate from flammables in the main prep room. Flammables are kept in their own cupboard.
- ✓ Spillage kits are provided
- ✓ Large original electric panel located in the main science prep room showing signs of corrosion – Was this room was designed for storing chemicals?
- ✓ The water taps in Lab 8 are no longer being used; this could create a risk of legionella bacteria building up in the “dead legs” and also there is the risk of someone tripping and hitting their eye / head on uprights.

### 1.3 Technology

CLEAPSS guidance is the standard to which the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) would expect this department to follow. At the time of this report, the department did not have access to this vital source of information and without it, would be unable to judge whether they are still meeting current standards.

The department has a policy but this will need to be reviewed based on most recent guidance and reflecting current management arrangement within the department.

The department does not have its own training matrix which could easily identify training gaps and required refresher dates.

Risk assessments (including COSHH) are either old or too generic and as with the policy, will require review to reflect current safe methods of work and curriculum needs. As part of the COSHH review, an inventory of all hazardous items will need to be carried out and safer alternatives found if possible.

Laminated Hazcards are on display next to each piece of equipment but the font would be far too small to read for any operative. It is recommended that the hazcards are kept in a box / file for easy reference and a simple do's and don'ts in large clear font is displayed next to each piece of equipment.

There is a concern that at times staff and/or students walk through the technician's room whilst he is working with hazardous machinery. In fact, according to the technician, there was once a near miss where he very nearly would have major laceration / amputation injuries. Matters are made worse because with the extraction and machinery operating, the technician cannot easily hear persons enter. The department must either strictly forbid persons entering (a sign on the door instructs this) or if this is too difficult to manage, then provide an alternative safe method e.g. stable door system where people wait until they can be seen by the technician and receive permission from him before they enter.

An external contractor has recently inspected the workshop equipment for Resistant Materials and a list of remedial action has been provided which will be tackled in a timely manner. A similar inspection is planned for the equipment in Textiles with nothing yet planned for Food Technology.

The department has its own first aider, which is recommended, however it appears she is often providing first aid to non-department staff / children which is keeping her away from her technician duties. The school needs to check that her technician's duties are not being negatively impacted by the first aid role.

There is no training matrix for the department. There is evidence of previous training by the technician and the staff have a wealth of experience, however it has been agreed that some form of refresher training will be required, possibly in-house with the support of BSS.

Whilst staff have a monitoring regime for the department, there is no evidence of a formal audit of the department using the CLEAPSS form "DL79 Auditing Health & Safety in a Secondary School Design and Technology Department".

As a result of the brief inspection of the rooms the following observations can be made:

- Workshops are kept clean and tidy. There is a build-up of timber in one workshop which encroaches into machine work zones, however these machines are not being used until the timber is removed.
- Rules of behaviour and PPE signage is on display
- The level of lighting in classroom T1 beside the workshop is poor. This is possibly due to the fact that half of the fluorescent tubes and all the bulbs in the central lighting strip need replacing.
- There are several dry powder fire extinguishers within the department. Should these ever need to be used they would destroy all the equipment and could injure the operative or those nearby due to the enclosed nature of the rooms. It would be advisable to replace these with a better alternative e.g. CO2 and also, having a CO2 extinguisher to hand at the brazing area would be a good idea.
- Whilst the immediate work areas are kept clean and dust regularly vacuumed, there are areas within the workshops, such as at height, behind radiators, etc. which are difficult to reach and a regular deep clean by an external company would be advisable.
- Safety goggles are provided for operatives of machinery; these are cleaned daily by the technician and also children are instructed to wipe them before use.
- The department needs to decide whether aprons should be mandatory and if so then ensure that a sufficient number are provided (by the school or the parents).
- Welding gas bottles are kept secured on a purpose-built trolley, but there is no evidence of their arresters, valves, etc. being inspected by either in-house or external competent persons.

- Isolation switches are at height – these should be easily accessible without the need to get on a stepladder and best in the technicians area away from children.

#### 1.4 Site Services / Caretaking

Site services is managed by the caretaker working the morning shift and the site manager the afternoon shift with a shared time over lunchtime when both are on site. Currently, the caretaker appears to be responsible for the sixth form building and the site manager for the rest of the school. Whilst it is could be beneficial for persons to take ownership of their own area, this system has resulted in certain site services requirements either not being followed or not introduced in the first place.

Document keeping is poor and there appears to be a discrepancy on the understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities when it comes to health and safety. The caretaker believes that he is not responsible for completing any paperwork.

The management of fire safety in the school requires a great deal of improvement and rather than going into detail, it is best if reference is made to the separate fire risk assessment document.

There is very little evidence of proactive monitoring of the site. Water management logs are being kept by the site manager however these are very poorly filed and it is difficult to judge whether any poor results resulting from the monitoring are being actioned, such as low temperature reading of hot water systems. Also, there is a discrepancy in understanding between departments with regards to the showers. Currently, site services only run the showers every week during the summer holidays however the PE department knows that the showers are rarely used and therefore these should be run every week throughout the term as well as in the school holidays.

External contractors are engaged to carry out work which the in-house site services are either unable to do themselves or statute requires it. Evidence of statutory inspections, planned maintenance and service is both in the form of digital (WCC Atlus web) and /or documents held on file. This brief inspection has uncovered that there are certain documents which cannot be downloaded from Atlus (e.g. asbestos surveys) and others have not been provided by the contractor despite the work being carried out (e.g. gas boiler inspection reports).

There does not appear to be any risk assessments for the work being carried out by this department. Areas of particular attention should be working at height (including on the roof), lone working, working near to asbestos, litter picking, snow clearing, cleaning, minor repairs, manual handling operations, COSHH, etc.

There is no training matrix for the department. Both staff members have attended the WCC two-day caretaker training but this appears to have been a few years ago now. The site manager has undergone minibus defensive driving training as he is often asked to drive the minibus.

As with other departments, it has been agreed that some form of refresher training will be required, possibly in-house with the support of BSS.

Despite the above-mentioned inadequacies, it must be noted that the school was found to be very clean and tidy and both staff members appear committed to keeping the school buildings well looked after.

## 2.0 Recommendations

Description	By	Priority
Each department should ensure that they create their own policy which clearly outlines roles and responsibilities of staff and the management arrangements of the department.	PE Science Technology Site Services	
An emergency procedure for the accidental release of toxic gases such as those which are ammonium or chlorine based, needs to be agreed, written down and practiced as with a fire drill.	Science SLT	
The Technology department needs to decide whether aprons should be mandatory and if so then ensure that a sufficient number are provided (by the school or the parents).	Technology	
Each department should ensure that they write suitable and sufficient risk assessments and agree on safe system of work which must be followed, making sure they reflect the work being done and are not purely generic.	PE Science Technology Site Services	
The Technology department must ensure it can access the CLEAPSS website and receive regular bulletins	D&T	
The Science department must ensure that it makes arrangements to receive the regular updates and bulletins from CLEAPSS	Science	
Stepladders provided for the science prep room to access shelving need to be returned	Science	
Items temporarily left on the floor of the prep rooms need to be stored safely on their shelves, flammable cupboards, etc.	Science	
The PE department should purchase the latest version (2016) of the AfPE guidance book	PE	
The Technology department must either strictly forbid persons entering the technician's room (a sign on the door instructs this) or if this is too difficult to manage, then provide an alternative safe method e.g. stable door system where people wait until they can be seen by the technician and receive permission from him before they enter.	Technology	
Copies of all inspection reports, maintenance and service records carried out by external providers must be readily available for reference.	Site Services	

Description	By	Priority
The site management documentation for in-house inspections and checks must be better organised, ensuring all agreed inspections and checks are completed in a timely manner with records easily available for reference or audit.	Site Services	High
Create a summary table of all deficiencies highlighted by either internal or external inspection reports, check lists, etc. and ensure that actions are completed in a timely manner.	Site Services	High
Ensure that the actions highlighted in the fire risk assessment are carried out in a timely manner	SLT	High
A local asbestos management plan must be created and reviewed annually thereafter	Site Services	Medium
It is recommended that the school joins the AfPE to allow the PE department access to their website, bulletins and updates	SLT	Medium
Contact an electrician to check the integrity of the electrical switch panels in the main chemical storeroom which are showing signs of corrosion caused by chemical vapour.	Science Site Services	Medium
Teaching departments should carry out their own self-audit using CLEAPSS and AfPE guidance templates to ascertain their health and safety strengths and weaknesses	PE Science Technology	Medium
Each department should create a training matrix which clearly outlines mandatory and recommended training courses as well as in-house training, inset and evidence of particular instruction given	PE Science Technology Site Services	Medium
Each department should hold copies of their staff training certificates or at the very least have we easy access (i.e. school intranet) to them.	PE Science Technology Site Services	Medium
Each department must commence formal proactive monitoring of their area, ensuring that where applicable, recognised templates are used e.g. CLEAPSS	PE Science Technology Site Services	Medium
The level of lighting in classroom T1 should be improved by replacing blown fluorescent tubes / bulbs.	Technology Site Services	Medium



Description	By	Priority
Consideration should be given to installing active extraction for each chemical store and one which could be connected to a timer so that if there are long periods where nobody enters, the air is still extracted.	Science Site Services	Yellow
It is recommended that the laminated hazcards currently next to each machine are kept in a box / file for easy reference and a simple do's and don'ts in large clear font is displayed instead.	Technology	Yellow
It is recommended that the gas cookers and electrical powered appliances in Food Technology are inspected for safety and integrity by an external competent contractor	Technology	Yellow
A review of the timetabling for PE classes should be made to try and reduce the amount and age disparities of children using the changing rooms simultaneously.	PE SLT	Yellow
Where possible, ensure that health and safety is integrated into the schemes of learning	PE Science Technology	Green
Ensure all students are instructed on both old and new hazard labelling until all the old labels are exhausted.	Science Technology	Green
Consideration should be given to removing the plumbing and taps in Lab 8 to minimise any possible growth of legionella bacteria in the "dead legs" and to remove the risk of someone tripping and hitting their eye / head on the redundant uprights.	Science Site Services	Green
Consideration should be given to organising a regular deep clean by an external company for the Resistant Materials workshops and technicians room.	Technology Site Services	Green
The isolation switches currently located at height in the Resistant Materials workshop should be relocated into an area where children do not have access and there is no need to use a stepladder to access them.	Technology Site Services	Green
A review of the PE sports equipment storage should be made, with particular regard to the damaged concertina door and storage of mats used for exams.	PE SLT	Green
The first aid needs assessment should be reviewed, ensuring department technician's duties are not being negatively impacted by their first aid role.	SLT	Green

Description	By	Priority
Organise (refresher) training and / or instruction as identified in the training matrix. NB: BSS will support with this as much as possible.	PE Science Technology Site Services	

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to all the staff I met at the school for their time and patience during my visit.

*C. Billington*

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