



# Working at Heights Policy

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## **Statement of intent**

At Micklands, we recognise that there may be an increased risk to the health and safety of employees when working at heights. This policy has been established to identify risks and manage the risks accordingly.

The school has a duty under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees. The school also has obligations under The Work at Height Regulations 2005 (as amended).

Within this policy, 'working at height' refers to situations where staff, in the course of their duties, work at heights and are physically isolated from colleagues, possibly without immediate access to assistance.

## **1. Legal framework**

1.1. This policy has due regard to relevant legislation, including, but not limited to the following:

- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Work at Height Regulations 2005 (as amended)

## **2. Definition**

2.1. Micklands adopts the definition of the HSE, which defines work at heights as any place where, if there were no precautions in place, a person could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury or death.

## **3. Working at heights procedure**

3.1. The headteacher is responsible for ensuring suitable procedures are in place for undertaking risk assessments for all situations requiring work at height. These procedures must ensure that all involved are aware of the precautions and methods of work to be followed, including emergency action to be taken if necessary.

3.2. Working at height should be avoided, where it is practicable to do so, but where work at height cannot be avoided, the risk and consequences of falls should be prevented, using either an existing place of work that is already safe or the right type of equipment. This includes:

- Taking into account weather conditions that could compromise safety.
- Undertaking as much work as possible from the ground.
- Checking that the place where work at height is to be undertaken is safe. Each place where people will work at height needs to be checked each time, before use.
- Preventing materials or objects from falling or, if it is not reasonably practicable to do so, taking suitable and sufficient measures to make sure no one can be injured.
- Ensuring that workers can get safely to and from where they work at height.
- Ensuring equipment is suitable, stable and strong enough for the job, maintained and checked regularly.
- Storing materials and objects safely to ensure they won't cause injury if they are disturbed or collapse.
- Workers ensuring that they don't overload or overreach themselves when working at height.
- Taking precautions when working on or near fragile surfaces.
- Considering emergency evacuation and rescue procedures.

3.3. An approved list of work at height activities will be established, outlining situations where work at height may be authorised, and the necessary precautions and work methods to be followed.

- 3.4. Providing the activity is on the approved list, work at height may be deemed 'authorised'.
- 3.5. Unless explicitly stated on the approved list, work at height must only be undertaken following authorisation from the headteacher.
- 3.6. It is the responsibility of the individual concerned to ensure all necessary precautions and methods are adhered to at all times, in accordance with their instructions and training.
- 3.7. Any person, who becomes aware of circumstances involving work at height, where the existing control methods are ineffective, must inform the headteacher as soon as possible.
- 3.8. Risk assessments must cover all work currently undertaken at heights (or proposed to be), where the risk may be increased by the work activity itself, or the lack of available assistance should something go wrong. Once relevant tasks are identified, the following must be considered:
  - Plant and equipment: Plant and equipment used by individuals working at height will be assessed for suitability and safety.
  - Access and egress: Some work at height may require access to locations that are difficult to access or egress. Assessments will consider whether these tasks are safe.
  - Lone working: Work at height will not be undertaken when working alone.
- 3.9. Work equipment should be assembled and/or installed according to the manufacturer's instructions and in keeping with industry guidelines.
- 3.10. Where the safety of the work equipment depends on how it has been installed and/or assembled, the headteacher should ensure it is not used until it has been inspected in that position by a competent person.
- 3.11. Any equipment exposed to conditions that may cause it to deteriorate, and result in a dangerous situation, should be inspected at suitable intervals appropriate to the environment and use.
- 3.12. A record will be maintained of any inspection for types of work equipment, including guard rails, toe-boards, barriers or similar collective means of protection, and working platforms, both fixed and mobile.
- 3.13. Working platforms used for construction work and from which a person could fall more than two metres must be inspected:
  - After assembly/installation in any position.
  - After any event liable to have affected its stability.
  - At intervals not exceeding seven days.
- 3.14. Where it is a mobile platform, a new inspection and report is not required every time it is moved to a new location on the school/academy premises.

- 3.15. Any equipment, such as a mobile elevating work platform (MEWP), which has come from an external supplier, must be accompanied by a clear indication to everyone involved, when the last thorough examination has been carried out.

## **4. Risk assessment**

- 4.1. The school's risk assessment will include the following considerations:
- Safety of the pupils, staff, visitors, contractors and the general public.
  - Hazardous nature of any general work at height on the site (i.e. environmental conditions).
  - Required competency level of staff to undertake work at height.
  - Required level of competence and ability to use access equipment.
  - Required level of supervision.
  - The safest equipment to use on site.
  - The condition of access equipment and its maintenance.
  - Other methods of safe access for higher risk or time-consuming jobs at height.

## **5. Control measures**

- 5.1. In order to manage general risks, the following control measures have been put place. Members of staff working at height must:
- Not undertake work for which they are not trained.
  - Take reasonable care of their health and safety.
  - Not put themselves in danger.
  - Know, and follow, safe working procedures.
  - Never rush or cut corners.
  - Follow reasonable targets.
  - Stop for regular breaks and, if possible, change activity after prolonged periods.
  - Inform the headteacher of any relevant medical conditions.
  - Inform the headteacher of any hazards or accidents encountered.
- 5.2. The following communication procedures will also be put in place.
- Carry a mobile telephone at all times when working at height.
  - The worker will inform someone when they are working at height, how long they will be, and when they expect to be finished.
  - In the event that a worker has an accident or falls into difficulties, they are to use their mobile telephone to contact the headteacher, their nominated person, or the emergency services.
- 5.3. First aid kits will be made available throughout the premises. There locations will be communicated to all members of staff.

## **6. Training**

- 6.1. The school business manager will ensure that only individuals with sufficient skills, knowledge and experience are employed to perform a task at height, providing, where necessary, the appropriate training by an accredited trade organisation.
- 6.2. Where staff members are currently undergoing training, they should work under the supervision of somebody competent to work at heights.
- 6.3. Where a working at height activity is low-risk and of a short duration, competence requirements may be no more than making sure an employee receives instruction on how to use the equipment and appropriate on-the-job training.
- 6.4. Where a member of staff finds that they are required to use an item of access equipment on which they have not had instruction/training, or where they are unsure of correct or safe use, then they are to contact the school business manager prior to use.
- 6.5. The school business manager will maintain an up-to-date record of all instruction and training given to staff members.
- 6.6. Refresher training will be provided every three years.

## **7. Circulation**

- 7.1. This policy will be circulated to every staff member working at height, who shall annually sign a statement which affirms that he/she has:
  - Received a copy of the policy.
  - Has read and understood the policy.
  - Has agreed to comply with the policy.
- 7.2. This policy will be included in the publication scheme on the school's website and will be made available to the public.

## **8. Monitoring and review**

- 8.1. The headteacher will be responsible for reviewing this policy every three years. The next review date is 31<sup>st</sup> August 2027.

## Approved list of Working at Height Activities

This document has been created to ensure its users can map out the risks associated with working at heights. In addition to explaining the risks and the steps that will be taken to mitigate them, this list should also detail: the person carrying out the activity; any training or supervision the person requires; who is responsible for overseeing the works are carried out safely; who has approved the works and when.

In accordance with the HSE webpage 'Work at Height – Frequently asked questions', a person is considered working at height if they:

- Work above ground/floor level.
- Could fall from an edge, through an opening or fragile surface.
- Could fall from ground level into an opening in a floor or a hole in the ground. <sup>1</sup>

The examples in the table below have been completed in line with this definition and pertain to activities including changing a lightbulb, inspecting a leak in a roof and changing a wall display. This is an approved list and should be updated and maintained regularly to help ensure the safety of those carrying out the works, and to help identify any risks associated with working at height activities.

This document should be used alongside a Working at Heights Policy and Working at Heights Risk Assessment (both available in the related documents section of the article page) and should not be utilised in place of a risk assessment.

<sup>1</sup> HSE (2018) 'Working at Height – Frequently asked questions', para. 2 <<http://www.hse.gov.uk/work-at-height/faqs.htm>> [Accessed: 16 February 2018]

Activity	Equipment required	Main risks associated	Safety precautions	Person(s) carrying out the activity	Relevant documents	Training and/or supervision required	Responsible person	Approved by	Date of approval
Changing a lightbulb in the school hall	Elevated platform to carry out the works  Lightbulb removal tool	Falling from the platform  Slipping due to choice of footwear	Guard rails to be fitted to the platform.  Adequate safety footwear to be worn when completing works.	Third-party contractors	Health and Safety Policy  Working at Heights Policy  Site Safety Checklist  Contractors Policy	Caretaker to review school hall and structure before works proceed.	Caretaker	Headteacher	
Retrieving a ball from the school roof	Extension ladder for access to roof	Ladder slipping if not properly secured  Injury from overstretching if ladder isn't long enough  Falling from the ladder	Rubber feet fitted to the bottom of the ladder before use, and the ladder is held by the caretaker during use to ensure stability.  Ladder is adequately extended before use.	Caretaker	Working at Heights Policy  Working at Heights Risk Assessment  Health and Safety Checklist  Stepladder safety checklist	Caretaker to review equipment and site before undertaking activity.	Caretaker	Health and safety officer	

Activity	Equipment required	Main risks associated	Safety precautions	Person(s) carrying out the activity	Relevant documents	Training and/or supervision required	Responsible person	Approved by	Date of approval
Changing a wall display in a classroom	Step ladder to reach highest parts of the display	Falling from the stepladder  Injury from overstretching	The stepladder is secured on the ground with rubber feet.  The stepladder is placed directly and evenly on the ground.  The class teacher checks the stepladder before use.  The stepladder used is adequate for the classroom teacher to reach all parts	Classroom teacher	Working at Heights Policy  Working at Heights Risk Assessment  Health and Safety Checklist  Stepladder Safety Checklist	Class teacher will ensure the stepladder is secure before use.	Class teacher	Site manager	

Activity	Equipment required	Main risks associated	Safety precautions	Person(s) carrying out the activity	Relevant documents	Training and/or supervision required	Responsible person	Approved by	Date of approval
			of the wall display.						
Clearing the gutters	Renting a mobile elevating work platform (MEWP) to avoid use of the roof as an access point.	<p>Damaging the gutters</p> <p>Falling from the MEWP</p> <p>Injury from overstretching</p> <p>Damaging the roof and gutters</p>	<p>Third party contractors will be harnessed on to the MEWP to minimise the risk of falling from the platform.</p> <p>The platform will be positioned close to the relevant gutters to avoid overstretching.</p> <p>Third party contractors will remove the leaves and other debris from the</p>	Third party contractors	<p>Working at Heights Policy</p> <p>Working at Heights Risk Assessment</p> <p>Health and Safety Checklist</p> <p>Stepladder Safety Checklist</p>	Caretaker to remain in close proximity to the works while they're being carried out.	Caretaker	Headteacher	

Activity	Equipment required	Main risks associated	Safety precautions	Person(s) carrying out the activity	Relevant documents	Training and/or supervision required	Responsible person	Approved by	Date of approval
			gutters to avoid damage to the roof.						
Investigating a leaking roof	Extension ladder  Hard hats  Safety net installed underneath roof	Falling from the ladder  Falling from the roof  Falling through the roof	Rubber feet are fitted to the ladder to minimise the risk of slipping.  Perimeter edge protection is fitted to the roof to mitigate the risk of falling.  Safety nets are installed under the ceiling in question to minimise the risk of injury should anyone fall through the roof.  The roof will only be	Caretaker	Working at Heights Policy  Working at Heights Risk Assessment  Health and Safety Checklist  Stepladder Safety Checklist	Caretaker to undertake refresher training in working at heights.  Trained first aider to be in close proximity to the works at all times.	Caretaker and first aider	Headteacher	

Activity	Equipment required	Main risks associated	Safety precautions	Person(s) carrying out the activity	Relevant documents	Training and/or supervision required	Responsible person	Approved by	Date of approval
			accessed at the lowest points possible to minimise injury should anyone fall through it.						