

Health & Safety Guidance Children's Services Department

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Review Date	Changes Required	Name & Position
Sept 21	-	L.Bignall HT A.MERRINAN CHAIR OF Cov.

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Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Introduction

Although this guidance is written specifically for schools it applies to all areas within the Children's Services Department where personal protective equipment (PPE) is used. Therefore all references to school or department should be taken as also meaning setting, service or team and any reference to Headteacher or Head of Department should be taken as Section Head or Manager.

Provision of PPE – The Schools, The Subjects

The need for PPE is mainly confined to the practical subject departments in secondary schools and adult education centres. There is usually however, a need in most establishments for the provision of certain common items e.g. disposable gloves for use by first aiders and protective aprons to protect clothes from contamination. Examples of PPE used in educational establishments are given at the end of this guidance note.

Current Practice in Derbyshire Schools

We know from our contacts with heads of practical subject departments and from our inspections of schools that, generally speaking, protective clothing and equipment is provided and used. However, more emphasis needs to be placed on ensuring that:

- PPE is the most appropriate control measure;
- The most suitable PPE is provided to the correct standard;
- PPE is kept clean, repaired and maintained;
- PPE is appropriately stored;
- Staff and other users are given suitable information, instruction and training on how to properly use, store the PPE, report concerns;
- The use of PPE is monitored and enforced

These matters are covered in this guidance note.

PPE is a Last Resort Measure

Although prevention and control of risks must be the first consideration it is not always possible to deal with risks adequately by such means alone. In these circumstances, the use of PPE becomes necessary.

Under the Coshh Regulations for example educational establishments are required to assess the risks of any hazardous substances they use or produce such as wood dust and to put in place any necessary measures to protect staff and pupils. Where the use of any other method, such as local dust extraction facilities, proves impracticable, then as a last resort PPE may be the only option.



Reasonably Practicable

Because the use of PPE is a 'last resort' measure and because it is usually readily available, relatively inexpensive and therefore reasonably practicable to provide, there would be little defence against either a criminal prosecution under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act or civil claim for failure to provide and ensure the use of PPE. It is recommended therefore that this Guidance Note is followed.

1. Provision of PPE

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations require employers to identify and assess the risks to health and safety present in the workplace enabling the most effective means of reducing those risks to an acceptable level to be determined. There is a hierarchy of control measures and PPE should always be regarded as a last resort: engineering controls and safe systems of work should always be considered first. For example, a fixed screen to protect against swarf thrown off from a lathe in a workshop protects everybody; individual eye protection only protects those wearing it.

Headteachers/centre heads should ensure, through their Heads of Departments, that appropriate PPE and any necessary instruction and training in its use is provided wherever there is a risk to health and safety that cannot be adequately controlled by other means.

'Providing' means more than simply having the equipment on the premises. The staff and pupils must have the equipment readily available or at the very least have clear instruction on where they can obtain it. Appropriate signs and notices should be displayed.

By virtue of Section 9 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 no charge can be made to the staff for provision of PPE which is used only at work.

Adequate control of the risk is the general standard of protection that PPE provided should achieve. PPE should not be worn if the risk caused by wearing it is greater than the risk against which it is meant to protect.

When selecting PPE for use by staff and pupils, the nature of the activity or task and the demand it places on individuals should be taken into account. Things such as the physical effort required, methods of work, how long the PPE will need to be worn, should be considered.

The comfort of the wearer should be considered when selecting PPE as uncomfortable equipment is unlikely to be worn properly. Staff should not be expected to share PPE.

There will also be considerable differences in the physical dimensions of different staff and pupils and therefore more than one size of PPE may be needed. It is advisable to involve potential users when selecting appropriate PPE.

PPE provided must meet minimum standards and should carry the 'CE' mark which indicates the PPE meets minimum European standards.

2. Compatibility of PPE

If more than one item of PPE is being worn, the different items of PPE must be compatible with each other. For example, certain types of hearing protection will not fit properly and give adequate protection if a safety helmet is worn. In such cases when selecting PPE it should be ensure that both items when used together will adequately control the risks against which they



are provided to protect. PPE suppliers should be able to advise on compatibility of different types of PPE.

3. Assessment of PPE

The Headteacher or Head of Department should make an assessment to ensure that any PPE chosen is appropriate for the particular risks involved and for the circumstances of its use.

Existing guidance, e.g. COSHH assessments/CLEAPSS hazards etc may well give advice as to the types of PPE required if the risks cannot be controlled by any other means.

The assessment should take into account the following:

- a an assessment of any risks to health and safety which have not been avoided by other means;
- b the definition of the characteristics required by the PPE for it to be effective against the risks mentioned in (a), taking into account any risks which the PPE itself may create;
- c a comparison of the characteristics of the PPE available with those required in accordance with paragraph (b) above.

In the simplest and most obvious cases, which can easily be repeated and explained at any time, the assessment to identify suitable PPE need not be recorded. In more complex cases, however, the assessment will need to be recorded and kept readily accessible to those who need to know the results.

Once the potential hazards are known, there may be several types of PPE that would be suitable. The risks at the workplace and the parts of the body endangered are the two key elements to consider. Suppliers of PPE can advise on suitable equipment.

e.g: If we consider casting work in a school DT workshop and protection of the face in particular, the risk to the face will be from molten metal splashing. Therefore, ordinary workshop goggles will be no good as they only cover the eyes and are not generally molten metal resistant. We would, therefore, need to choose protection that covers the whole face and provides protection from molten metal.

Once a type of PPE, has been selected for a given application, the Headteacher/Head of Department will need to ensure, before purchasing, that the equipment can provide the protection needed. Manufacturers and suppliers have a legal duty to provide this information. Selection of suitable PPE should be seen only as the first stage of a continuing programme which is also concerned with the proper use and maintenance of the equipment and the training and supervision of employees.

An example of an assessment form is given in appendix 1.

4. Maintenance and Replacement of PPE

An effective system of maintenance of PPE is essential to make sure the equipment continues to provide the degree of protection for which it was designed.

The responsibility for carrying out maintenance should be laid down, together with the details of the procedures to be followed and their frequency. Where appropriate, records of tests and



examination should also be kept. The maintenance programme will vary with the type of equipment and the use to which it is put.

In general, PPE should be examined to ensure it is in good working order, before being issued to the wearer. PPE should also be examined before it is put on and should not be worn if it is found to be defective or has not been cleaned.

Such examinations should be carried out by properly-trained staff in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.

Whilst most PPE will be provided on a personal basis, in the case of pupils some may be used by a number of wearers. There should, therefore, be arrangements for cleaning and disinfecting if necessary before PPE is re-issued.

A sufficient stock of spare parts, when appropriate, should be available to wearers. Only the manufacturer's spare parts should be used in maintaining PPE or the degree of protection may not be reached. Some new PPE components also have to be 'CE' marked.

Some maintenance can be carried out by the trained wearer, but more intricate repairs should only be done by specialist personnel. With complex equipment, a high standard of training will be required and it may be easier to use the manufacturer, their agent or specialist firms to do the maintenance.

In certain circumstances it may be more appropriate, instead of instituting specific maintenance procedures, to provide a supply of disposable PPE in which case it is important that users know when it should be discarded and replaced.

5. Accommodation for PPE

Accommodation should be provided for PPE so that it can be safely stored or kept when not in use and will often be simple, for example a peg for weather-proof clothing or a case for safety spectacles. It must, however, be adequate to protect the PPE from contamination, loss or damage by, for example, harmful substances, damp or sunlight.

Where PPE becomes contaminated during use the accommodation must be separate from that for ordinary clothing and where necessary be suitably labelled, eg lab coats and ordinary coats should be hung separately.

If the PPE itself contains hazardous materials it may need special storage arrangements. Where quantities of PPE are stored, equipment which is ready for use must be clearly segregated from that which is awaiting repair or maintenance.

6. Information, Instruction and Training

Headteachers/Heads of Department must ensure that staff receive suitable information, instruction and training to allow users to make effective use of the PPE provided to protect them against hazards to their health and safety.

Users should be given both theoretical and practical instruction/ training in the use of the PPE to include:-

- an explanation of the risks present and why the PPE is needed
- operation, performance and limitations of the PPE



- instructions on selection, use and storage of PPE
- factors which can affect the performance of the PPE
- recognizing defects in PPE and arrangements for reporting loss or defects
- practice in putting on, wearing and removing PPE
- inspection and where appropriate testing of PPE
- maintenance which can be done by users
- safe storage of PPE
- problems that could be faced during use of PPE

The Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Head of Department and other managers and supervisors as appropriate should have an awareness of PPE and its correct use.

Those involved in maintenance testing and repair of PPE and its selection for use must also receive adequate training.

Training should be carried out in accordance with the recommendations and instructions supplied by the PPE manufacturer, who may be able to assist in the training if necessary.

The extent of training required will depend on the type of PPE, the frequency of use and the knowledge or experience of those involved.

Records of training should be kept.

7. Use of PPE

PPE must be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

PPE should only be used after adequate training has been given to the user and adequate levels of supervision should be provided to ensure that the training and instructions are being followed.

PPE should be returned after use to the storage place provided.

8. Reporting Loss or Defect

There should be arrangements for reporting defective PPE and for repairing and replacing it.

Users have a duty to take reasonable care of PPE and report to the Headteacher or Head of Department any loss, obvious defect or concern as to the serviceability of the PPE as soon as possible.



9. Types of PPE

Examples of the types of PPE used for different processes in establishments are given on the following pages. Please refer to specialist handbooks/manuals and standard risk assessments (for example CLEAPSS) for further details.

General

Aprons etc

Some form of protective clothing such as a coat or apron, preferably of non-flammable material (sometimes not essential – make an assessment), is advisable for most practical work. They protect the wearer's own clothing and help to cover loose items, such as ties, from causing problems.

Footwear

Special footwear is rarely necessary (except in gardening/ digging) but open shoes and sandals should be avoided especially when chemicals are being used.

Hair

Long, loose hair should always be tied back for practical work.

Examples of PPE Used in Schools

SUBJECT	PROCESSES	PROTECTION
Design and Technology	General	Cotton aprons for pupils Coats for staff
	Use of chemicals, including corrosive and flammable liquids	Eye Protection – goggles, with chemical resistance
	Cutting wood, sanding and finishing wood, drilling, cutting metal, using abrasive wheels, hammering into masonry or metal	Eye protection – goggles providing impact and dust protection. Where mechanical dust extraction is not available provide disposable dust masks or toxic dust respirators.
	Casting	Provided eye, neck and face protection (i.e. full face shield) molten metal resistant and leather aprons, gaiters/spats and gauntlets
	Welding	Provide eye, neck and face protection and leather aprons and gloves
Science	General	Cotton aprons for pupils Coats for staff
	Heating anything, handling chemicals	Provided at least spectacles to with chemical resistance
	Alkali solutions more than 1m concentration, bromine, concentrated acid, corrosives (e.g. calcium oxide)	Goggles or face shields Gloves
	Dispensing large volumes concentrated acids, alkalis or other corrosives; opening and dispensing from storage containers that may be under pressure (e.g. '880' ammonia); handling molten alkalis, glass working, breaking up rocks, stretching metal wires or plastic cords, some dissection work, metal work or woodwork in the prep room any other operation likely to give rise to flying splinters	Face shields Impervious apron as well as lab coat Gloves
	Microbiological work	Laboratory coat Gloves



SUBJECT	PROCESSES	PROTECTION
Geology/ Geography		Safety helmets, goggles, with impact resistance Foul weather clothing
Home Economics/Art		Aprons Gloves
Gardening Activities		Foul weather clothing, protective footwear – steel mid-sole and toe protection
First Aid		Aprons, disposable gloves(non latex), resuscitation aids
Outdoor and Adventure Activities		Warm clothing including waterproofs, gloves, hats and particulars PPE for specialist activities such as life jackets for canoeing
PE		Protective clothing and equipment in accordance with the rules of the game or activity
Building Works at the School	Any area designated by the contractor as a 'Hard Hat Area'	Safety helmet to be worn by any person entering the area (in practice these may be provided by the contractor before entry)

NB. This is not an exhaustive list of examples.



Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 1992
Assessment Questionnaire

Task:	
Establishment:	
Assessed by:	
Person at Risk:	

QUESTION	COMMENTS/ACTION TAKEN
What are the hazards that the person is exposed to?	
Can the hazards reasonably be controlled at source?	
Is PPE provided?	
If YES does it protect the person against the risks identified?	
If NO what PPE is required?	
Is the PPE suitable for the work undertaken?	
Is the PPE comfortable to wear? (e.g. is it the correct size?)	
Does the PPE restrict visibility, communication or movements?	
Does wearing the PPE for any length of time cause problems?	
Does the PPE carry the approved CE mark?	
Does using the PPE cause any additional risks?	
Is there replacement PPE available for use?	
Is the PPE maintained adequately?	

QUESTION	COMMENTS/ACTION TAKEN
Is the PPE compatible with any other PPE which may have to be worn?	
Is there appropriate storage facilities for PPE?	
Has sufficient information, instruction and training been given to the employee for its effective use and maintenance?	
RECOMMENDATIONS	

Assessor:		Date:	
Safety/Union Rep:		Date:	
Employee:		Date:	