



Policy Title:	Safety and Health Policy	
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Applies to:	Group wide	
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Policy Lead:	Head of Group Health and Safety	
Policy Sponsor:	UK Chief Executive Officer	
Approved By:	UK Chief Executive Officer, Richard Wilkins	
Approval Date:	20/09/2026	
Signed:	<i>Richard Wilkins</i>	
Cross Reference:	SHEP02	Allergy Policy
	SHEP03	Fire and Emergency Preparedness Policy
	SHEP04	Risk Assessment Policy
	SHEP05	Safe Driving and Vehicles Policy
	SHEP06	First Aid Policy
	SHEP07	Smoke Free Policy
	SHEP08	Animal Policy
	SHEP09	Environmental Policy
	SHEP10	Medical Conditions Policy
	OPSP28	Futures Work Experience External Placements Policy
	CLP03	Self-Harm and Suicidal Intent Policy and Guidance
	HRP03	Code of Conduct Policy
	HRP10	Workplace Concern Resolution Policy
	HRP11	Harassment and Bullying Policy
	HRP18	Safer Recruitment and Selection Policy
	HRP21	Employee Induction and Learning Policy
	HRP22	Your Wellbeing Policy
	OPP02	Restraint Reduction Policy
	DPP05	Data Protection Policy
	DPP06	Data Retention Policy
		Procurement Policy
Outcome:	This policy aims to: • Ensure that all employees are aware of their responsibilities in relation to safety and health • Inform of the Witherslack Group's approach to the management of safety and health including our commitment to ongoing improvement through the setting of health and safety objectives. • Provide details on the framework and systems we have in place to manage safety and health and where to access further information • Ensure compliance with relevant legislation including the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999.	

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EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Witherslack Group is committed to the fair treatment of all in line with the Equality Act 2010. An equality impact assessment has been completed on this policy to ensure that it can be implemented consistently regardless of any protected characteristics, and all will be treated with dignity and respect.

ENVIRONMENT, SOCIAL, GOVERNANCE (ESG) STATEMENT

Witherslack Group is committed to responsible business practices in the areas of: Environmental Stewardship, Social Responsibility, Governance, Ethics & Compliance. An ESG impact assessment has been completed on this policy to ensure it can be implemented successfully without adverse implications on our Group goals.

To ensure that this policy is relevant and up to date, comments and suggestions for additions or amendments are sought from users of this document. To contribute towards the process of review, please email the named policy lead.

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1. STATEMENT AND VISION

- 1.1 The Witherslack Group recognise and accept our responsibility to provide safe and healthy working environments to all our employees, children, young people, and any other persons affected by our operations. We have a pragmatic and proportionate approach, recognising we cannot eliminate all risk but reduce and manage exposure as far as reasonably practicable to minimise the number and impact of accidents and incidents that occur.

We have a comprehensive and externally accredited occupational safety and health management system in place, and we are committed to continual improvement. Health, safety, and risk management is a core consideration during decision-making processes, and we promote a positive and proactive health and safety culture within the organisation. We ensure our policies, procedures, and systems of work are adapted as necessary in the event of changes of legislation, employee feedback or additional risks being identified.

We ensure that employees are mindful of our collective duty of care to our children and young people, colleagues and other interested parties and are committed to ensuring active consultation and participation with all key stakeholders. We are aware that we can have a positive impact on our children, young people and integrate and promote health and safety as part of their learning and development.

- 1.2 The Chief Executive Officer, Executive Directors, and Senior Managers, as far as reasonably practicable will ensure we:
- Comply with all relevant legal requirements
 - Ensure all employees are aware of this policy
 - Communicate and consult with employees on matters that affect their health and safety
 - Encourage employees to identify, report, and manage hazards so that everyone contributes towards improving safety and healthy environments
 - Ensure adequate resources are provided for the provision of health and safety controls
 - Eliminate risks through the selection and design of buildings, facilities, equipment, and processes
 - Provide and maintain premises, plant, and equipment in a safe condition
 - Provide adequate welfare facilities and arrangements for employees, children, young people, and visitors including safe access and egress provisions
 - Have suitable emergency procedures in place in all buildings
 - Adequately train, instruct, inform, and guide employees to be competent and confident in their role and any tasks they are expected to undertake, and they are aware of their legal duties
 - Ensure all contractors have demonstrated competency in health and safety matters
 - Continually undertake and review assessments to identify proportionate, workable, and effective ways of reducing and managing risk
 - Safeguard the safety, health, and welfare of children and young people and employees on visits away from the setting
 - Monitor and review performance regularly and update policies, procedures, training, and guidance to pursue continual improvement
 - Provide health surveillance for employees where appropriate

2 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1 All employees have general duties under health and safety law and must take the time to read and understand the principals and expectations of this policy. All employees must:
- Take reasonable care of their own safety, and the safety of any other persons who may be affected by what they do or fail to do when at work.
 - Be aware of, and comply with, all safety and health policies, procedures, safety rules and any written or verbal instructions given to ensure their personal safety, health or that of others.

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- Be aware of risk assessments and relevant controls for their area of work and contribute and collaborate with the updating of risk assessments.
- Undertake dynamic risk assessments as part of their work to manage risks and keep everyone safe.
- Co-operate with colleagues so we can meet our legal duties and our policy and procedural requirements.

2.2 The UK Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is the ultimate duty holder for all matters relating to safety and health in the organisation and is responsible for ensuring:

- A competent person is appointed to ensure compliance with safety and health legislation.
- Appropriate resources (financial, people, materials, and equipment) are made available for the effective management of safety, health, and welfare.
- Board Members and the Senior Management Team are aware of the importance of safety and health and that it is considered as part of any business decision making process.
- A safety and health policy and management system are implemented and communicated effectively to all relevant people in the organisation.
- An effective training program is in place to ensure employees are competent to carry out their work in a safe manner.
- A plan of continuous safety and health improvement is in place and regularly reviewed.
- Suitable and sufficient insurance cover is in place.

2.3 Head Teachers, Registered Managers or Responsible Individuals are the people responsible for all matters related to safety and health in their setting and are responsible for ensuring:

- All safety and health policies, procedures, and risk assessments are in place and being followed.
- A positive safety culture is nurtured where employees can report hazards, discuss concerns, and safety and health is part of regular discussions in team meetings.
- The Health and Safety Compliance Lead is informed of any hazards not covered in our management system or any difficulties in implementing any of our controls.
- Premises and equipment are in a safe and healthy condition to use and where they are not, this is reported, the item taken out of use, or the risk managed.
- An effective system of reactive maintenance is in place.
- Appropriate welfare facilities are provided and maintained for employees, children and young people to use.
- Risk assessments are in place for all significant hazards within the setting, and controls and safety instructions are followed.
- Employees receive appropriate and effective training, instruction, and supervision to undertake their role safely and all have access to safety policies, procedures, guidance, and information.
- Appropriate resources are made available for the effective management of safety, health, and wellbeing.
- At least one Health and Safety Representative is designated in their setting, and they are involved in management discussions and decisions about health and safety.
- Any contractors working at the setting are adequately managed and supervised.
- Safety concerns, accidents, incidents, injuries and near misses are recorded, reported, and investigated.
- All regulatory visits and any correspondence relating to these visits are notified to the Health and Safety Team.

2.4 The Head of Group Health and Safety (HGHS) is the competent person appointed to oversee the management of safety and health across the Group and ensure that:

- The CEO is informed of any significant risks or safety concerns present in the organisation.
- We have a clear policy and an effective management system on safety and health with relevant

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information, guidance, and advice available to employees.

- Risk assessment templates are in place to cover all the hazards identified in the business.
- Regular communication, consultation, and engagement occur with all employees regarding safety and health issues.
- Regular audits, monitoring, and reviews take place to identify any areas of concern, to develop safe systems of working and to minimise the risk of ill health and harm being caused.
- Our policies, procedures, and systems of work are adapted as necessary in the event of changes of legislation or additional risks being identified.
- Training needs are regularly reviewed, and employees are supported in becoming competent in their role.
- Critical or serious incidents are fully investigated.
- The work of the Health and Safety Compliance Leads is planned and effective

2.5 Health and Safety Compliance Leads provide safety and health information, advice, and guidance to support everyone in working safely and minimising harm and ensure that:

- The Head of Group Health and Safety is informed of any hazards not covered in our management system or any difficulties in implementing any of our controls.
- Employees have an awareness of our safety and health policies, procedures, and guidance documents and check these are being implemented.
- Risk assessments are in place and effective for all hazards in the business.
- We are communicating effectively, and employees are receiving the training, instruction, and information they need to understand the risks and work safely.
- Safety training is effective and being given to those who need it.
- Visits are undertaken so that we can monitor compliance with legislative and procedural requirements.
- Accidents, dangerous occurrences, diseases, or other incidents that are notifiable are reported to the enforcing authority.
- Assistance is provided to employees to investigate accidents or incidents.

2.6 The Head of Quality Assurance (QA) is responsible for overseeing the work of the Safety, Health and Environment (SHE) Team and ensures that:

- Quality standards in the organisation are monitored and reported on.
- The work of the Health and Safety Team meets the objectives of the organisation.
- We have clear policies and procedures in place for protecting staff health, safety and welfare and these are reviewed and communicated effectively.

2.7 Line Managers oversee the management of safety and health within their area of control. They provide leadership and guidance to their teams to support everyone in working safely and minimising harm and ensure that:

- They have a good knowledge of and actively lead in the implementation of our safety and health policies and procedures.
- All staff under their management have an awareness of the safety and health policies, procedures, and relevant risk assessments and these are being followed and integrated into operation practices
- Suitable arrangements are in place for emergency situations, and all employees are aware of the procedures to be followed.
- We encourage a positive safety culture at all levels of the organisation where employees feel safe to raise and discuss concerns.
- Their Line Manager or the HGSH is informed of any hazards not covered in our management system, safety concerns that cannot be effectively managed or any difficulties in implementing any of our controls.
- Where premises and equipment are not in a safe and healthy condition, this is reported, and the

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risk managed effectively.

- Suitable and sufficient training plans are in place for relevant to the work of the role being undertaken, and employees are supervised and working practices monitored to develop safe systems of work.
- Risk assessments are in place, effectively communicated to their team, and reviewed regularly.
- Risk assessment controls and any safety related instructions are followed.
- Accidents and incidents are recorded, reported, and investigated in line with WG guidance.
- Health and Safety is an agenda topic in management meetings and regular meetings are held to discuss safety and health matters with employees.
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) is provided when required for employees.
- Hazardous substances are stored and handled in a safe manner.
- Appropriate resources are made available for the effective management of safety, health, and wellbeing.
- Health and safety conditions are monitored in the area over which they have control, and monthly health and safety checks are completed and reports returned as required.

Members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) of a setting will be expected to coordinate a response to safety and health events and manage risks in the absence of the Registered Manager or Head Teacher.

2.8 The Property Director is responsible for overseeing the buildings and spaces we use, and ensures that:

- Buildings are designed to be fit for purpose and consider future safety and health risks associated with their use and maintenance.
- Statutory examinations are planned, completed, and recorded with remedial actions addressed.
- An effective system of planned preventative maintenance is in place to ensure property, plant, and work equipment is in a safe condition.
- Resources are available for maintenance and reactive works to be undertaken.
- We have a clear policy and an effective management system for contractors who undertake work on our behalf.

2.9 The Transport Manager is responsible for sourcing and overseeing company vehicles, and ensures that:

- Vehicles are sourced from reputable suppliers and fit for the purpose in which they will be used.
 - Vehicles used for business activities meet the legal statutory requirements and we have an effective system of maintenance in place.
 - We have a clear policy and an effective management system for drivers and all vehicles used for work purposes.
 - We collate information on drivers to ensure they are legally able to drive.
 - All drivers based at Head Office or are home-based hold a valid driving licence and their vehicle is taxed and have an MOT as required.
 - All drivers based at Head Office or are home-based have completed a fitness form before being permitted to drive.
 - Line Managers and/ or Setting Responsible Persons are given the appropriate information required on drivers to allow a suitable and sufficient risk assessment to be completed (including those with points on their licence and any poor driving behaviours noted via our vehicle tracking system). Information sharing is based on legitimate need to know to meet the legal requirement for risk assessment to be completed in accordance with our Data Protection Policy (DPP05).
 - Drivers and line managers are given suitable information and training to support them driving safely and in line with Witherslack Group expectations.
 - All vehicle collisions and incidents are recorded and investigated.
 - Risk assessments are in place to cover all hazards associated with driving and vehicle usage.
 - The organisation is updated with any changes in legislation, best practice requirements, or requirements to allow us to continually improve standards and reduce risk.
- Vehicle related accidents and incidents are monitored and reviewed to identify unacceptable risks.

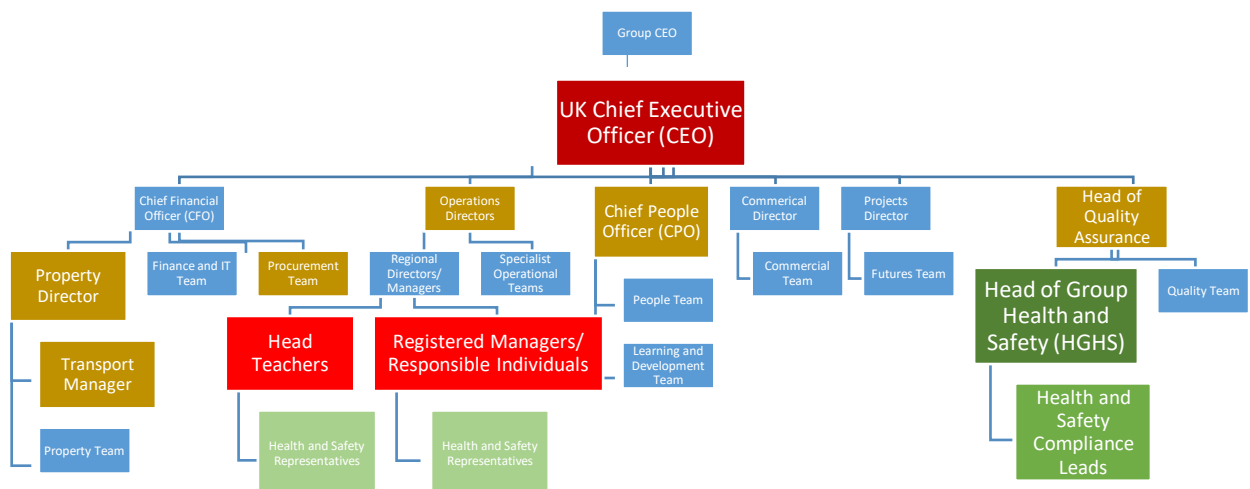
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- 2.10 The Chief People Officer is responsible for ensuring we are protecting and supporting our employees whilst at work and encouraging their personal development, they ensure that:
- We have clear policies and procedures in place for protecting staff health and welfare.
 - Staff have access to relevant information, guidance, and advice to support their health and wellbeing
 - Effective systems of recruitment and training are in place for staff to ensure they are competent for the role they undertake.
- 2.11 Health and Safety Representatives provide additional support to Head Teachers, Registered Managers and Responsible Individuals to complete tasks and help to ensure that:
- Their line manager, the Health and Safety Compliance Lead or a member of the Senior Leadership Team is informed of any safety concerns that have been reported and are not effectively managed.
 - We encourage a positive safety culture where employees are happy to report hazards and raise and discuss safety or health concerns.
 - Premises and equipment are in a safe and healthy condition to use and where they are not, this is reported and taken out of use, or the risk managed.
 - Employees within their setting have access to safety policies, procedures, guidance, and information.
 - We have effective records of safety and health checks and controls in place.
 - Safety and health is part of a regular discussion in team meetings.
 - We have 'champions' of health and safety who represent and provide a voice for frontline staff.

3 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Overview

Group organisational overview highlighting key roles for health and safety.



Key Roles:

Legal Duty Holder for H&S:	Chief Executive Officer
Responsible Persons for H&S across organisation:	Executive Directors & Senior Managers
Responsible Persons for H&S in each setting:	Head Teachers and Registered Managers
Competent Persons for H&S:	Head of Group Health and Safety Health and Safety Compliance Leads
Supporting task completion for H&S:	Health and Safety Representatives

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4 SAFETY AND HEALTH MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

4.1 Safety and Health Policy

Our Safety and Health Policy forms part of the Witherslack Occupational Safety and Health Management System, which meets the ISO 45001 standard. The aim of the management system is:

- To provide a framework to meet the legal requirements, organisational vision, mission, and values of the Witherslack Group
- Provide a safe and healthy environment for our staff that makes them want to come to work
- Give comfort and confidence to parents, visitors, and business partners that we work to achieve the highest levels of safety, health protection, and wellbeing for everyone
- Teach children and young people the importance of safety and effective risk management
- To set, monitor and maintain the highest standards in relation to safety, health, welfare, wellbeing and environments for children, young people, staff, and visitors

The management system incorporates all our activities in our settings and office locations, and we are regularly externally audited to ensure we are meeting the ISO 45001 standard.

4.2 Supporting Policies

We have developed specific safety, health and environment policies to support this general policy and these along with accompanying procedures, forms, and guidance documents form part of our safety and health management system. The policies are listed on page one of this document, and they can be accessed in the Witherslack Way, via ME@WG.

We use a paper folder system, electronic online folders, and software systems to record health and safety records in settings. All forms, guidance, and accompanying information can be accessed from the Health and Safety folder in WG_Shared on the Network Drive.

4.3 Safety and Health Statement

Each setting has a [Safety and Health Statement \(SHEF01\)](#) which is signed by the Responsible Person to affirm our commitment to this Policy at a site level. This provides information on those undertaking local roles and any site-specific arrangements in place. As this is a new requirement, this will be in place from 1st November 2026.

4.4 Monitoring Performance

Measuring and monitoring performance is essential to continually improve our safety performance and to continually develop a positive and proactive safety and health culture. We complete both active and reactive monitoring and it is everyone's responsibility to help support this process.

We have a schedule of visits (SHE Reviews) that are completed by the Health and Safety Team to ensure that we monitor and review our policies, procedures, processes, and controls to ensure they are fit for purpose. We undertake these using document review, data analysis, employee feedback and physical observations. This continual audit and review process allows us to adapt and change to keep us compliant and ensure our working environments are safe and healthy.

A periodic review (Setting Health and Safety Review) is undertaken by the Responsible Person in each setting to identify any site-specific hazards or gaps in meeting the Group health and safety management system. In homes this is undertaken monthly and recorded on ClearCare and in schools this is undertaken at least every half term and recorded in the Board report. [Guidance on H&S Reviews \(SHEG09\)](#) is available.

Where personal data is used to monitor health and safety performance, only the minimum information necessary is used. Reports, trend analysis and Group-wide learning is anonymized and identifiable information must not be included in general reports or communications unless there is a specific and proportionate need to do so.

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4.5 Communication and Consultation

It is important that effective communication and consultation with employees is in place, and we have several ways we do this at the Witherslack Group. We know employees must be kept informed and we value their feedback and views when putting together or reviewing policies, procedures, and ways of working. We do this via:

- Having designated Safety and Health Representatives in each setting
- Having a designated Health and Safety Compliance Lead being a point of contact for each setting
- A member of the Health and Safety Team visiting each site at least once each year
- Sharing regular health and safety bulletins to all staff
- Organising health and safety forums where staff can attend
- Undertaking a regular health and safety review in each setting
- Safety and health being an agenda point in staff meetings
- Having a robust consultation and ratification process for Witherslack Group policies
- Displaying the 'Health and Safety Law – What you need to know' poster

Information shared through communications must not identify an injured or affected person unless this is necessary for a specific safety, safeguarding, or legal purpose. Where information is shared to support learning or prevent recurrence, personal details should be removed or minimised wherever practicable.

4.6 External visits

We have a [Safety, Health and Environment \(SHE\) Regulatory Visits Procedure \(SHESOP02\)](#) in place to ensure that we can swiftly respond and react to any risks that have been identified by a regulatory body. All settings must:

- Ensure all key staff are aware of and follow the requirements of the procedure
- Ensure that visits are discussed with the Health and Safety Compliance Lead
- Any documentation left or sent by the regulatory body is saved down in the health and safety folder/ file

5 RISK ASSESSMENT

5.1 What is a Risk Assessment?

Risk assessment is a step-by-step process for identifying hazards and determining whether we are doing enough to reduce the likelihood of injury or ill health. A risk assessment is not the document itself but an active process of evaluation that is carried out.

The risk assessment process allows us to identify the hazards in place and put in place suitable controls for their use. Not all hazards identified in the organisation are listed in this policy and employees must refer to the risk assessments for their setting for more information. Whilst the risk assessment process considers all known hazards, the risk assessment document includes only significant hazards, so minor and inconsequential hazards may not be recorded.

All hazards have some degree of risk attached; the aim of safety and health management is to reduce the risk to the lowest practical level by implementing effective control measures. There is always a balance between the benefit of hazard exposure and the risk of it causing harm.

5.2 Types of Risk Assessment at Witherslack Group

The following types of risk assessment are in place in the organization:

- **General risk assessments**
These are used for our known and reasonably foreseeable hazards and cover our premises, equipment, and regular activities. There is a set of these for each setting or office and all employees must be familiar with the controls in place for the areas they work or activities they are involved in.

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- Person specific risk assessments**
 Person specific risk assessments consider the risks to individual people and any additional controls needed to protect them from harm. Most of our children and young people have a person specific risk assessment, but some of our employees will need them too. Including anyone with a significant medical condition, new and expectant mothers, those who work alone (lone workers), those who lift or move equipment (manual handling) and those who use computers on a regular basis (Display Screen Equipment assessments). **Risk assessments undertaken for employees should always be completed by the Line Manager (or another member of SLT where relevant). Advice can be sought from the Health and Safety Representative or Compliance Lead where appropriate.**
- Event specific risk assessments**
 Where we are undertaking unusual or higher risk activities that do not form part of a routine day, an event specific risk assessment must be completed. This includes residential school trips, maintenance activities with specialist equipment such as a mobile platform, and public events like open days. We recommend that all event specific risk assessments are discussed with the Health and Safety Team to ensure we are considering all the risks. For school visits, this is built into our recording and review process using the Evolve software.
- Equipment specific risk assessments**
 Where higher risk work equipment is used, we have equipment specific risk assessments in place. These provide specific information on the specific training and controls that are needed and cover maintenance, clinical and specialist equipment.
- Dynamic risk assessments**
 Dynamic risk assessments must be undertaken by all employees continuously throughout their working day. The purpose is to enable us to work safely by understanding the potential risks of what we are doing and continually planning, assessing, and reacting to situations to keep everybody safe. They help us manage the risks that we cannot plan for in our general risk assessments. Dynamic risk assessments do not need writing down however, you must report to SLT any concerns you have where we may not be effectively managing a risk.

The Witherslack Group Risk Assessment Policy provides more detail on risk assessments. Template risk assessments are available for common hazards, activities, or areas, the [Risk Assessment List \(SHEG41\)](#) details these. The list and risk assessments can be accessed in the Health and Safety folder in WG_Shared on the Network Drive.

Steps of dynamic risk assessment

- 1. Identifying hazards and continually assessing any risks**
 Undertake regular daily checks on the environment to ensure it is safe and secure
 Check equipment for damage or wear before we use it
 Think about the outcomes of our next actions or activities before we begin
 Consider whether we are competent and confident in an activity before we start
- 2. Thinking about who may be affected and how**
 Who may be in my area of work?
 Is there a risk to colleagues?
 Do we need to manage situation by putting in additional controls or supervision?
 Do any children have additional needs for this activity we have not considered?
- 3. Taking actions needed to control the risk**
 Take damaged equipment/ areas out of use
 Reducing the number of children who undertake activities that are harder to manage

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or risky
Ensuring close supervision during higher risk activities

4. Communicating risks and actions to colleagues and recording them

Ensure anyone at risk is aware of the hazard or risk present by telling them
Update general or person specific risk assessments where appropriate
Report defects, issues, or concerns to H&S Representative or SLT to ensure these can be addressed.

6 COMPETENCE OF EMPLOYEES

6.1 Training, Information, Instruction and Support

Having competent, skilled, and knowledgeable employees is essential to creating safe environments and managing risk effectively. Our training enables employees to be confident in their work and make a positive contribution to our safety and health culture.

The Witherslack Group provide training, instruction, guidance, and information to help work and tasks to be undertaken safely. Training can be completed through observation, shadowing, reading, watching videos, online tutorials, roleplay, discussions and through formal courses and qualifications.

Training will be undertaken at the beginning of employment as an induction and additional training will be provided depending on the role. Training will be reviewed and refreshed as necessary considering amendments to policies or procedures, changes in role, introduction of new technology or equipment and following an incident or performance appraisal. Records of training will be kept for all employees.

Employees must:

- Follow instructions or information provided for safety or health reasons
- Participate in training as required for the role or the tasks they need to undertake
- Work according to the content of training received or policies and procedures in place
- Ask for clarification of any points not fully understood
- Not operate or use equipment, plant, or substances unless they have been appropriately trained and instructed to use
- Co-operate with colleagues and inform their Line Manager/ Health and Safety Team about anything that present a serious or imminent risk to safety or health or is a failure in our safety arrangements
- Take care of their own health and safety and that of others

Line managers must ensure that staff have completed the training required for their role and this is recorded.

7 ACCIDENTS, NEAR MISSES, AND FIRST AID

7.1 First Aid

First aid applied incorrectly can cause further injury and delay the healing process and may lead to the person giving treatment putting themselves at risk of injury, contracting illness or disease through exposure to a bodily fluid. We therefore only advise that trained first aiders give treatment.

We are committed to providing sufficient provision for first aid, to achieve this we will:

- Appoint and train a suitable number of employees to be first aid responders
- Display information with details of the trained first aiders available
- Provide suitable and sufficient first aid equipment
- Provide a defibrillator for use in settings

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The [Witherslack Group Accident and First Aid Policy \(SHEP02\)](#) provides details on how many first aiders are required to be trained in each setting.

7.2 Accidents and Near Misses

We are aware of how important recording, reporting, and investigating accidents and near misses are to identify areas of weakness, implement changes to prevent future incidents and ensure legal compliance.

We are committed to reducing the likelihood of injuries and harm by:

- Recording all events where someone requires first aid treatment
- Investigating accidents that require treatment from a medical professional to identify areas of learning
- Promoting the recording of near-miss events to allow analysis of trends
- Undertaking remedial actions where needed to reduce the likelihood of recurrence
- Sharing relevant learning from accidents and near misses with colleagues to support dynamic risk management. Information should be anonymised or appropriately aggregated wherever identification of an individual is not necessary. Where identifiable information must be shared, this must be limited to the minimum necessary and shared only with persons who have a legitimate need to know.

The [Witherslack Group Accident and First Aid Policy \(SHEP06\)](#) provides details on the accident recording and investigation process.

8 PREMISES SAFETY

8.1 Witherslack Group Controlled Work Environments

We aim to provide a safe and healthy environment for everyone and a key element of this is designing, providing, and managing our buildings, structures, fixed plant, and equipment. We schedule proactive upgrades, refurbishments, and extensions as necessary for organizational need and have a process in place for planned inspections, servicing, and reactive work and repairs.

8.2 Planned Preventative Maintenance

Each setting and Group controlled office space has a schedule of statutory inspections, testing, servicing, checks, and maintenance to ensure we stay legally compliant. Our site maintenance teams and property team are supported by contractors to ensure that we are effectively managing our premises. We record this information on a centrally held portal, Expansive and at each setting via the [H&S Property Checks document \(SHEF02\)](#).

All electrical systems are installed by a competent person and inspected every 5 years. There is a testing regime in place for portable appliances, and we advise that all electrical appliances are visually examined for damage prior to every use.

Gas equipment, fire equipment, and other work equipment and plant is inspected and serviced using competent contractors in line with best practice recommendations.

8.3 Internal Health and Safety Checks and Controls

Each setting and Group controlled office space has a schedule of internal checks that are completed to help us manage risks, create healthy and safe environments and stay legally compliant. These checks are completed by employees who work in each site and vary depending on the plant, equipment and activities that take place at each location. These checks are recorded on ClearCare in homes; electronically/ on paper or on Arbor in schools and electronically in offices.

Property and equipment checks should not include personal data and access to records held on ClearCare, Arbor, paper files or electronic folders must be limited to authorised persons. Duplicate recording across different

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systems should be avoided unless there is a documented operational, safeguarding or legal reason for maintaining more than one record.

8.4 **Working from Home**

Whilst most employees work within a setting or office environment, we recognise that we have a duty of care to those that work from home or are hybrid working. We support the safety, health, and well-being of those that work from home where it is practical and appropriate for the role and adapt our controls and support measures where necessary to meet homeworking needs. A risk assessment is in place for home workers.

All persons who work from home are required to complete a DSE assessment for their workstation and this must be reviewed annually.

8.5 **Hygiene and Cleanliness**

The cleanliness and tidiness of our environments are essential in reducing the risk of accidents and ill-health all staff have a responsibility in ensuring all workplaces are kept clean and free of rubbish. Welfare facilities are provided, maintained, and kept clean with regular sanitisation of work surfaces and touch points. Waste bins must be emptied at least once per day.

9 **WORK EQUIPMENT, CONTRACTORS, AND SUPPLIERS**

9.1 **What is work equipment?**

Work equipment is any machinery, appliance, tool, or installation provided for your use at work and incorporates all types of items that may be used every day or only from time to time from a pencil through to a minibus.

We have a large amount of equipment that is used across Witherslack Group. We ensure that it is:

- Suitable for the intended use
- Maintained in a safe condition, in effective working order, and in good repair
- Inspected to ensure it is installed correctly and does not subsequently deteriorate
- Accompanied by adequate information, instructions, or training to ensure safe use
- Accompanied by suitable health and safety measures, such as protective devices and controls where required. These will normally include adequate guarding, emergency stop devices, means of isolation from sources of energy, clearly visible markings and warning devices.

Due to the wide range of different work equipment being used, the risk from each varies depending on the equipment and the task being undertaken. It is important that appropriate training, instruction and/ or information is given on any equipment that is to be used, especially where it is unfamiliar or there is a risk of injury during its use. The risk assessment for the task being carried out or the equipment being used provides information on the type of instruction needed and controls that should be in place.

The [Work Equipment Safe Operating Procedure \(SHESOP01\)](#) provides information on the steps to be followed before acquiring equipment. All work equipment should be purchased from reputable suppliers in line with the [Witherslack Procurement Policy](#).

9.2 **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is any equipment or clothing that protects the user against health and safety risk at work. It includes items such as gloves, aprons, hi-visibility clothing, eye protection, hard hats, face masks and safety footwear. Where an activity requires the use of personal protective equipment, this is detailed in the risk assessment, and it is a requirement that it be worn by all employees when undertaking the task. Training in the correct wearing and use of PPE is completed with all employees as necessary as required by their job role.

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PPE must be purchased from a reputable supplier and have a UKCA or CE conformity mark and be used for the use intended. PPE should be stored in a suitable location to ensure it is clean, hygienic, and ready to use when needed. Employees must report any issue or fault with PPE to their Line Manager.

9.3 **Maintenance Equipment**

Equipment specific risk assessments must be provided for all maintenance equipment in use across Witherslack sites. Only people employed in maintenance or property roles or who have had training and have been authorised by the Responsible Person are permitted to use this equipment. Visual inspections must be completed prior to the use of any maintenance equipment.

9.4 **Sports, Gym, Play, and Therapy Equipment**

We have a large amount of sports, gym, play and therapy equipment that is used across Witherslack Group. The [Guidance on Sports Gym, Play and Therapy Equipment \(SHEG10\)](#) provides additional information on the different types of equipment and how this is managed in settings.

9.5 **Therapy Equipment**

We routinely use therapy equipment as part of structured support to children and young people. Risk assessments are in place for all approved therapy equipment, and these have been complied by the Clinical and Health and Safety Teams. All employees must use equipment in accordance with the controls detailed in the relevant risk assessment.

It is recommended that prior to the purchase or acquisition of any new equipment being used for therapy, guidance be sought from the Clinical Team to ensure it is used in the appropriate way, and a risk assessment has been completed. Any employee who uses equipment for therapy is responsible for ensuring a risk assessment is in place. All therapy equipment should be purchased from approved suppliers and have a UKCA conformity mark.

9.6 **Design, Technology, and Science Equipment**

Equipment used as part of technology or science lessons in schools should follow risk assessments, guidance, and support information provided by CLEAPPS. Each school should have a subscription to the CLEAPPS website to allow access to the relevant information by anyone involved in these lessons.

Employees leading practical lessons are responsible for ensuring the risk assessment is in place (this can be part of the lesson plan) and has been shared to any support staff as necessary.

9.7 **Suppliers and Service Providers**

All services should be organised in line with the [Witherslack Procurement Policy](#) and considering the health, safety, and wellbeing of our employees, children, young people, and members of the public who may be affected by our operations.

Suppliers and service providers must adhere to all relevant legislative requirements, and we may undertake checks to ensure they can work safely and healthily in our sites. Where goods are being delivered to settings, suppliers must contact reception in advance of delivery and offload the goods as instructed. No goods should be left external to the building unless there has been prior agreement in writing.

9.8 **Contractor Management**

Contractors completing work may not be familiar with our practices, children, young people or specific controls we have in place. It is therefore important that all work undertaken by contractors is properly planned and managed. The [Witherslack Group Managing Contractors Policy \(SHEP12\)](#) provides information on the procedures that we have in place.

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10 CONTROL OF SUBSTANCES HAZARDOUS TO HEALTH (COSHH)

10.1 Managing Hazardous Substances

We consider and manage exposure to any chemical, fume, dust, mist, or biological agent that is present in our organisation and has been identified as being a risk to health. Any individuals who feel that have been or are at risk of exposure should complete an accident or near miss form so this can be investigated.

We control the risk by:

- Ensuring our risk assessment process considers hazardous substances and effective control measures are in place
- Reviewing products in use on a regular basis to check if less hazardous products are available and using non-hazardous products wherever possible
- Having an approved list of cleaning products that must be purchased via our approved suppliers
- Having COSHH risk assessments for all products being used and these being available to access

10.2 COSHH Risk Assessments

Prior to undertaking any activities that may lead to exposure to a hazardous substance, a risk assessment must have been completed considering the risks.



Any products purchased with a hazard pictogram on the label (an example is shown here for one type of hazard – corrosive), **must not be used until a data sheet has been acquired and a COSHH risk assessment completed**. The information on a COSHH risk assessment must be understood by all those using the product and PPE worn where required.

All cleaning products must be purchased through our procurement partner, Lyreco and Biohygiene products should be used where their brand of product is available for the use required. We have completed COSHH Risk Assessments for all Biohygiene products and these can be referenced in the WG_Shared on the Network Drive.

11 EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

11.1 Management of Emergencies

We are aware that an emergency may occur at any time, and we take steps to prepare for these events to ensure all employees, children and young people are confident in taking the right action. We have procedures in place for the management of fire safety and other emergency situations that may require evacuation or lockdown. In each building we ensure:

- The building has been designed to allow safe egress in an emergency with suitable fire exits, signage, and lighting in place.
- Security systems are in place to ensure unauthorised access is controlled.
- A fire alarm system is in place and regularly maintained to give early warning of fire.
- Procedures are in place for raising the alarm for emergency situations such as fire or lockdown.
- Emergency equipment is in place as required from the risk assessment process.
- All fire and emergency systems and equipment are regularly checked, and records kept.
- All employees are aware of the emergency procedures, and these are regularly practiced ensuring familiarity.

The Head Teacher or Registered Manager/ Responsible Individual is responsible for ensuring all employees and visitors are aware of the action to take in the event of an emergency. All employees have a responsibility to alert their Line Manager of an emergency and follow the procedures in place and the training and information received.

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The Witherslack Group Fire and Emergency Preparedness Policy (SHEP03) provides the detail on the requirements in place for managing fire safety and emergency situations including lockdown and business continuity.

12 EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND SAFETY

12.1 Health Questionnaire

All employees who work for the organisation complete a health questionnaire. This will identify if any additional considerations are needed and if a person specific risk assessment needs to be completed. We have access to an occupational health team who can offer advice and additional support. Any health condition that is thought to be caused from work related activities must be reported to the Head Teacher or Registered Manager as well as the Health and Safety Compliance Lead.

Health questionnaires and related occupational health information contain special category personal data and must be treated as confidential. Only information that is relevant and necessary for the stated purpose should be collected. Detailed medical information must only be accessible to appropriately authorised HR Team, Occupational Health, or other designated personnel unless explicit permission has been granted for it to be shared.

12.2 Wellbeing and Stress Management

We are aware that safeguarding the health of our employees is as important as the management of safety and we are committed to providing a healthy environment for everyone. Risk assessments are in place that include the management of stress, bullying, and poor mental health. The Witherslack Staff Wellbeing Policy provides more information on the resources that are available.

12.3 Alcohol and Substances

The abuse of alcohol, drugs and other substances can affect health, work performance, and safety. All employees have a duty to take reasonable care of themselves and others who could be affected by their actions while they are at work. Witherslack Group have a zero tolerance of using drugs or alcohol whilst at work. All premises and company vehicles are a smoking, illegal drug, and alcohol-free zone. Smoking (including vaping/ e-cigarettes) must be carried out off site, away from entrances and out of sight from the view of children, young people and visitors.

12.4 Lone Working

Lone workers are those who work in any situation or area for significant periods of time without colleagues nearby. This includes working alone with a young person in a building or vehicle, meeting someone away from the setting like a parent or someone from another organisation (especially for the first time) or those working as cleaners or maintenance when the setting is shut.

We recognise that employees who lone work are at greater risk than those with the support of colleagues nearby, so all activities where lone working is necessary must be risk assessed to ensure we have suitable controls in place. It is the Line Managers responsibility to ensure a suitable and sufficient risk assessment is in place. The [Lone Working Guidance \(SHEG06\)](#) provides more information and details appropriate control measures that can be implemented.

13 DATA PROTECTION

13.1 Health and safety activities may involve the processing of personal data relating to employees, children, young people, visitors, contractors and other individuals. This may include special category personal data concerning physical or mental health.

Personal data collected or used under this policy must be:

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- processed only for a clear and legitimate health and safety, safeguarding, employment, insurance, regulatory or legal purpose;
- relevant and limited to the information necessary for that purpose;
- recorded accurately, objectively and, where appropriate, updated;
- stored securely and protected against unauthorised access, alteration, disclosure, loss or destruction;
- accessible only to authorised persons with a legitimate need to know;
- shared only where necessary and proportionate, using anonymised or appropriately aggregated information wherever possible; and
- retained and securely deleted in accordance with the Witherslack Group Data Protection Policy and Retention Schedule.

Individuals must be provided with appropriate privacy information explaining how their personal data is used. Any new or materially changed process, system or technology used to collect, monitor, analyse or share health and safety information must be referred to the Data Protection Team where it may create a high risk to individuals or require an update to the relevant privacy information.

14 DEFINITIONS

- 14.1 **Accident** – An event that results in injury or ill health.
- 14.2 **As far as reasonably practicable** – To a level where applying further control measures is grossly disproportionate to the benefit that would be gained.
- 14.3 **Competence** – The combination of training, skills, experience and knowledge that a person has and their ability to apply them to perform a task safely.
- 14.4 **Dangerous occurrence** – A specific reportable event as defined by the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR).
- 14.5 **Display Screen Equipment (DSE)** – Devices or equipment with an alphanumeric or graphic display screen includes computers, laptops, mobile phones and handheld touch screen devices.
- 14.6 **Dynamic Risk Assessment** – Carried out immediately before and during an activity to build on general risk assessments and allows active responses to changing situations and risk.
- 14.7 **Hazard** - A hazard is something that has the potential to cause harm or ill health effects on a person or persons.
- 14.8 **ISO 45001 standard** – An internationally recognised specification for safety and health management systems.
- 14.9 **Major Accident** – An accident leading to a fatality, amputation, over 10% burns, crush injury, loss of consciousness, blindness or any injury that could be life threatening and/ or requires significant treatment or rehabilitation.
- 14.10 **Minor Accident** – An accident leading to an injury that does not require treatment, or where first aid can be administered on site.
- 14.11 **Near Miss** – An unplanned and unwanted event that did not lead to injury or illness but had the potential to do so.
- 14.12 **Occupational safety and health management system** – A framework of interrelated elements to achieve the objectives of an organisation through the alignment of policies, procedures, and processes.

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- 14.13 **Risk** - Risk is the likelihood combined with the severity of harm being caused when exposed to a hazard.
- 14.14 **Risk Assessment** – A systematic process of identifying hazards, evaluating the risks associated with those hazards and determining the control measures needed to reduce the likelihood or consequence of harm.
- 14.15 **Serious Accident** – An accident leading to an injury that requires treatment by a medical professional offsite, an NHS 111 call, time off work, an inoculation or follow up GP appointments and any head related injury.

15 REFERENCES

15.1 Health and Safety Legislation:

[The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974](#)
[The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999](#)
[Workplace \(Health, Safety and Welfare\) Regulations 1992](#)
[Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 \(RIDDOR\)](#)
[Health and Safety \(First Aid\) Regulations 1981](#)
[The Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005](#)
[Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 \(PUWER\)](#)
[Electricity at Work Regulations 1989](#)
[Food Safety Act 1990](#)
[Food Hygiene Regulations 2019](#)
[Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2012](#)
[Control of Substances Hazardous to Health 2004 \(COSHH\)](#)
[Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005](#)
[Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992](#)
[Health and Safety \(Display Screen Equipment\) Regulations 1992](#)
[Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) at Work Regulations 1992](#)
[The Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004](#)
[The Health Act 2006](#)

15.2 Educational Legislation:

[Education \(School Premises\) Regulations 2012](#)
[School Standards and Framework Act 1998](#)
[Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
[School Inspections Act 1996](#)
[Education Act 2011](#)
[The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#)

15.3 Children's Homes Legislation:

[The Children's Homes \(England\) Regulations 2015](#)
[The Children's Homes Quality Standards 2015](#)
[Care Standards Act 2000](#)

15.4 Significant Guidance:

[Managing for health and safety \(HSG65\)](#)
[Leading health and safety at work \(INDG417\)](#)
[DfE - Protective security and preparedness for educational settings](#)

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16 ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

16.1 Procedures

SHESOP01 - Work Equipment Safe Operating Procedure

SHESOP02 - SHE Regulatory Visits Procedure

16.2 Forms

SHEF01 – H&S Setting Statement

SHEF02 – H&S Property Checks

SHEF0201 - Site Information File

SHEF0202 - White Goods Register

SHEF03 – Health and Safety Induction Checklist

SHEF0301 - PPE Issue Record

SHEF04 - COSHH Risk Assessment Template

SHEF05 - COSHH Product Register

SHEF0501 - Carbon Monoxide Record of Checks

SHEF06 – Ladder Safety Inspection Form

SHEF0601 - Gritting and Snow Clearance Record

SHEF0602 - Intruder Alarm (Schools) Record of Occurrences

SHEF070 - Sports, Gym, and Play Equipment Asset Register (had code change)

SHEF071 - Sports, Gym, and Play Safety Monthly Check (had code change)

SHEF0711 - Therapy Equipment Record of Checks

SHEF072 - Sports, Gym, and Play Equipment Annual Check (had code change)

SHEF073 - Sports, Gym, and Play Equipment Weekly Check (had code change)

SHEF074 - Sports, Gym, and Play Equipment Young Person Training Record (had code change)

SHEF075 - Sports, Gym, and Play Equipment Cleaning Schedule (had code change)

16.3 Risk Assessments

SHEG41 - Risk Assessment List

SHEG42 – Higher Activities in Education List

RA33 – Sports, Gym and Play Equipment

RA62 – Display Screen Equipment

RA63 – Manual Handling

RA64 – New and Expectant Mothers

RA66 – Lone Working

RA69 – Home Visit

RA671 - Wellbeing

SHEF41 - General Risk Assessment Template

16.5 Guidance

SHEG02 - Checks and Control Schedule – Educational and Homes

SHEG03 – Use of Stepladders

SHEG04 - COSHH HSE Guidance

SHEG06 - Lone Working Guidance

SHEG07 – HSE Lone Working Guidance

SHEG09 – Guidance on Safety and Health Reviews

SHEG070 – Guidance on Sports, Gym, Play and Therapy Equipment (had code change)

SHEG071 - Paddling pool guidance renumber required (had code change)

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