Viking Academy Trust

Health and Safety Policy

Approved by the Trust: Term 2 2018

This policy will be reviewed at least annually by the policy owner and competent health and safety adviser. It will also be reviewed following significant changes in legislation or guidance, significant changes to the Trust's organisation or estate, or a serious incident that identifies a need for amendment

Last review date: Term 1 2026

Signed  **Chair of Trust**

Health and Safety Policy

The Viking Academy Trust

Empowering Children Through Education: One Childhood One Chance

Schools in the Viking Academy Trust (VAT)

Chilton Primary School
Ramsgate Arts Primary School
Upton Junior School

This Health and Safety Policy is for all aforementioned schools

1. Purpose and scope

Viking Academy Trust is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for pupils, staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors. The Trust will manage health and safety risks in a proportionate, sensible and effective way, balancing the need to protect people with the educational and developmental benefits of school activities.

This policy applies to all Trust schools and to activities undertaken on or off Trust premises, including educational visits, sporting activities, clubs, events, lettings and work undertaken by contractors.

The Trust will comply with applicable health and safety legislation and will have regard to current Department for Education and Health and Safety Executive guidance.

2. Statement of commitment

The Trust Board accepts its responsibility as the employer for the health and safety of employees, pupils and visitors. The Trust will provide appropriate resources, competent advice, information, training, supervision and arrangements to manage significant risks.

Health and safety is a leadership responsibility. Risks will be identified and controlled; arrangements will be implemented; performance will be monitored; and improvements will be made where required.

No member of staff will be expected to undertake an activity where they reasonably believe there is a serious and immediate danger. Concerns must be reported promptly and will be investigated and addressed.

3. Legal and guidance framework

This policy is based principally on the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated regulations and guidance. Relevant legislation and guidance includes, as applicable:

- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992.
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH).
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR).
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, Fire Safety Act 2021 and Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022, as applicable.

- Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012.
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER).
- Electricity at Work Regulations 1989.
- Work at Height Regulations 2005.
- Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992.
- Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992.
- Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992, as amended.
- Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981.
- School Premises (England) Regulations 2012.
- Education legislation and current DfE guidance relevant to academies and educational visits.
- Current UK Health Security Agency guidance on health protection and infectious diseases in education settings.
- Current HSE guidance for education and relevant specialist activities.

The Trust will check current legislation and guidance when this policy is reviewed and whenever a significant change occurs.

4. Governance, accountability and leadership

4.1 Trust Board

The Trust Board has ultimate accountability for the Trust's health and safety arrangements as employer. The Board will:

- approve this policy and ensure appropriate oversight of its implementation;
- ensure that suitable arrangements and resources are in place to manage significant risks;
- receive appropriate assurance on health and safety performance;
- ensure significant health and safety failures are addressed and lessons are learned; and
- ensure the Trust maintains its estate in a safe working condition and complies with statutory requirements.

4.2 Executive Headteacher

The Executive Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented across the Trust and for ensuring that appropriate operational responsibilities are clearly delegated. Delegation of duties does not remove the Trust's employer accountability.

- ensure effective Trust-wide health and safety arrangements;
- ensure adequate staffing, supervision and resources to manage identified risks;
- ensure competent health and safety advice is available;
- ensure serious incidents and significant risks are escalated appropriately;
- ensure schools report health and safety performance through agreed Trust arrangements;
- ensure emergency arrangements are maintained and tested; and
- ensure corrective actions are implemented and monitored.

4.3 Trust Health & Safety Lead / competent person

The Trust will appoint a competent person or competent persons with sufficient skills, knowledge, training and experience to provide sensible advice on health and safety. The competent person will support the Trust and schools in meeting their legal duties.

- advise on legal and good-practice requirements;
- support risk assessment and control arrangements;
- coordinate Trust-wide monitoring and audit;
- advise on significant accidents, incidents and RIDDOR;

- monitor statutory compliance and remedial actions;
- support training and competence arrangements; and
- provide reports and assurance to senior leaders and the Trust Board.

4.4 Headteachers

Each Headteacher is responsible for implementing Trust health and safety arrangements within their school and for ensuring that risks are effectively managed.

- ensure staff know and follow this policy and local procedures;
- ensure appropriate risk assessments are completed, implemented and reviewed;
- ensure adequate supervision and staffing arrangements;
- ensure accidents, incidents, hazards and near misses are reported;
- ensure emergency arrangements are understood and tested;
- ensure staff receive required information and training;
- ensure contractors and visitors are managed safely; and
- escalate significant risks or unresolved actions to the Trust.

4.5 Estates / Premises

The Trust Estates Lead is responsible for coordinating premises-related health and safety arrangements, statutory inspections and maintenance, within delegated authority and in accordance with Trust procedures.

- maintain appropriate statutory compliance records;
- coordinate fire, asbestos, water hygiene/Legionella, gas, electrical and other premises controls;
- ensure defects are recorded, prioritised and addressed;
- maintain site security arrangements;
- ensure contractors are appropriately managed; and
- provide evidence and assurance for Trust monitoring.

4.6 Employees

Employees must take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions; cooperate with the Trust; follow training and instructions; use equipment appropriately; and report hazards, accidents, near misses and serious or immediate dangers.

Staff supervising pupils must take appropriate care of them and follow Trust procedures for supervision, first aid, safeguarding and emergency response.

4.7 Pupils, parents, volunteers and visitors

Pupils, parents, volunteers and visitors are expected to follow reasonable health and safety instructions, comply with site rules and report hazards or incidents to staff.

4.8 Contractors

Contractors must comply with Trust requirements and relevant legislation. Before work begins, appropriate evidence of competence, insurance, risk assessments/method statements and other controls must be obtained where required. Contractors must receive relevant site information, including asbestos information, and must not compromise safeguarding or the safety of pupils, staff or visitors.

5. Risk assessment and risk management

The Trust will use proportionate risk assessment to identify hazards, determine who may be harmed, evaluate risks, implement controls and monitor whether those controls remain effective.

- Risk assessments must be suitable and sufficient for the activity and environment.
- Significant findings and required control measures must be recorded.
- Risk assessments must consider employees, pupils, visitors, contractors and others who may be affected.
- Assessments must be reviewed where they are no longer valid, following a significant change, following an incident or where monitoring identifies a concern.
- Staff must be informed of relevant control measures and their responsibilities.
- Dynamic risk assessment may be used for immediate situations but must not replace formal assessment where one is required.
- Risk controls should follow the hierarchy of control, prioritising elimination or reduction of the hazard before relying on administrative controls or PPE.
- Particular consideration must be given to pupils or staff who may be more vulnerable because of age, disability, medical needs or other relevant circumstances.

6. Consultation, communication and reporting

The Trust will communicate health and safety arrangements to staff and provide opportunities for health and safety concerns to be raised. Staff must be able to report hazards, defects, incidents and near misses without unreasonable barriers.

Significant concerns that cannot be resolved locally must be escalated to the Headteacher and, where appropriate, Estates Lead

7. Training and competence

The Trust will ensure staff receive appropriate health and safety information and training as part of induction and ongoing professional development. Training will be proportionate to role and risk.

Depending on role, this may include:

- general H&S induction
- fire safety and emergency evacuation
- first aid and paediatric first aid
- COSHH
- asbestos awareness
- manual handling
- working at height
- DSE
- educational visits
- risk assessment
- premises and statutory compliance
- water hygiene/Legionella awareness
- specialist curriculum activities
- emergency/critical incident procedures

Records of mandatory training and certification will be maintained and monitored.

8. Premises, workplace and statutory compliance

The Trust will maintain its buildings, grounds, plant and equipment so far as reasonably practicable in a safe condition. Statutory inspection, testing and maintenance regimes will be identified and monitored.

The Trust will maintain appropriate arrangements for fire safety, asbestos, water hygiene and Legionella, gas, electricity, lifting equipment where applicable, work equipment, emergency lighting, alarms, playground and PE equipment, and other statutory or risk-based controls.

9. Fire safety

Each school will have an appropriate fire risk assessment and arrangements for prevention, detection, evacuation and emergency response. Fire safety arrangements will comply with applicable legislation and current fire safety guidance.

- Fire alarms will be tested and maintained in accordance with applicable standards and manufacturer requirements.
- Emergency lighting, fire doors, extinguishers and other fire safety systems will be inspected and maintained as required.
- Evacuation procedures, assembly points and arrangements for people requiring assistance will be communicated and practised.
- Fire drills will be undertaken at appropriate intervals and at least once each term unless a documented risk assessment identifies a different safe arrangement.
- New staff will receive fire safety information as part of induction.
- Records of testing, maintenance, drills and significant actions will be retained.
- Fire risk assessments will be reviewed following significant change, a significant incident or where required by competent advice.

10. Emergency planning and response

The Trust will maintain proportionate emergency arrangements for foreseeable serious incidents, including serious injury, fire, significant property damage, criminal activity or threats, severe weather, major utility failure, hazardous substance release, significant public health incidents and other events that may materially affect school operations.

Emergency arrangements will link with the Trust's business continuity and critical incident arrangements. Emergency contacts will be maintained and arrangements will be tested where appropriate.

11. First aid and medical emergencies

Each school will maintain appropriate first aid provision based on a first-aid needs assessment and in accordance with the Trust First Aid/Medical Needs Policy and applicable statutory requirements.

- appropriate numbers of trained first aiders will be maintained;
- paediatric first aid requirements will be met for EYFS provision;
- first aid equipment will be suitable, accessible, checked and replenished;
- first aid treatment will be recorded appropriately;
- parents/carers will be informed of injuries and first aid treatment in accordance with Trust procedures;
- emergency services will be called where required; and
- educational visits will have appropriate first aid arrangements.

12. Accident, incident and near-miss reporting

All accidents, injuries, work-related ill health, dangerous occurrences, significant hazards and near misses must be reported promptly using Trust procedures. Reports should contain sufficient factual information to support appropriate follow-up.

Accidents and incidents will be investigated proportionately to determine immediate and underlying causes and to identify corrective or preventative action. Serious incidents will be escalated promptly to Trust leadership.

Records will be retained in accordance with the Trust's records retention arrangements and applicable legal requirements.

13. RIDDOR

The Trust will comply with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013. The Trust's nominated competent person will coordinate RIDDOR reporting on behalf of the Trust, with appropriate input from the school and relevant managers.

Not every accident, hospital attendance or near miss is reportable under RIDDOR. The Trust will assess incidents against the current HSE reporting criteria, including specified injuries, relevant over-seven-day injuries, reportable diseases and dangerous occurrences.

Where an incident is reportable, it will be notified to the HSE within the statutory timescale applicable to that category. RIDDOR records and evidence of reporting will be retained as required.

Near misses and non-reportable incidents will nevertheless be recorded and reviewed where they provide useful information about risk.

14. COSHH and hazardous substances

Hazardous substances will be identified and controlled through COSHH assessments where required. Products will be stored, used and disposed of in accordance with manufacturers' instructions and Trust procedures.

- Only appropriate and authorised products will be used.
- Safety data and product information will be available where required.
- Exposure will be prevented or adequately controlled.
- PPE will be provided where required and staff instructed in its correct use.
- Spillages and accidental exposure will be managed through appropriate emergency procedures.
- Cleaning products and other hazardous substances will be securely stored away from pupils where necessary.

15. Asbestos

The Trust will manage asbestos in accordance with the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 and current DfE/HSE guidance. Each relevant school/site will have an up-to-date asbestos register and management arrangements.

- Staff and contractors will be informed of relevant asbestos risks.
- Contractors undertaking work that may disturb the fabric of the building must have access to relevant asbestos information before work starts.
- Appropriate surveys will be obtained for refurbishment or intrusive work where required.
- Work that may disturb suspected asbestos-containing material will stop immediately and the area will be controlled pending competent advice.

- Records of asbestos management, inspections and remedial actions will be maintained.

16. Water hygiene and Legionella

The Trust will manage the risk of Legionella and other waterborne hazards through appropriate risk assessment, monitoring, maintenance and control measures. Responsibilities, monitoring frequencies and records will be established within the Trust's water hygiene arrangements. Risk assessments will be reviewed periodically and following significant changes to water systems or buildings.

17. Electrical safety

Electrical installations and equipment will be maintained and used safely. Inspection, testing and maintenance will be undertaken at appropriate intervals by competent persons. Defective equipment must be removed from use and reported promptly.

Portable appliance testing will be risk-based and undertaken where required by competent persons. Staff and pupils must not use electrical equipment in unsafe conditions.

18. Work equipment, PE and specialist equipment

Work equipment will be suitable for its intended use, maintained appropriately and used by people who have received suitable information, instruction and training. Equipment will be inspected where required by risk assessment or legislation.

PE, playground and specialist equipment will be checked and maintained appropriately. Defects will be reported and equipment taken out of use where necessary.

19. Working at height

Work at height will be avoided where reasonably practicable and otherwise properly planned, risk assessed, supervised and undertaken by competent people using suitable equipment. Pupils must not undertake work at height. Ladders and access equipment must be inspected and used in accordance with Trust procedures.

20. Manual handling

Manual handling will be avoided or reduced where reasonably practicable. Where it cannot be avoided, the task, load, environment and individual capability will be assessed and suitable controls used, including mechanical aids or assistance where appropriate.

Particular arrangements will apply where staff may need to assist pupils with mobility or personal care. Staff will receive appropriate training where risk assessment identifies a need.

21. Lone working

Lone working will be risk assessed. Higher-risk activities must not be undertaken alone where the risks cannot be adequately controlled. Appropriate communication, check-in and emergency arrangements will be established for staff who work alone, including premises staff and staff undertaking visits outside normal arrangements.

22. Educational visits and off-site activities

Educational visits will be planned and managed in accordance with the Trust Educational Visits Policy and current DfE/HSE guidance. Risk assessment and approval arrangements will be proportionate to the activity and destination.

Visit planning will consider staffing, supervision, medical needs, first aid, emergency contacts, transport, accommodation, safeguarding, activities and foreseeable emergencies. Higher-risk or residential activities will receive appropriate additional scrutiny.

23. Site security, visitors and lettings

Schools will maintain appropriate access control and visitor management arrangements. Visitors and contractors will be subject to relevant signing-in, safeguarding and site safety procedures.

Lettings must be managed under the Trust Lettings Policy. Hirers must comply with relevant health and safety requirements and provide information and risk assessments where required.

24. Violence, aggression and challenging behaviour

The Trust does not tolerate violence, threatening behaviour or abuse towards staff. Incidents and near misses must be reported and investigated. Appropriate control measures will be used where there is a foreseeable risk of violence or aggression.

25. Smoking and vaping

Smoking and vaping are prohibited on Trust premises and grounds, subject to any lawful arrangements that may apply outside the premises.

26. Infection prevention and control

The Trust will follow current UK Health Security Agency and government guidance on infection prevention and control in education settings. Schools will maintain proportionate arrangements for hand hygiene, cleaning, ventilation, management of bodily fluid spillages, PPE where required, waste and laundry, and response to outbreaks or significant infectious disease incidents.

The Trust will not reproduce static disease-exclusion tables in this policy where current external guidance is available; schools will use the current national guidance in force at the time.

27. New and expectant mothers

Where an employee notifies the Trust that they are pregnant, has recently given birth or is breastfeeding and where applicable, an appropriate individual risk assessment will be undertaken and reviewed as circumstances change. Suitable adjustments or controls will be implemented where risks are identified.

28. Display Screen Equipment

Staff who meet the definition of DSE users will be provided with an appropriate DSE assessment. Reasonable measures will be taken to reduce risks associated with workstation setup, posture, breaks and the working environment.

29. Occupational health and wellbeing

The Trust recognises that health and safety includes physical and psychological health. Work-related stressors will be identified and managed through appropriate risk assessment and staff wellbeing arrangements. Occupational health advice will be obtained where appropriate.

30. Children and adults requiring additional support

Risk assessments and safety arrangements will take account of pupils and staff who may require additional support because of disability, medical needs, mobility, communication needs or other relevant circumstances. Reasonable adjustments will be made where required.

This may include individual healthcare arrangements, specialist equipment, moving and handling arrangements and personal emergency evacuation plans where appropriate.

31. Contractors and construction/refurbishment work

Construction, maintenance and refurbishment work must be planned to prevent exposure of pupils, staff and visitors to unacceptable risks. Contractors must comply with Trust site rules and relevant construction health and safety requirements. Work areas must be appropriately segregated, and arrangements must address safeguarding, asbestos, fire, access, noise, dust, hazardous substances and emergency arrangements as appropriate.

32. Monitoring, inspection, audit and assurance

The Trust will monitor health and safety performance through a combination of school-level checks, premises inspections, statutory compliance monitoring, accident and incident analysis, training compliance and Trust-level audit.

Monitoring will consider whether controls are actually working, whether corrective actions have been completed and whether trends indicate emerging risks.

Each school will maintain an action log for identified health and safety issues. Significant or overdue actions will be escalated to Trust leadership.

The Trust Board will receive appropriate assurance on health and safety performance, including significant incidents, key compliance issues, material risks and progress against corrective actions.

33. Investigation and learning

The Trust will investigate significant accidents, incidents and near misses proportionately. Investigations will focus on identifying immediate, underlying and organisational causes rather than simply attributing blame. Where appropriate, lessons learned will be shared across the Trust.

34. Records

The Trust will maintain appropriate records of risk assessments, statutory inspections, training, accidents, RIDDOR reports, fire drills and tests, asbestos management, water hygiene, maintenance and other significant health and safety controls. Records will be retained securely for the required period in accordance with applicable law and the Trust records retention arrangements.

35. Related Trust policies and procedures

- First Aid / Medical Needs Policy
- Fire and Evacuation Policy
- Emergency / Critical Incident and Business Continuity Plans
- Asbestos Management arrangements
- COSHH arrangements
- Lone Working Policy
- Staff Wellbeing
- Accessibility Plan
- Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy / Culture Policy
- Lettings Policy