



Design & Technology

Compliance Code

Reviewed: January 2026

Contents

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Responsibilities

 2.1 Delegated Responsibilities

3.0 CLEAPSS

4.0 Management Issues

 4.1 Class Management

 4.1.1 Class Supervision/ Behaviour

 4.1.2 Class Sizes

 4.2 Curriculum Risk Assessments

 4.2.1 Adapting and Recording Risk Assessments

 4.3 H&S Training

5.0 Inspection of Workplace and Work Equipment

 5.1 Types of Inspection, Maintenance and Testing of Work Equipment

 5.1.1 Level 1

 5.1.2 Level 2

 5.1.3 Level 3

6.0 Portable Electric Equipment

7.0 Personal Protective Equipment

8.0 Manual handling

9.0 Noise

10.0 Hazards and Machinery Defects

11.0 Hazardous Substances

12.0 Isolation of Services

 12.1 Gas

 12.2 Electricity

13.0 Emergency Procedures

 13.1 General

 13.2 Fire

14.0 First Aid

15.0 Storage and general housekeeping

16.0 Sharps

1. Introduction

This Compliance Code covers the Design and Technology departments of all high schools associated with West Norfolk Academies Trust.

2. Responsibilities

Headteachers, where appropriate through Heads of Department, teachers, technicians and other support staff, have a responsibility to ensure that the requirements stated within this compliance code are met within their school.

The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Compliance Code and for ensuring that a copy is made available to the Head of Design and Technology (D&T) electronically.

The Head of D&T is responsible for ensuring the Compliance Code and any updates are brought to the attention of all staff in the Department and for ensuring that it is complied with.

The Head of D&T, through discussion with the Site Manager or Deputy Chief Operations Officer (DCOO), is to ensure that the control measures identified within the Site General or department Risk Assessment are implemented and reviewed for their area of responsibility.

2.1 Delegated Responsibilities

Inspection, servicing and maintenance of department equipment is delegated to the site manager who is responsible for ensuring that issues identified from servicing, inspection and testing reports are communicated to the head of department in a timely manner.

An assessment of the findings is to be conducted with mitigating control measures implemented until such time that equipment can be repaired/ replaced. Where an increased risk is identified this, along with additional control measures, is to be included in department Risk Assessment.

3. CLEAPSS

CLEAPSS is an advisory service providing support in science and technology for a consortium of local authorities, Academy Trusts and their schools. West Norfolk Academies Trust provides access to all schools.

Model risk assessments and other documentation provided by CLEAPSS underpin this Compliance Code and references to relevant areas of CLEAPSS guidance are provided where appropriate.

4. Management Issues

This section considers the management issues required to run a safe and healthy Design and Technology Department. The information should be used to develop local procedures and delegate responsibilities to individual staff members. It will be necessary to consult relevant sections of this Compliance Code and CLEAPSS documentation and guidance to ensure all aspects are covered.

4.1 Class Management

4.1.1 Class Supervision/Behaviour

School rules for students participating in design and technology should be displayed prominently in each D&T classroom and staff must ensure that they are enforced. CLEAPSS provides a model list of D&T classroom rules for students is contained in 'Model Health and Safety Policy for D&T Departments' (CLEAPSS document L260).

In general, students must not be left unsupervised in a D&T classroom. Staff wanting to leave a class briefly must assess whether this is safe, and if necessary arrange temporary supervision by a neighbouring member of staff.

The use of D&T classrooms as general teaching areas or for registration by, for example, non-specialist teachers, is not recommended. Where it cannot be avoided it is essential that the Head of D&T is consulted, and where the requirement is identified as short term only, a dynamic assessment of risk is undertaken and any additional precautions implemented before the D&T classroom is used in this way. It may, for example, be necessary to draw up simple guidelines that are shared with none department staff paying particular attention to controls such as access to chemicals, machinery, and equipment.

Should the requirement be identified as a permanent requirement the hazard and associated control measures should be included in the department Risk Assessment.

D&T classrooms should be locked when not being used.

4.1.2 Class Sizes

There is no statutory limitation on class size however the teacher retains the responsibility for ensuring that the space available allows adequate safety precautions to be in place in relation to the task.

If, in a teacher's professional judgement, a class is too large to attempt a particular piece of practical work safely, then other strategies must be considered. These might include abandoning that particular practical, having only part of a class doing practical work at any one time, or adopting student-assisted teacher demonstrations, etc.

Teachers who are concerned that risks in practical work are unacceptable because of the class size should report their concerns to the Head of D&T and, if necessary, the Headteacher. If the risks cannot be made acceptable, the activity must cease until it can be resumed safely. See also 'D&T Class Sizes, Room Sizes and Possible Effects on Safety' (CLEAPSS document PS068).

4.2 Curriculum Risk Assessment

A department Risk Assessment must be completed that considers the foreseeable hazards associated with the area. However, this risk assessment will not include specific control measures for the numerous activities that take place within a D&T department and as such guidance should be taken from the model Risk assessments provided by CLEAPSS.

It should be noted that a model risk assessment should not simply be accepted and that a review must be undertaken to ensure the model control measures are suitable, adequate and relevant. See 4.2.1 below.

4.2.1 Adapting and Recording Risk Assessments

Health and safety legislation require that, before model risk assessments are adopted for use in a workplace, the need for modification to suit the local conditions is to be considered, e.g. size of rooms, class size and pupil behaviour, the equipment available etc.

For guidance on the use of model risk assessments see also 'Using Model Risk Assessments in D&T' (CLEAPSS document GL171)

It is therefore good practice to consider all of the practical requirements likely to take place within the department such as the use of machinery and hand tools and to create specific Risk Assessments using the CLEAPSS guidance. This information should be recorded locally, made available for all staff and should be reviewed regularly.

4.3 Health and Safety Training

In addition to mandatory H&S training such as Fire awareness or Display Screen Equipment (DSE) training there is a requirement for staff employed with in the D&T department to ensure they remain competent to carry out their work safely. This includes maintaining up to date knowledge in the use of the various types of machinery. The Health and Safety for Design and Technology in Schools and Similar Establishments BS 4163: 2021 recommends that all staff working in Design and Technology and related areas can show that they meet certain standards.

To facilitate this Heads of D&T must ensure that staff have attended relevant courses or can demonstrate an equivalent level of competence gained through alternative training providers.

A record of training must be held and Headteachers and Heads of D&T should ensure that suitable induction procedures are in place for new staff. For guidance see WNAT Induction Policy.

Heads of D&T must attend a suitable 'Health and Safety Managers' course that includes information relating to risk assessment and should renew this training every two years. The course should also be made available to aspiring subject leaders.

Technicians must complete suitable training to cover all aspects of their role within the department. For example, COSHH, Manual handling etc

In addition, it is good practice to ensure staff are kept up to date with other safety aspects. Therefore, Heads of D&T should organise local training or refresher sessions for staff to cover the following areas. This could be particularly important for new and temporary staff:

- D&T Departmental Procedures and Controls referencing this Compliance Code and the department Risk Assessment
- Record of curriculum risk assessments
- Local Emergency arrangements
- Local workroom rules
- Equipment use and inspection procedure
- Use of personal protective equipment.

5. Inspection of Workplace and Work Equipment

The inspection process consists of periodic checks of the workplace environment and the equipment contained in it. The aim of this is to ensure that the control measures put in place to protect persons from risks identified in the department Risk Assessment or through review of the CLEAPSS model risk assessments are actually working in practice.

Health and Safety law requires that work equipment is maintained in a safe condition as per the Provision and Use of Workplace Equipment Regulations (PUWER). To achieve this, equipment must be maintained, inspected and, where necessary, tested. The requirement to meet regulation requirements is the responsibility of the Site Manager who monitors the need as part of their compliance schedule. Heads of Department should have access to certification to confirm equipment is maintained.

Whilst service, testing and inspection is the responsibility of the school site manager, department staff are also responsible for the daily inspections and reporting of faults in a timely manner with suitable control measures implemented where there is a potential increased hazard and associated risk.

5.1 Types of Inspection, Maintenance and Testing of Work Equipment

There are 3 levels of inspection, maintenance and testing of work equipment which must be carried out in D&T departments. These are: -

5.1.1 Level 1

A visual check by staff of equipment and workplace prior to its use on a daily (or as used) basis. This is simply a visual reassurance that the item or area is safe to use.

All faults are to be reported to the site manager in a timely manner using the relevant helpdesk. Any equipment found to be faulty is not to be used until remedial work is completed

5.1.2 Level 2

A more formal visual inspection which should be carried out annually. It requires checking the workplace and equipment using a checklist or audit process. For WNAT this inspection is conducted by the Deputy Chief Operations Officer (DCOO) utilising the CLEAPSS document 'Auditing H&S in a secondary school D&T department - G79'.

5.1.3 Level 3

Formal maintenance/inspection checks carried out by competent persons such as specialist contractors.

This requirement is monitored and scheduled by the School Site Manager as part of their role responsibility for compliance management. Service, Inspection and testing reports are to be reviewed upon receipt and recorded centrally within the school Estates Management System (EMS). All issues are to be communicated to the HoD and additional control measures are to be considered where there is an increased risk to H&S or the operational effectiveness of the department.

Contractors that maintain, service and formally inspect work equipment, such as kilns etc, may sometimes recommend upgrades or improvements to the system, citing non-compliance with legal requirements. Schools are inherently a low-risk environment and all recommendations should be considered and, if required, further clarification should be obtained relating to the specifics of non-compliance. Where there is a clear lack of compliance, increased risk to H&S or the operational effectiveness of the department then the recommendations must be implemented.

6. Portable Electric Equipment

Portable electrical equipment is identified as any equipment or appliance that can be plugged into or removed from a mains socket. It does not include any equipment or appliance hard wired into the building electrical system. There is no legal requirement to inspect portable electric equipment, however, the Electricity at Work regulations state that all electrical equipment should be maintained in a safe condition. Therefore, it is good practice to conduct checks as follows

Visual inspection - A visual inspection of portable electric equipment should be carried out each time they are used and should form part of the lesson to instil good practice.

Particular attention should be paid to the condition of the plug, lead, casing and switches. Faulty or damaged equipment should be taken out of use and marked accordingly until the fault has been rectified. Under no circumstances should a portable appliance be used other than for its intended purpose.

Periodic testing - Portable equipment should be tested periodically (Portable Appliance Test). Note this does not need to be an annual requirement and is based on an assessment of the use of the equipment.

For example, items that remain in situ and do not regularly move would potentially require testing every three to five years (E.g. IT) whereas items that are regularly moved around (E.g. Soldering irons) could be deemed as requiring PAT every 6 months. The periodicity of testing is at the discretion of the Head of Department through discussion with the Site Manager

7. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

All persons involved in workshop activities must ensure that, prior to the activity commencing, loose clothing, ties, long hair etc., liable to become entangled in machines, is adequately secured; aprons, overalls or protective coats and gloves are worn where appropriate and rings, watches and loose jewellery are removed. Students should be reminded of these rules at the beginning of each lesson and information should be displayed to promote adherence.

Any eye protection bearing the mark BS EN 166 indicates that it is suitable for general purpose use and conforms to the European Standard. This includes goggles, face shields and spectacles.

D&T classrooms should have sets of goggles and face shields conforming to the above standard which give protection against chemical splash, dust, impact and molten metal as appropriate. Reference should be made to the model risk assessments provided by CLEAPSS to determine which class and type of equipment is suitable for specific D&T activities.

Different British Standards apply for eye protection for welding and the model risk assessments provided by CLEAPSS should be referred to for additional guidance and information.

Dust masks conforming to BS EN149 must be used to protect against inhalation of particulates in woodworking, metal working and some motor vehicle work activities where those activities may generate significant quantities of inhalable dust or particles i.e. checking of dust control equipment or emptying dust collection bags.

When cleaning up, use vacuum equipment that meets at least the dust class M (medium hazard) classification. Do not use compressed airlines or hand brushing, particularly on clothing, as these will just create dust clouds and redistribute the dust. Alternatively, dust may be damped down with water to prevent the creation of inhalable dust clouds prior to sweeping. If there is a residual risk of inhaling dust after the above control measures have been observed then a dust mask should be worn.

Students should be encouraged to wear suitable footwear at all times in school workshops due to the risk of falling heavy objects, sharp tools and from spillages of hot or damaging liquids etc. Where this is not the case then the teacher should consider if it is safe for the student to take part in the activity or consider adapting the activity to suit.

The wearing of open-toed sandals or light shoes e.g. trainers should be discouraged and Teaching staff and technicians should ensure that adequate and suitable footwear is worn at all times to provide protection and promote good practice by setting examples.

Personal protective equipment must be: -

- suitable for the intended use
- maintained in good condition
- correctly stored.

Defects must be reported and defective equipment repaired or replaced promptly.

8. Manual Handling

D&T utilises materials and equipment that may be heavy, bulky and cumbersome. Therefore, there is a potential risk associated with manual handling requirements. Students should not be requested to perform manual handling with the requirements being conducted by suitably trained members of staff only.

Bulky and cumbersome materials may require a two man or more lift and this should be assessed at the time.

Where a process is identified that includes regular manual handling, an assessment of the risk should be carried out and recorded using a manual handling risk assessment form. See the WNAT Manual Handling guidance for further information.

9. Noise

Prolonged exposure to loud noise can cause permanent damage to hearing. The effect is cumulative and irreversible.

For most students involved in D&T activity, noise is unlikely to be generated that goes above the first action level, however reference should be made to the model risk assessments contained in the CLEAPSS website for specific equipment and activities and where necessary PPE should be made available.

A sample of D&T workshops were monitored in 2007 for noise exposure levels. This showed that in some cases technicians were exposed to noise above the upper exposure action value of 85 decibels (dB(A)) and teaching staff, in most cases, were exposed to noise above the lower exposure action value of 80 dBA.

Therefore, in addition to ensuring PPE is available, the head of department is responsible for ensuring that the following precautions are considered where practical to do so:

- reducing the noise level (e.g. enclosing machines; blocking sound through barriers or screens)
- limit the number of equipment running simultaneously
- limit the time people spend in noisy areas
- noise emissions of equipment when purchasing new items
- Designate the technician's workshop as a Hearing Protection Zone, identifying it by floor markings and signs such as:



- Restrict access to the area and allow entry only to people wearing hearing protection.
- Provide information and training to employees on the risk of Noise Induced Hearing Loss (NIHL), ways to reduce noise exposure and the proper use of hearing protection.

10. Hazards and Machinery Defects

It is the responsibility of everyone in the workshop to inform the person in charge of any hazards, e.g. defects to machinery, equipment or protective equipment, so that appropriate action can be taken. Additionally, the Site Manager must be informed via the school caretaker service desk to ensure an auditable trail is in place and that prompt action is taken to remedy the issue.

If it is deemed that a defect is a significant threat to health and safety, the machine or equipment must be put out of action until the defect to the machinery or protective equipment has been remedied and/or the Head of Department agrees it is safe to be used.

The machine or equipment should be taken out of use by such methods as isolation of electrical supplies and a notice must be put on the machine and/or electrical isolator indicating that the machine is faulty and must not be operated.

11. Hazardous substances

Substance used with the technology department should be reviewed regularly to ensure that the risk associated with their use is managed to a suitable level. CLEAPSS model risk assessments can provide general control measures and information but it is the departments responsibility to ensure that where a substance displays any of the nine hazard symbols that they are suitably managed and controlled.

Where a model risk assessment is not available a COSHH risk assessment must be completed, see WNAT use of hazardous substances compliance code for further guidance, and the information provided in the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) should be considered. The MSDS will be provided by the supplier of the product.

All corrosive or toxic chemicals, including many cleaning fluids, adhesives, dyes and inks, in addition to flammable products, must be stored in appropriate containers and kept in secure stores with a contents list readily available. Hazard information should be clearly displayed on the outside of the storage cupboard/ cabinet and the Site Manager should be made aware of the storage location to ensure the site fire plan is updated accordingly.

Quantities in use should be restricted to the minimum necessary.

Staff must be aware of the first aid requirements associated with all hazardous substances in their department.

Hazardous substances should only be disposed of as per the information provided on the MSDS.

Where decanting of substance into other containers is carried out the container must be labelled stating the substance contained. Substance should never be mixed unless specifically required as part of a process requirement.

There are a variety of materials used in D&T activities. The CLEAPSS model Risk Assessments give detailed advice, whether working in metals, wood, plastics, glass, building and insulation blocks, ceramic materials, paints, solvents, dyes, scrap materials, adhesives, plaster of Paris or experimental and novel activities and materials.

Where possible the replacement of high-risk substances for low-risk substances should always be considered.

12. Isolation of Services

12.1 Gas

There should be a gas isolating valve in each workroom to which gas is supplied, near to the main teaching location or adjacent to the main exit. This should be clearly marked.

For hot work areas where there is gas supply the extraction system must be interlocked to isolate the gas supply when the extraction is not operating

12.2 Electricity

There should be a mains electricity isolator fitted in each workroom, near to the main teaching location or adjacent to the main exit.

13. Emergency Procedures

13.1 General

Emergency procedures must be determined for all activity areas and all staff and students using such areas should be made aware of these procedures.

An 'emergency procedure' notice should be prominently displayed in each work area. Devices, e.g. electricity and gas shut-off, must at all times be readily accessible, correctly labelled, unobstructed and used only for emergency and testing purposes.

13.2 Fire

The school fire evacuation plan should be displayed in a prominent location and staff should review regularly to ensure they are aware of the requirements.

Issues identified during termly evacuation drills are to be communicated to the Site Manager to allow potential amendments to be implemented.

Rags, Saw dust, wooden off cuts and similar materials are a potential source of combustible material and should not be allowed to accumulate or be stored near naked flames, very hot objects or flammable product storage.

All flammable substances must be stored in appropriate containers/ cabinets and the site manager should be made aware of the location to ensure the site fire plan is updated accordingly.

Activities within communal areas or displays of work (including on open days) should never obstruct access to fire escape routes or emergency exits. Please note that displaying of work within corridors can pose an additional risk in terms of impeding escape routes. Therefore, the amount of work displayed should be considered

All staff are required to complete mandatory fire awareness training annually.

14. First Aid

A first aid box or boxes containing suitable first aid materials should be situated in the area. Where deficiencies are identified this should be highlighted to the school 'Appointed Person' responsible for first aid as per the WNAT First Aid Policy.

All staff should be able, if necessary, to carry out immediate remedial measures when required while waiting for the first aider. It is therefore highly recommended that staff complete a suitable first aid course as per the WNAT First Aid Policy.

All incidents are to be reported using the WNAT Incident helpdesk. This will assist in determining whether follow up investigation is required or whether there is a need to report the incident to the HSE as per the Reporting of Incidents, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations (RIDDOR).

Effective investigation and reporting can assist in alleviating potential claims made against the School / Trust.

Emergency services must be called for any injury where the person suffers a head injury leading to unconsciousness or obvious signs of disorientation. This must be done as a priority.

15. Storage and general housekeeping

Poor organisation of storage for equipment, materials and work in progress, may create hazards. Clutter in circulation spaces and untidy, inaccessible or excessively full storerooms present obstacles to safe movement in addition to creating a potential fire risk.

Storerooms should be sufficiently large enough to meet the needs of the areas they serve and take account of the range and type of activities. Failure to organise storage space can result in an accumulation of materials in working areas.

Racks and storage units should be positioned for ease of access and should not reduce or obstruct circulation space. High level storage units should not be used for heavy equipment or materials and safe means of access should be provided.

Students must never be exposed to any risk of falling from height and as such any requirement identified, such as retrieving items from high shelves etc, is to be conducted by staff only.

NOTE – Furniture such as chairs and desks are not to be used for any working at height requirement in any case. This includes retrieval of items in storage spaces.

16. Sharps

D&T departments utilise various tools that could potentially cause harm if used irresponsibly. Therefore, teaching staff must ensure that students are suitably monitored when utilising tools that could cause injury such as those listed below,

Knives,
Chisels,
Screwdrivers
Scribers
etc.

Teaching staff must also ensure that equipment is suitably controlled and accounted for at the end of each lesson with periodic checks conducted. All sharps are to be secured to prevent unauthorised access.