

School Health and Safety Committees-Terms of Reference

Purpose

The school H&S committee is concerned with the health, safety and welfare of all employees. The school H&S committee has oversight of all measures taken to ensure the health and safety at work of employees. (Guidance 9, 71 & 75 p28/29)
Its purpose is to provide a mechanism and structure for consultation, collaboration and engagement with stakeholders regarding the management of Health & Safety in schools

The Committee will:

- Ensure decision-making is effective, transparent and aligned with legal, departmental and national requirements.
- Oversee all measures taken to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees.
- Review and ensure the Behaviour of Concerns (BoC) policy is being fully implemented.
- Promote a culture where all staff understand their responsibilities for reporting hazards, near misses, significant occurrences and unsafe practices.
- Ensure that health and safety processes are embedded within the school's quality assurance framework.

Membership

Health & Safety committee shall include core representation from teachers and support staff. To have a working functionality, there would be between 5-10 people on the committee, and no more than 12.

The Head Teacher or Business Manager, reflecting the importance of the committee, shall be the chair.

Membership of the Committee should reflect the range of roles with responsibility for, or direct involvement in, health and safety practice.

Membership should include but is not limited to:

- Head Teacher or Business Manager (Chair)
- Business Manager (if not Chair)
- Teacher representatives
- Pupil Support Staff representatives
- Admin Support Staff representatives
- Trade Union representative(s), including TU Safety Officer
- Facilities Management representative
- BoC Co-ordinator
- Nursery representative (where applicable)

Roles & Responsibilities of Committee Members

Committee members will:

- Ensure effective communication with staff, parents, pupils and the wider community.
- Maintain good and effective communication between management, the committee and all employees.
- Establish and maintain a Health & Safety noticeboard in the staffroom displaying membership, meeting dates and key information.
- Ensure meeting minutes contain clear action points, owners and deadlines.
- Ensure all concerns are addressed, even where sensitive comments are removed before wider distribution.
- Promote and model a culture of shared responsibility for health and safety reporting.
- Support the school's quality assurance of risk assessments, including sampling a range of assessments each cycle.
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Accountability & Governance

By law the Committee must be consulted about:

- Any change that may substantially affect workforce health and safety.
- Risks to staff and the precautions required to mitigate them.

The Committee has a quality assurance role in reviewing the school's risk assessment processes, including:

- Sampling a range of risk assessments (curricular, operational and environmental).
- Ensuring oversight of Behaviour of Concerns risk assessments, which may be anonymised but must not be excluded.
- Monitoring the implementation of agreed actions.

Timeline of Activities for Committee

School Health and Safety Committees should meet twice per term with a minimum of 8 times per session. Dates should be included in the Quality Assurance calendar.

Schools can determine the timing of these meetings to suit i.e. during the school day or outside school hours, however consideration should be given to the Working Time Agreement and Business Manager hours. Support staff working patterns must also be considered, recognising that most support staff finish before 4pm.

Ad hoc meetings can be arranged as required should situations or issues arise.

Meetings should be stand-alone to ensure the Committee's work has a clear and distinct identity. These meetings can be in person, on MS Teams or hybrid meetings

Scheduling & Papers

- Meeting dates should be set for the full school year.
- Meetings should not be cancelled except in exceptional circumstances.
- Agendas and papers should be circulated one week in advance.

The Committee will routinely consider:

- Accident investigations and follow-up actions
- Workplace inspections by health and safety representatives
- Fire and building-related risk assessments
- Health and safety training needs
- Emergency procedures
- Changes in the workplace affecting staff welfare
- Behaviour of Concerns data, including trends, patterns and intervention effectiveness
- Sampling of risk assessments (including BoC)
- Review of reporting mechanisms (MyHS, corporate helpdesk, significant occurrences)
- Nursery-specific health and safety matters (where applicable)

Significant Occurrences should not be discussed in the main meeting but handled in line with Health & Safety Operations Manager guidance.

Reporting, Recording & Templates

To support consistency and moderation a standardised minute template must be used, including:

- Attendance
- Standing items
- Risk assessment sampling outcomes
- BoC data review
- Accident/incident themes
- Training needs
- Actions, owners and deadlines

The Committee's work should be included in the school's Quality Assurance Calendar.



Useful references:

- CEC Health & Safety Guidance Note
Constitution - Schools - Health and Safety Committees (Feb 2021)
[Health Safety Committee Constitution \(003\).docx \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- UK Gov Health & Safety Executive – Health & Safety Committees
[Health and safety committees \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)
- Chartered Governance Institute UK & Ireland
[Who owns the Agenda? \(cgi.org.uk\)](#)
- CEC Health & Safety Guidelines for Heads of Establishments
<https://orb.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/file/5852/arrangement-for-medication-health-care-programmes-and-clinical-tests>