

Health and Safety Committees

Advice for Schools

Each school in Stirling Council should have a functioning Health and Safety Committee. This Committee should meet once a term (4 times per year) and these meetings should be entered into the school calendar. Those staff serving on Health and Safety Committees should be given time to do so.

These Committees should consist of a representative from each Trade Union recognised by the employer. Those Unions are:-

EIS
SSTA
UNISON
GMB

Stirling Council also recognises TGWU, AEEU and UCATT Unions, although these are unlikely to have members within schools.

Ideally, this member should be a nominated Health and Safety Representative, although any nominated staff representative can fulfil the role.

As such, Health and Safety Committees can and should represent the make up of staff working in the school. School Health and Safety Committees will often have representation from Teachers, SLA's, Office staff, Janitorial staff and cleaning staff. This is not a specific list and should be regarded as illustrative.

Where no functioning Health and Safety Committee exists, two or more Union nominated staff representatives can request in writing for a Health and Safety Committee to be set up.

Along with the previously suggested representatives from each Union, the Committee should have representation from the Management side. Good practice is to ensure the person with nominated overall responsibility for Health and Safety within the school attends. This is normally the Head Teacher.

A Chair of the Committee should be nominated. The chair should rotate between the Management side and the Trade Union Side A good example of this would be on an annual basis. Although some schools may wish for a more frequent rotation, doing so on an annual basis allows time for the chair to become more established in the role.

Minutes of the meetings should be recorded. These minutes should be shared with staff so that staff are aware of the work of the Committee, and are agreed as an accurate record of the meeting at the following meeting.

Schools should look towards forming an agenda that covers the range of Health and Safety issues likely to be encountered in schools. An example agenda is included with this document and should be adapted to suit individual schools. Any adaptation should be done collegiately and agreed upon.

Health and Safety Committees should perform a number of roles relating to Health and Safety. Although not exhaustive, some of those roles may include:-

- Discussion about workplace accidents/incidents and subsequent preventative actions
- Incident Reporting

- Changes in the workplace affecting the health, safety and welfare of employee
- Inspections of the workplace by enforcing authorities or management or employee health and safety representative
- Risk Assessments
- CoSHH Assessments (where required)
- Health and Safety training
- Emergency procedures
- Updating on new Council Policies

As mentioned above, Health and Safety Committees should attempt to undertake a Health and Safety walk around on an annual basis. This is sometimes referred to as an Inspection of the Workplace. This should look to ensure that required elements of Health and Safety are in place. Although not exhaustive, this could include:-

- Adequate PPE is in place and being used.
- Signage such as emergency exits and fire evacuation signage is in place
- Trip, Slip and Fall hazards are identified
- Fire exits are clear
- Building security is in place
- Defects in the building are identified
- Storage of Chemicals and cleaning products is adequate
- Equipment is maintained

Walk arounds should be ideally be undertaken jointly by management and the Trade Unions, as this will allow for collegiate discussion as the inspection is being undertaken. However, neither side should have to wait for the other to undertake a walk round. Further information about Health and Safety walk arounds can be found on the Health and Safety Executive website at:-

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/involvement/inspections.htm>

From time to time, Health and Safety Committees may wish to seek further guidance or support on issues that may arise. This can come from the Councils own Corporate Health and Safety Team. Additionally, most Trade Unions have a senior nominated Health and Safety Representative that can also be consulted.

Finally, Trade Union members of the Health and Safety Committee will have a vested interest in the Health and Safety matters of all employees in the building. This may from time to time require them, in their Health and Safety Committee capacity, to consult with members from other Trade Unions, through mutual agreement between those Trade Unions, to ensure that their views are addressed by the Committee. This is especially so if a Trade Union has no representative on the Health and Safety Committee.