

Health & Safety Policy



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Next review due by		September 2026

1. Introduction and Statement of Intent

Earley Springs School is committed to providing a safe, healthy and well-maintained environment for all pupils, staff, visitors and contractors. As a specialist school for children with communication and interaction needs, many of whom have EHCPs, sensory processing differences or limited awareness of physical danger, we recognise that health and safety and safeguarding are inseparable. A calm, predictable and well-organised environment is essential for ensuring pupils' wellbeing, regulation, communication and learning.

This policy outlines the school's compliance with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, COSHH Regulations, the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, and all statutory requirements set by the Department for Education, the Independent School Standards and Keeping Children Safe in Education. The school aims to prevent accidents, reduce risks, ensure safe practice and promote a culture of vigilance and collective responsibility.

Earley Springs expects all adults on site to model safe behaviour, support pupils to understand their environment and follow procedures and training consistently. This policy works in harmony with all other Earley Springs policies, including Safeguarding and Child Protection, Behaviour and Positive Handling, Site Access and Security, First Aid and Medicines, Fire Safety, Educational Visits, Control of Infections, Risk Assessment and the Site Inspection and Maintenance Policy.

2. Scope and Application

This policy applies to every person who enters the school site, including staff, pupils, visitors, volunteers and contractors. It covers all school activities, including off-site visits, transport, community-based learning and any alternative provision used by pupils.

3. Legal and Regulatory Framework

Earley Springs fulfils all duties set out in relevant legislation and guidance, including:

- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH)
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations
- Independent School Standards, particularly Parts 3, 5 and 6
- DfE guidance, including those relating to health and safety, first aid and school premises
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- HSE guidance for education providers

The school adheres to the Health and Safety Executive's five-step risk assessment model and ensures that all health and safety measures are proportionate, effective and responsive to the needs of our pupils.

4. Responsibilities for Health and Safety

4.1 The Proprietor and Executive Board

The Proprietor and Executive Board retain strategic responsibility for ensuring that health and safety arrangements are robust, well-resourced and compliant. They ensure that the Headteacher and Operations Manager have the authority, time and training required to implement this policy and that health and safety performance is reviewed regularly. The Executive Board provides independent oversight and ensures that safety, safeguarding and site management are prioritised at every level of operation.

4.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher holds operational responsibility for the implementation of this policy and ensures that all staff understand and follow health and safety requirements. This includes ensuring that risk assessments are carried out and reviewed, that emergency procedures are understood, that staff are competent and trained, and that safeguarding and health and safety practices are aligned. The Headteacher ensures that accidents, incidents and near misses are properly investigated and that lessons learned are used to improve practice.

4.3 The Operations Manager / Site Manager

The Operations Manager oversees the safety and maintenance of the school premises. This includes managing contractors, ensuring compliance with statutory testing schedules, completing daily and weekly checks, maintaining the premises safely, supervising repairs, ensuring equipment is safe to use and maintaining full documentation. The Operations Manager works closely with the Headteacher to ensure that safety is monitored rigorously and that any hazards are dealt with promptly.

4.4 Staff Holding Posts of Responsibility

Staff with leadership or additional responsibilities, such as phase leads, curriculum leads, the SENCO and DSL, are required to implement the Health and Safety Policy within their areas. They are responsible for ensuring that appropriate risk assessments are completed, that safety procedures are followed and that staff within their team understand expectations relating to safe practice. They must monitor their areas regularly, identify hazards, report concerns promptly and follow up actions to ensure they have been addressed. They are also expected to contribute to the induction and ongoing training of staff regarding safety within their specific area of responsibility.

4.5 Teaching Staff

Teaching staff have a key role in maintaining a safe environment for pupils. They must carry out regular visual checks of their classroom spaces, maintain safe housekeeping, follow all risk assessments relevant to their teaching area and ensure that pupils use equipment safely. They must provide adequate supervision, model safe behaviours and ensure pupils understand routines and safety expectations at a level appropriate to their development and communication ability. Teaching staff must ensure that emergency procedures are followed and that any accidents, defects or hazards are reported immediately.

4.6 All Staff

All staff share responsibility for maintaining a safe environment. In addition to the expectations already listed in your draft policy, all staff must report all accidents and near misses, cooperate with training, follow written and dynamic risk assessments at all times and maintain a high standard of housekeeping. Staff must ensure they know the evacuation procedures and understand their role within them. They must use equipment safely, refrain from bringing personal electrical devices onto the premises without permission and ensure that hazards are removed or reported without delay.

4.7 Contractors and Visitors

Contractors and visitors must comply with all safety procedures, report any hazards they observe and follow all instructions issued by school staff. Contractors must only enter areas authorised by the Operations Manager and must not leave equipment or materials in places where they could pose a risk. Any contractor who creates unsafe conditions may have their work suspended until safe conditions are restored.

4.8 Pupils

Pupils are supported to follow routines and engage safely in the environment, taking into account their age, developmental level and communication needs. Pupils are encouraged to follow staff guidance, use equipment appropriately and communicate (through any method available to them) when they feel unsafe or unwell. Staff provide the necessary modelling, prompting and structured support to enable pupils to develop personal responsibility for safety where appropriate.

5. Health and Safety Arrangements

5.1 Risk Assessments

Risk assessments are written following the Health and Safety Executive's five-step model. The school uses a range of assessments, including site-specific, classroom, curriculum activity,

behavioural, individual pupil, fire, manual handling, COSHH, water hygiene, educational visits, working at height, lone working and new/expectant mothers assessments. Staff are expected to read all relevant assessments and follow the control measures consistently. Risk assessments are reviewed annually, following incidents, when pupils' needs change or when the environment is altered. Dynamic risk assessment forms part of everyday practice, particularly when working with pupils who may react unpredictably or have limited danger awareness.

5.2 Accident, Incident and Near-Miss Reporting

Accidents and incidents are recorded in the school's designated reporting system. The Headteacher ensures that appropriate investigations take place and that parents are informed when required. Patterns of incidents are monitored to identify emerging risks. Any incident that meets RIDDOR criteria will be reported to the Health and Safety Executive. Records are stored securely and reviewed during leadership meetings.

5.3 Display Screen Equipment

Staff who regularly use display screen equipment are entitled to a DSE assessment. The school ensures that workstations are set up safely, that appropriate furniture is provided and that staff are advised on posture, breaks and safe use. Staff are encouraged to report discomfort or concerns so adjustments can be made.

5.4 Electrical Safety

All portable electrical equipment is PAT tested on a scheduled basis. Fixed wiring inspections are carried out every five years by a qualified contractor. Any defective equipment is removed from use immediately and reported to the Operations Manager. Staff may not bring personal electrical items into school without permission.

5.5 Fire Safety and Emergency Evacuation

Fire safety arrangements include an annual Fire Risk Assessment, termly fire drills, regular checks of alarms, extinguishers and emergency lighting, and clear signage. Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans are created for pupils and staff who require them. The fire evacuation procedure is displayed throughout the school and forms part of staff induction and annual training. Fire marshals are trained annually and support the safe evacuation of pupils and staff. Escape routes are checked regularly and kept clear at all times. Fire drills are reviewed to identify any areas for improvement.

For full details of procedures relating to intruders, on-site threats or critical incidents requiring internal lockdown, staff must refer to the Earley Springs Lockdown Policy.

5.6 First Aid and Medical Needs

The school maintains appropriate first aid provision at all times, including qualified paediatric first aiders. First aid supplies are checked and replenished regularly. Medicines are stored safely and administered in line with the First Aid and Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs Policy. Pupils with medical conditions have individual Health Care Plans, and relevant staff receive training to meet their needs. Records of all first aid treatment are maintained. Staff must never administer medication unless authorised and trained.

5.7 Manual Handling

Manual handling risk assessments identify tasks that may cause injury. Staff receive manual handling training and are expected to use equipment and techniques correctly. Staff must not lift pupils unless they have been trained and authorised to do so and only when a risk assessment permits it.

5.8 Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

Hazardous substances are used only when necessary and are stored securely in locked COSHH cupboards. The school maintains a COSHH register and ensures that Safety Data Sheets are available for all substances. Staff using hazardous substances must be trained, follow risk assessments and wear appropriate protective equipment. Pupils never access hazardous substances.

The Operations Manager ensures that COSHH substances are kept in locked storage, that Safety Data Sheets are available and that risk assessments are completed. Staff must never leave cleaning products or chemicals unattended or accessible to pupils.

5.9 Inclusion

The school ensures that health and safety measures are adapted to support pupils with SEND, sensory needs, communication differences or physical disabilities. This includes the use of visual supports, structured transitions, safe sensory areas, appropriate supervision ratios, environmental adjustments and individualised pupil risk assessments.

5.10 Site Security

The school site is secured with controlled access points, fencing, CCTV and clear visitor protocols. Staff challenge any unidentified person and report concerns immediately. Perimeter checks are carried out daily. Any defects are reported and addressed promptly. The Site Access and Security Policy supports these arrangements.

5.11 Site Maintenance

The Operations Manager ensures that the premises are kept in a safe condition and that maintenance schedules are followed. Staff must report damage immediately. Records of inspections, servicing and repairs are maintained.

5.12 New and Expectant Mothers

A personalised risk assessment will be completed for any new or expectant mother on staff. Adjustments will be made as necessary to ensure their safety and the safety of their unborn or newborn child. This includes rest breaks, environmental adjustments and restrictions on high-risk tasks.

5.13 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE is provided when risks cannot be eliminated through other means. Staff must use PPE as instructed, report defects immediately and store equipment safely.

5.14 Off-Site Activities and Educational Visits

All off-site activities follow the Educational Visits Policy. A full risk assessment is completed for every visit, taking account of pupils' communication needs, sensory profiles, behaviours, medical needs and individual risk factors. Staffing ratios reflect pupils' needs rather than age-based norms. Staff carry out dynamic assessments throughout each activity, and safeguarding considerations are always central to decision making.

5.15 Smoking and Vaping

Earley Springs is a smoke-free and vape-free site. Smoking or vaping is not allowed at any time, in any area of the premises, indoors or outdoors.

5.16 Managing Medicines and Drugs

All medicines are stored securely and administered in line with the First Aid and Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs Policy. Staff who administer medication receive appropriate training. Pupils are not permitted to carry medication unless explicitly authorised following a risk assessment.

5.17 Infection Control

Infection control measures are implemented in line with the Control of Infections Policy. Staff practise good hygiene, and the school follows public health guidance when managing infectious illnesses. Cleaning routines are enhanced where necessary.

5.18 Water Hygiene and Legionella

Water hygiene is monitored by a competent contractor. Flushing schedules, temperature checks and inspections are completed regularly and logged. Actions arising from inspections are completed promptly to prevent risk of Legionella.

5.19 Training

All staff receive health and safety induction training and annual refresher training. Additional training is provided for specific roles, such as fire marshals, first aiders, manual handling and COSHH users.

5.20 Working at Height

Staff must not stand on furniture or climb unsafely. Only approved step stools or ladders may be used, and only by trained staff. Working at height must never be carried out alone.

5.21 Harassment, Violence and Aggression

The school takes all incidents of harassment, violence or aggression seriously. Risk assessments and behaviour plans are used to minimise risks. Staff receive training on de-escalation, and any incident is reported, recorded and investigated. Support is provided to staff affected.

5.22 Safe Use of Equipment, Sensory Rooms and Learning Spaces

All equipment, including sensory room installations, playground equipment, immersive room technology and classroom resources, is inspected regularly for safety. Damaged items are removed immediately. Rooms are arranged to support safe movement, minimise sensory overload and reduce risks of falls or collisions.

5.23 Supervision of Pupils

Pupils are supervised in line with their needs, sensory regulation requirements and risk assessments. Staff provide close monitoring where pupils have limited danger awareness, sensory-seeking behaviours, reduced motor control or high anxiety. Transitions are planned and supported to maintain safety and predictability.

5.24 Staff Wellbeing

The school promotes staff wellbeing through supportive supervision, communication, manageable workloads and opportunities for professional development. Staff are encouraged to raise concerns at an early stage so that appropriate support can be provided.

6. Evidence of Implementation

To demonstrate compliance with this policy, the school maintains:

- completed risk assessments
- daily and weekly site inspection logs
- contractor safety certificates and service records
- fire drill logs and testing records
- first aid records and training logs
- visitor signing-in records
- COSHH register and Safety Data Sheets
- maintenance schedules
- incident and near-miss records

These are available for inspection by Ofsted, the DfE and the Executive Board.

7. Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher, Operations Manager and Executive Board monitor the implementation of this policy. Any identified improvements are actioned promptly. The policy is reviewed annually or sooner if required due to legislative changes, significant incidents or alterations to the school environment.

8. Conclusion

Earley Springs School is committed to maintaining a safe, predictable and nurturing environment in which pupils with communication and interaction needs can thrive. Health and safety is embedded in every aspect of school life and aligned with safeguarding, behaviour support and the school's ethos. All staff, visitors and contractors are expected to uphold the standards outlined in this policy and contribute to a culture of care, regulation and vigilance.