

New Monkland Primary School & Nursery Class



Getting it Right for Every Child

Sharps Policy



Written: May 2025
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Definition of Sharps

‘Sharps’ includes objects or instruments which could potentially cut, prick or cause injury. This includes needles, blades or other medical instruments.

Statement of intent

New Monkland Primary School and Nursery Class are committed to the health and safety of our pupils, staff and visitors. The safety of our learning community is of paramount importance to us and this policy reflects our dedication to creating a safe and nurturing environment.

According to the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, employers are required to undertake suitable and sufficient assessment of risks at work. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 is the basis of all health and safety legislation and sets out the legal duties which employers are required to comply with.

The law also applies to risks from sharps injuries. The purpose of this policy is to deal with the handling and disposal of sharps and to prevent infection from blood borne diseases.

This policy contains details of the process for the safe handling and disposal of sharps and what procedure to follow in case of a sharps related injury. This policy should be followed in line with the school and nursery Health and Safety policy.

1. Aims

New Monkland Primary School and Nursery Class adopt practices that minimise the risk to staff, pupils and others coming into contact with sharps.

This policy aims to:

- Protect all pupils and members of staff from the danger of exposure to sharps.
- Establish a procedure around the safe handling and disposal of sharps.
- Ensure all members of staff are aware of how and where to dispose of sharps correctly.
- Make members of staff aware of sharps injury and the procedure to follow in the event of an injury.

2. Procedure for handling and disposing of a sharp

Where a sharp is found and must be disposed of, it is good practice for all children to be moved away from the area in order to prevent accidental injury. If an individual finds a needle/syringe, they are required to:

- Guard it and get help from a member of staff.
- Check the surrounding area carefully to ensure that no other syringes/needles are in the vicinity.
- Ensure that there is adequate space to observe the sharp.
- Place a cone or box on top of the sharp to prevent anyone else (especially children and young people) from finding it.
- Ensure that it is handled safely by using protective gloves, never bare hands.
- Make sure that the member of staff is not barefoot or wearing sandals/open toe shoes, as injury may occur if the needle is dropped on the foot.
- Handle only one item at a time. Where there are multiple sharps, they should be carefully separated using a stick or implement. They should not be flicked or picked up casually with a rubbish 'grabber' or set of tongs.
- Handle the needle/syringe using a pincer tool and place it into the sharps box.
- Inform a member of management.
- Log the incident with details of when and where the sharp was found.
- Where the individual is a pupil, inform the nearest member of staff, never touching the object.

2.1 Safe disposal of Sharps

- Ensure that any sharps are disposed of quickly and safely. An item must not be discarded in a manner to cause injury to others.
- The user of the Sharp is responsible for disposal of it and must not hand it to anyone else for disposal. It should not be passed from hand to hand.
- The individual should wear gloves while picking up discarded needles/syringes.
- Sharps are to be held in the centre of the shaft to prevent injury.
- A sharps box should be taken to the needle and not vice-versa.
- Used syringes/needles must not be re-sheathed by hand before disposal.
- All sharps must go directly into a sharps bin. Wherever appropriate, a sharps bin must be provided.
- Report any needle stick injury as soon as possible and seek medical attention.

2.2 Sharp Boxes

- Sharps should be discarded straight into a sharps box, which complies with British Standard 7230.
- Sharps boxes should be marked 'Danger: Contaminated Sharps' and 'Destroy by Incineration'.
- They must be kept off the floor and out of the reach of children.
- The sharps box will be stored in the HT office.
- Sharps boxes must not be filled above the designated fill line on the outside of the box.
- Once filled, boxes must be sealed immediately and removed by a clinical waste contractor or a specialist collection service.

2.3 Sharps Retrieval Kit

This should include:

- Non-powdered vinyl or latex free CE marked disposable gloves.
- Puncture medical gloves.
- Retrieval tools to avoid handing the needle i.e., tongs.

3. Sharps injury – process and procedure

3.1 Risks of Sharps Injury

According to the health and Safety Executive (HSE), a sharps injury can potentially cause infections such as blood borne viruses (BBV) including Hepatitis B (HBV), Hepatitis C (HCV) and the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

An injury can occur when an individual is in contact with a contaminated sharp, which is infected with blood or bodily fluid. It may also occur when sharps are not stored or disposed of properly.

3.2 Sharps Injury

The HSE provides the following advice in case of injury from a contaminated sharp:

- Encourage the wound to bleed gently, ideally by holding it under running water.
- Wash the wound using water and soap.
- Do not scrub the wound while washing.
- Do not suck the wound.
- Dry the wound and cover it with a waterproof dressing.
- Seek medical advice immediately, as effective prophylaxis medication is available.

3.3 Measures to prevent sharp injuries

- Use tongs/rubbish 'grabbers' to pick up or move rubbish.
- Do not manually compress rubbish bags, as they may contain syringes/needles.
- Regularly inspect the 'Rainbow Room' and surrounding areas within the school and nursery to ensure that discarded sharps are detected and disposed of as quickly and as safely as possible.

4. Training

Appointed staff must be trained in:

- The safe collection and disposal of sharps.
- Assembling sharps boxes and verifying that they comply with the accepted standards.
- The procedure to log incidents.
- Immediate action in the event of sharps or needle stick injury.

- Sharps Risk assessment to be shared with all staff within the school and nursery and reviewed annually following any significant incident to ensure control measures for the management of sharps on site remain effective.