

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

LEARNING AND LEISURE SERVICES

HEALTH AND SAFETY

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION

A Code of Practice (Revised)

April 2013
Due for Review April 2015

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Principles

The purpose of paying attention to safety precautions is to foster proper and lasting attitudes of mind to safety and to increase the confidence of all who work in early years establishments and nursery classes. Staff must be alert to potential hazards so that they may be avoided and complete effective risk assessment (**see sec 9**). However, while recognised hazards can be guarded against, there is always an element of unforeseen danger which calls for thoughtful and deliberate attitudes in the setting of good practice by staff. Staff must be thorough in preparation and alert in supervision.

1.2 The Practices

All practices within early years establishments are subject to the guidelines of the Education Department's policy in respect of the *Health and Safety at Work Etc Act (1974)* as described in **MSF/4**.

2. Responsibilities

2.1 Responsibilities of staff in early years establishments for the implementation of the Code of Practice are as described in the document. Responsibility for Health, Safety and Welfare in the Education Department – **MSF/5**.

2.2 Although specific responsibilities have been allocated to particular categories of staff, it is incumbent upon every employee to take all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety at work of themselves and others.

2.3 All accidents/incidents must be reported in accordance with the procedure3s detailed in the *Code of Practice – "Incidents, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995"* – **MSF/11**.

3. Equipment and Furniture

3.1 Where it is reasonably practicable, unbreakable equipment should be used. Safe options should always be considered.

3.2 Equipment obtained should be of an approved standard, for example, British Standard, European Standard (CE).

3.3 A visual inspection of all equipment and furniture should take place before use and any faults reported and/or remedied. This includes sharp edges, splinters and other faults. Equipment should be checked to ensure that it is in good condition, correctly assembled and level and that fixings are secure.

3.4 Fixed and portable electrical equipment should be inspected by a competent person as required by the *Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 – HSE Guidance Note GS23 – MSF/10(e)*. The authority will make appropriate arrangements for these inspections to be carried out – **MSF/10(1)**.

3.5 Adaptors which enable more than one piece of electrical equipment to be plugged into one socket must not be used – **MSF/20(a)**.

- 3.6 The use of extension leads should, where possible, be avoided – **MSF/20(a)**.
- 3.7 Prior to relocation, electrical apparatus must be switched off.
- 3.8 Privately obtained new or second hand electrical equipment must be inspected/ tested before use in educational establishments – **MSF/20(1)**.
- 3.9 Only authorised staff may undertake the investigation and repair of faults in electrical appliances – **GSF/13(a) and GSF/13(b)**.
- 3.10 When equipment is not in use, due attention must be paid to its safe method of storage in an appropriate location.
- 3.11 Consideration should be given to safe manual handling and lifting, in the use and storage of equipment and furniture.
- 3.12 When apparatus such as climbing frames are used indoors, mats/rubber pads should be available.
- 3.13 Any activity which uses, for example, pin hammers, nails or timber, can be dangerous especially if such items are incorrectly or carelessly used. Adult supervision must always be provided. When not in use, tools and materials must be safely stored (**see 3.4 above**).
- 3.14 With regard to therapeutic ball pools/baths staff should refer to **GSF/15** for the agreed procedures.
- 3.15 Polystyrene should not be used within early years establishments.

4. Outdoor Play Areas

- 4.1 Perimeter fences and walls should be checked and gates secured before using the area.
- 4.2 Appropriate soft surface such as sand, grass, or mats must surround climbing apparatus such as climbing frames, tree trunks or boulders. This must be effectively maintained to ensure it is effective in cushioning the effects of any impact. The appropriate guidance on fall and leap height should be sought from the authorised contractors at installation.
- 4.3 Outdoor play areas must be kept free of broken glass and other dangerous litter. In the event of needles or syringes being discovered the procedures detailed in **MSF/23** must be followed.
- 4.4 Drain covers must be checked regularly and replaced where necessary. The surface of outdoor play areas should be checked regularly for damage and appropriate action taken.
- 4.5 Sandpits must be covered when not in use and inspected before use for items such as broken glass and litter.
- 4.6 Children should be under supervision when using the playground.

- 4.7 Children must be provided with helmets when cycling. Cycle helmets should be correctly fitted.

5. Hygiene

- 5.1 Staff should take any necessary precautions to maintain good personal hygienic practices during their working day.
- 5.2 All equipment used by children must be maintained in a clean, safe and orderly condition within playrooms, parent and family rooms.
- 5.3 Individual and personal items used before and after snacks or mealtimes should be cleaned with an appropriate sterilising agent, for example Milton or equivalent. Personal hand washing, before snacks, meals and after toileting should be integrated as part of the establishment routines so that it becomes a good habit.

6 Cleaning Materials and Disinfectants

- 6.1 All cleaning materials, disinfectants and cleaning machines must be kept out of reach of children in a lock fast storeroom cupboard and away from toys.
- 6.2 Cleaning materials and disinfectants must be stored in appropriate containers and clearly labelled. Hazard warning label should be noted and manufacturers' instructions followed – **COSHH/1, COSHH/2, COSHH/3 and COSHH/7**.
- 6.3 Staff must wear when necessary, the appropriate protective clothing as detailed in **MSF/34(e)**.

7. General

- 7.1 Care must be taken in the location and use of electrical goods including cookers, washing machines and tumble driers. Microwave ovens must be monitored as indicated in circular **MSF/10(f)**.
- 7.2 In all early years establishments use should only be made of pasteurised eggs, bearing the British Standard Lion mark. An alternative is the use of dried egg mixes or powders for all dishes including home baking.
- 7.3 Long hair should be tied back and loose clothing secured or removed when cookers are being used.
- 7.4 All spillage, wherever it occurs, must be mopped up immediately.
- 7.5 The temperature of water delivered to children's washbasins must be carefully controlled and monitored.
- 7.6 Extreme care should be taken when candles are used. Night lights, or candles used in cookery, must be well guarded and placed on a steady, heatproof surface. Self-relighting candles should not be used.

- 7.7 The keeping of animals is covered in the document “Animals in Primary and Nursery Schools” – **GSF/5**.
- 7.8 Peanuts and other small nuts should not be given to children in early years establishments, in line with recent medical advice.
- 7.9 Detailed guidelines on first aid are contained in **MSF/12**.
- 7.10 Information on the administration of medicines is contained in **MSF/29**.

8. Fire

- 8.1 General instructions regarding fire procedures are detailed in **MSF/9** which includes **Standard Circulars 24 (Revised) and 24a (Revised)** and must be carefully observed at all times.
- 8.2 It is particularly important to ensure that fire precautions and evacuation procedures are reviewed in conjunction with the local fire prevention officer and/or safety officer, to confirm that they are adequate for the needs of the young children on the premises. Consideration should be given to the particular needs of babies and children with special needs. See **MSF/28** when undertaking this review.
- 8.3 Fire drills should be carried out as detailed in **Standard Circulars 24 (Revised) and 24a (Revised)** so that an assessment may be made of the time required to evacuate the premises. Consideration should be given to the effectiveness of the procedures including the time taken for the evacuation.

9. Risk Assessments

Risk assessments should be regarded as an active tool when carrying out daily activities and customised where appropriate.

It is important that risk assessments are reviewed on a regular basis and when there has been significant change to an activity

Copies of risk assessments can be found within **First Class under Management/ HASAW / Early Years Risk Assessments 2013**.