

Sharps Policy

This policy applies to all staff and pupils including EYFS

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Rationale

The Proprietors are committed to the health and safety of our staff, students and visitors. Ensuring the safety of our school community is of paramount importance to us and this policy reflects our dedication to creating a safe school.

According to the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, employers are required to undertake suitable and sufficient assessment of risks to staff at work. The Health and Safety at Work etc. 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 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 injury.

This policy should be followed in line with the school's Health and Safety Policy.

Aims

Heathcote school adopts 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 trained members of staff are aware of how and where to dispose of sharps correctly.
- Make members of staff aware of what constitutes a sharps injury and the procedure to follow in the event of an injury.

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 injuries. If a needle/syringe is found by an individual, they are required to:

- Guard it and get help from the school office by sending a staff member or pupil to request the sharps box.
- 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 it to prevent anybody else (especially children) from finding it.
- Ensure that it is handled safely by using protective gloves, never bare hands.
- Make sure that they are not barefoot or wearing sandals/open shoes, as injury may occur if the needle is dropped on feet.

- 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 grabber.
- Handle the needle/syringe using gloves and place it into the sharps box.
- Inform the appropriate staff, particularly the headteacher, school office and cleaners.
- Log the incident with details of when and where the sharp was found.
- (Where the individual is a pupil), inform the nearest staff member and never touch the object.

Safe disposal of sharps

- Ensure that any sharps are disposed of quickly and safely. An item must not be discarded in a manner so as to cause injury to others.
- The user of the sharp object is responsible for disposal of it themselves and must not hand it to anybody else for disposal. It should not be passed from hand to hand.
- The individual should wear gloves while picking up discarded needles.
- Sharps are to be held in the centre of shaft to prevent injury.
- The 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 needlestick injury as soon as possible to senior first aider and seek medical attention.

Sharps boxes

- Sharps should be discarded straight into a sharps box which complies with British Standard 7230.
- The box should be marked 'Danger: Contaminated Sharps' and 'Destroy by Incineration'.
- The box must be kept off the floor and out of the reach of children.
- 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 the parents contacted to collect and replace.

Sharps injury – process and procedure

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

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.

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 as effective prophylaxis medication is available.

Measures to prevent sharp injury

- The site manager will inspect school grounds daily to ensure that discarded sharps are detected and disposed of as quickly as possible.
- Only trained staff should handle sharps.

Training

The appropriate staff must be trained in:

- The safe collection and disposal of sharps.
- Verifying that sharps boxes are in compliance with the accepted standards.
- The procedure to log incidents and who to inform.
- Immediate action in the event of sharps or needlestick injury.