

Health and Safety Policy

Health and Safety Statement

The leadership regards the promotion of health and safety at work to be of the utmost importance for all personnel that attend as pupils, work in, and visit VLC. VLC seeks to ensure that every reasonable step is taken to prevent injury and ill-health to personnel by protecting individuals from hazards.

This is approached by:

- establishing a proactive and positive health and safety culture;
- encouraging ownership and responsibility of health and safety at all levels;
- assessing and controlling risk as part of the day-to-day management of VLC;
- providing and maintaining safe, healthy and secure working conditions;
- providing appropriate training and instruction so that personnel are able to perform their various tasks safely and efficiently;
- ensuring that all personnel are aware of this policy and that there is a constant awareness with regard to health and safety in respect of all activities within VLC;
- periodic review of the safety policy as VLC's activities and the associated risks change.

All personnel employed within VLC have a legal obligation to co-operate in the operation of this policy by not interfering with or misusing equipment that has been provided in the interests of health and safety.

All VLC employees have a corresponding obligation to co-operate and comply with this policy so far as is reasonably practicable by:

- complying with safety procedures, whether written or brought to their attention by other means for their own protection, protection of those under their supervision and others who may be affected by their actions;
- reporting to the Business Manager any incident that has led, or could have led, to damage or injury;
- assisting in any investigation with regard to accidents, dangerous occurrences or near-misses.

Line managers will ensure compliance with safety arrangements within their areas of responsibility.

From time to time, safety arrangements are adopted for the control of risk and reflect the procedures that are to be followed within VLC.

Objectives

The objectives of VLC's Health and Safety Policy are to:

- promote high standards of safety, health and welfare in compliance with the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974), other statutory instruments and approved codes of practice; ensure that places and methods of work are safe and healthy through the arrangements set out in part 3 and others that are adopted from time to time as appropriate to changing circumstances;
- protect personnel, whether they be employees, pupils, members of the general public visiting VLC, or contractors and their employees, from any foreseeable hazards;
- ensure adequate training, instruction, supervision and information is given to all employees in order that they may work in safety insofar as is reasonable and practicable;

- ensure a safe and healthy working environment for all personnel and that there are sufficient facilities and arrangements for their welfare;
- ensure that awareness with regard to all aspects of safety is fostered by all personnel;
- ensure personnel are aware of their responsibility to take any steps necessary in order that the health and safety of both themselves and others may be safeguarded, and to co-operate in all aspects with regard to safety;
- ensure that full and effective consultation on all matters is encouraged.

Responsibilities

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, requires trustees, elected members, managers and employees according to their particular roles, to take the initiative on certain matters.

Responsibilities of the Leadership

The leadership accept responsibility for the establishment, monitoring and review of all VLC health and safety policies.

The leadership aim to provide a safe and healthy environment for teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and visitors to VLC. The leadership recognise that policies alone cannot prevent accidents or ensure safe and healthy working conditions. Only good working practice will ensure safety. All staff, must appreciate that their own safety, and that of all in VLC, depends on their individual conduct as well as this policy.

The leadership will:

- ensure that all resourcing decisions take into account health and safety matters;
- delegate to the Principal a contingency budget to cover health and safety matters as appropriate to VLC's scheme of internal delegation;
- ensure that job descriptions of new staff include general and specific responsibilities relating to health and safety;
- together with the Principal ensure that students and their staff have suitable health and safety provision;
- ensure that safety standards for purchased goods and equipment are met;
- ensure that procedures exist for checking that items offered for sale by VLC are safe;
- together with the Principal ensure that approved journeys are arranged and supervised in a correct and safe manner;
- ensure that VLC has appropriate monitoring systems;
- arrange for a VLC site health and safety committee to be established, on request from Safety Representatives and/or staff;
- ensure that VLC is adequately insured against Employer's Liability claims.

Responsibilities of All Employees

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 states that:

- "the duty of every employee while at work to take reasonable care for the health and safety of herself/himself and of any other persons who may be affected by her/his acts or omissions at work."
- "the duty of every employee while at work... as regards any duty or requirement imposed on her/his employer or any other person by or under any of the relevant statutory provisions, to co-operate with her/him so far as it is necessary to enable that duty or requirement to be performed or complied with."
- "no person shall intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety or welfare in pursuance of any of the relevant statutory provisions."

To observe the laws and carry out the responsibilities to students and other visitors to VLC, all employees are expected to:

- be directly responsible to the Principal for the implementation of existing policies and safety measures, regulations and procedures within that department/area of work. They should follow the advice or instructions given by the DfE, the Principal or other suitable adviser including the relevant parts of this statement;
- establish and maintain safe working procedures including arranging to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the safety and absence of risks when using, handling, storing and transporting articles and substances, (eg. chemicals, boiling water, guillotines);
- know the special safety measures and arrangements to be adopted in their own working areas and to ensure they are applied, thereby maintaining high standards, carrying out regular inspections and where necessary submitting reports to the Business Manager;
- observe standards of dress consistent with safety and/or hygiene;
- keep good standards of personal hygiene and cleanliness;
- know and apply the emergency procedures in respect of fire and first aid;
- not wilfully misuse, neglect or interfere with things provided for his/her own safety and/or the safety of others;
- co-operate with other employees in promoting improved health and safety measures;
- co-operate with any appointed safety representative and the enforcement officer of the Health and Safety Executive or the Public Health Authority;
- report any hazard or malfunction in accordance with VLC's procedure;
- follow all instructions, written or verbal, designed to ensure personal safety and the safety of others;
- conduct themselves in an orderly manner and refrain from any form of inappropriate behaviour;
- use the provided safety equipment and/or protective clothing;
- avoid improvisation in any form which could create unnecessary risks to health and safety;
- maintain, or ensure safe maintenance, of tools and equipment, reporting any defect in accordance with VLC's procedure;
- attend training courses to further the needs of health and safety as required;
- report all accidents, assaults and "near misses" in accordance with VLC's procedures whether injury is sustained or not;
- ensure that they draw the attention of the Principal to any breach of statutory regulations or Departmental procedures which cannot be dealt with;
- ensure they maintain safe access to and egress from their places of work;
- ensure the necessary protective clothing or equipment is issued and used in their areas;
- ensure that, so far as is reasonably practicable, no plant, equipment or process under their control pollutes the atmosphere;
- where necessary, seek the appropriate Health and Safety advice of the relevant adviser;
- resolve, promptly, any health and safety problem referred to them by a member of staff or pupil and refer any of these problems, for which they cannot achieve a satisfactory solution within their resources, to the Business Manager;
- ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, they provide sufficient information, instruction, training and supervision to enable other personnel and pupils to avoid hazards and contribute positively to their own safety and health;
- where appropriate, recommend to the Business Manager improvements to safety procedures, practices and equipment including additions or improvements to plant, tools, equipment or machinery which are dangerous or potentially so;
- ensure that all donated equipment is safe for use, if necessary seeking specialist advice;

- ensure that relevant risk assessments are reviewed, performed, any results recorded and any necessary action taken.

Responsibilities of the Principal

The Principal is the person initially and ultimately responsible to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) for achieving the objectives of the Health and Safety policy in VLC.

The Principal will:

- ensure that VLC meets as far as is reasonably practicable, the requirements of health and safety legislation;
- ensure that all staff know, accept and are trained to discharge their responsibilities regarding health and safety;
- ensure staff and pupils comply with agreed procedures;
- advise the Board of Trustees on the resources and action required to meet statutory requirements;
- liaise on a termly basis with the Board of Trustees on health and safety matters in VLC;
- encourage and promote a positive health and safety culture in VLC.

Responsibilities of the Business Manager

The Business Manager will:

- be the focal point for day to day references of health and safety and give advice or indicate sources of advice;
- co-ordinate the implementation of the approved safety procedures in VLC;
- establish and maintain suitable health and safety programmes to eliminate accident potential so far as is reasonably practicable;
- receive health and safety guidance and establish procedures to disseminate safety information concerning VLC to all employees including temporary/supply staff;
- ensure that, before introducing any change which may affect the health and safety of employees at work, there is adequate consultation with the Board of Trustees, appropriate specialist support staff and employees' Safety Representatives;
- ensure that Safety Representatives, where appointed under statutory regulations, can effectively carry out the duties required by those regulations;
- ensure that accidents and hazards are:
 - recorded,
 - reported as appropriate to the HSE,
 - reported to the specialist staff,
 - followed by appropriate remedial action;
- ensure that the advice of appropriate specialist staff is sought to assist or clarify any health and safety matter;
- regularly make, or arrange for, an inspection of premises, places of work and working practices;
- ensure that:
 - recommendations or reports presented to the establishment by specialist support staff and other external organisations, eg. the Health and Safety Executive, are communicated to VLC's management structure and to the relevant Safety Representatives;
 - such reports are followed up so that the required action or policy decisions are taken.
- ensure that proper concern is shown for the health and safety of everyone who is not an employee, including students, volunteers, visitors, etc;
- ensure that workers at VLC undertake to conduct themselves according to the statutory requirements and safety procedures so that no one is put at risk;
- ensure that:

- all fire fighting and fire prevention equipment and facilities are maintained to the required standard, keep appropriate records and make employees familiar with the operation of such equipment;
- regular evacuation drills are conducted at least once per term, test fire alarms fortnightly and make all employees and persons using VLC aware of the emergency procedure;
- keep clear of obstruction all fire escape doors, alarm call points, and escape routes at all times and check that escape doors can be readily opened from the inside;
- ensure adequate first aid cover is provided in accordance with guidelines' issued by the Department for Education;
- ensure that all approved items of first aid equipment are available under the control of a responsible person or trained first aider, and that all employees know where they are;
- review as necessary, and make recommendations for improving the procedures on:
 - providing first aid in VLC,
 - the emergency procedures,
 - all health and safety procedures;
- take appropriate action when any hazard is reported to him/her and stop any practices or the use of any plant, tools, equipment, machinery, etc. he/she considers to be unsafe until he/she is satisfied they are safe;
- ensure all statutory registers are maintained;
- ensure the maintenance of and safe access to and from the site;
- ensure that so far as is reasonably practicable, no plant, equipment or process under VLC's control pollutes the atmosphere;
- create reports, feedback and advise leadership of VLC each half-term on issues with regard to Health and Safety and site maintenance at an appropriate committee meeting;
- ensure that relevant risk assessments are reviewed, performed, any results recorded and any necessary action taken. Ensure that risk assessments are made available to all staff at all times for reference and use.

Responsibilities of Teachers

The teacher is responsible for the safety of students in classrooms.

If for any reason, eg. the condition or locations of equipment, the physical state of the room or in the splitting of students for practical work, a teacher considers she/he cannot accept this responsibility, she/he should discuss the matter with the Business Manager before allowing work to take place.

Class teachers will:

- set a good example by adopting good health and safety practices, and procedures;
- supervise the pupils and ensure that they know the emergency procedures in respect of fire, first aid and any special safety measures for the teaching area/activity;
- give clear instructions and warning as often as necessary (notices, handouts etc. are not enough);
- ensure that pupils' bags, coats etc. are safely stored, and good housekeeping is maintained;
- include all relevant aspects of safety in the curriculum, if necessary in special lessons;
- request/obtain protective clothing, guards, special safe working procedures, etc. where necessary and ensure their use;
- make teaching assistants/volunteers/other visitors aware of safety procedures;
- recommend to the Business Manager, improvements to safety equipment and additions or improvements to plant, tools, equipment or machinery which are dangerous or potentially so;
- ensure that relevant risk assessments are performed, any results recorded and any necessary action taken.

Responsibilities of Visitors and Volunteers

Visitors and other users of the premises are required to observe the safety rules VLC. The Principal/Business Manager will ensure that visitors are informed of health and safety matters which may affect them during their visit.

Volunteers at VLC will be made aware of the health and safety arrangements applicable to them by the teacher/staff member to whom they are assigned.

Responsibilities of Students

Students at VLC will:

- conduct themselves in a manner which is considerate to their own and others' safety;
- observe standards of dress consistent with safety and/or hygiene (this would preclude unsuitable footwear and other items considered dangerous);
- observe all the safety rules of VLC and in particular the instructions staff give in an emergency;
- not wilfully misuse, neglect or interfere with equipment provided for their safety.

The student's Code of Conduct will make all students and parents aware of this section.

Responsibilities of Health and Safety Representatives

Safety representatives are nominated/appointed by the Trade Unions. The functions of safety representatives are to:

- investigate potential hazards and dangerous occurrences at the workplace (whether or not they are drawn to their attention by the employees they represent) and examine the cause of accidents at the workplace;
- investigate complaints by any employee they represent relating to that employee's health, safety or welfare at work;
- make representations to the employer on matters arising out of the points above;
- make representations to the employer on general matters affecting the health, safety or welfare at work of the employees at the workplace;
- carry out inspections;
- represent the employees he/she is appointed to represent in consultations at the workplace with the employer and with Inspectors of the HSE and any other enforcing authority;
- receive information from Inspectors in accordance with Section 28 (8) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974;
- attend agenda items relating to H&S at meetings where this is a responsibility of the committee, in the capacity of safety representative and in connection with any of the above functions.

Health and Safety Representatives have no additional duties other than those of all employees, as laid down in section 7 and 8 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. They do not carry legal liability for either their activities or omissions as a safety representative.

Risk Assessments

Responsibility for assessing and controlling risks rests with all personnel within VLC. However, risk assessment and training shall be performed in consultation with the safety adviser.

Safety Committee

The safety committee is to comprise:

- safety adviser
- faculty or area representatives

- nominated member of the leadership (as an observer)

The committee will meet as deemed necessary.

Under section 2(7) of the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974), the safety committee has the function, in consultation with the staff and pupils it represents, of keeping under review the measures taken to ensure the health and safety at work of the employees and pupils.

Specific functions will include:

- the study of accident and notifiable disease statistics and trends so that reports can be made to the leadership on unsafe and unhealthy conditions and practices, together with recommendations for corrective action;
- examination of safety audit reports on a similar basis;
- consideration of reports and factual information provided by inspectors of the enforcing authority;
- consideration of reports that safety representatives may submit;
- assistance in risk assessment and the development of VLC's safety procedures and safe systems of work;
- monitoring the effectiveness of safety procedures and safe systems of work;
- monitoring the effectiveness of the safety content of employee training;
- monitoring the adequacy of safety and health communication and publicity in VLC.

Safety arrangements

The safety arrangements set out below are for the information, guidance and compliance of all personnel in VLC.

Health and safety are integral parts of management. They are key considerations that should underpin and facilitate educational and financial activity. Under the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and common law, employers and employees must look after children in their care.

In carrying out their normal functions, it is the duty of all senior staff to do everything possible to prevent injury to individuals. This will be achieved so far as is reasonably practicable by adoption of arrangements and procedures developed out of risk assessment for control of risk.

These can be summarised as:

- providing and maintaining safe equipment and safe systems of work;
- making arrangements to ensure the safe use, handling, storage and transport of materials, drugs, substances and other articles;
- providing the necessary information, instruction, training and supervision to ensure all personnel are aware of their responsibilities for safety;
- providing safe places of work with safe access to and exit from them;
- providing a safe and healthy working environment;
- providing a system for rapidly identifying and remedying hazards;
- where hazardous conditions cannot be eliminated, providing suitable protective clothing and equipment.

More specific arrangements are set out below and will be appended from time to time as necessary to address new risks.

All personnel have a statutory duty to co-operate in fulfilling the objectives of the leadership and a personal responsibility to take reasonable care to ensure that their actions do not cause injury to themselves and to others.

Employees are required to observe special rules and safe methods that apply to their own work and to report hazards discovered by them to the Principal and/or Business Manager.

No person shall intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health and safety.

Accident reporting

Any accident or injury is to be reported to the safety adviser by the person or persons involved in the accident and entered in the accident report book (either the student accident book or the staff accident book). Accident books are held in the VLC office. The Business Manager is to ensure that the leadership are informed of all accidents deemed to be of a serious nature and any dangerous occurrences, and where applicable follow the requirements of current legislation.

Accident investigation

All significant accidents or incidents that are considered to be dangerous and near-miss situations are to be reported to the Principal. They in turn are to report the incident to the safety adviser.

The safety adviser is to carry out an immediate investigation into the incident in order to identify the cause of the accident and measures taken to prevent a reoccurrence.

Investigations such as these are essential in order that accidents, damage to equipment and property, and losses are kept to a minimum.

The chair of the safety committee is responsible for the co-ordination of such investigations.

All contractors must ensure that accidents involving their personnel are reported to VLC's safety adviser, as well as their own reporting chain.

Reporting procedures

Any practice or condition that is likely to have an adverse effect on the health and safety of personnel, or damage to equipment or property, is to be reported to the Principal and recorded in the Risk Assessment.

Safe working procedures

The Principal/Business Manager/Deputy must ensure that safe working procedures are developed through:

- assessing the tasks
- identifying the hazards
- defining a safe method
- implementing the system
- monitoring the system

Once developed, safe working procedures must be promulgated to protect all personnel working within their area of responsibility from dangers to their health and safety. They are also to familiarise themselves with laid-down procedures and ensure that personnel under their control are fully conversant with these procedures.

Defective tools and equipment

All defects found in handtools, power tools or any other equipment must be reported immediately to the Principal/Business Manager, who in turn will appraise the safety adviser of the details.

The equipment concerned is to be withdrawn from service, clearly marked and isolated in an area where it cannot be reissued for further use until repair has been effected.

Means of access

When using access equipment, such as ladders, crawling boards, etc, the correct equipment is to be used for the job to be undertaken. Stepladders should always be supported by an assistant.

Always use correct routes of access. Do not use short cuts; they can result in serious accidents.

Good housekeeping

Tidiness, cleanliness and efficiency are essential factors in the promotion of health and safety.

Accidents can be prevented by following the guidelines listed below.

- Keep corridors and passageways unobstructed.
- Ensure shelves in storerooms and cupboards are stacked neatly and not overloaded.
- Keep floors clean.
- Do not obstruct emergency exits.

Electrical equipment

Only authorised and fully qualified personnel are to install or [attempt to] repair electrical equipment.

Where 13-amp sockets are in use, only one plug per socket is permitted.

The protective outer sleeve of electrical cables is to be firmly secured within the electric plugs. Where the outer sleeve is not secured within the plug and the connecting live wires are visible, a qualified person is to be tasked to rewire the plug correctly.

Electrical equipment that is known to be, or suspected of being faulty must not be used.

If electrical equipment becomes faulty whilst in use, it is to be isolated from the source of supply and secured so that it cannot be used until repair has been effected.

Use of harmful substances

When using harmful substances, whether they be material or chemical substances, all personnel must ensure that adequate precautions are taken to prevent injury to health.

No new materials or chemical substances are to be brought into use unless an assessment using the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002 has been carried out and clearance given for use by the safety adviser. The user department is to be in possession of a safety data sheet.

Work involving lead or asbestos is not to be carried out under any circumstances without reference in the first instance to the safety adviser.

Skin infections and hand care

To reduce the risk of dermatitis, oil acne or skin cancer, always avoid unnecessary skin contact with oils and chemicals. Always wear gloves and protective clothing where necessary.

Use barrier creams before commencing work. These provide a barrier between the skin and harmful chemicals, oils and dirt.

Do not put oily or chemically soiled rags in pockets.

Always change clothing if it has become contaminated with chemicals, flammable liquids or oils.

Smoking

We are a non smoking school.

Consumption of food

Food may be consumed in all areas of the building.

Personnel allergies are discussed at the beginning of induction. Where this is a factor, arrangements will be put in place to ensure that food is consumed in a way which does not pose a risk to students.

VLC staff have a duty to ensure that food preparation areas are safe. All sharp knives are to be removed from kitchens.

Emergency services

Fire, police or ambulance services can be contacted by dialling 999.

There is a first aider on call within VLC during working hours.

Noise

Where noise cannot be controlled at source, all personnel must be protected from high noise levels as required by the Noise at Work Regulations.

Fire prevention

Fire orders are available for all personnel to read in their area. They cover all aspects of fire prevention.

A notice, '*Action to be taken in the event of a fire*' is posted in all buildings at fire points. Each learning area has a printed notice clearly identifying the evacuation route and assembly area to be used.

Personnel are responsible for knowing the location of fire points and fire exits. They should also know the location of the assembly point in the event of a fire.

The most important part of fire control is prevention. It is with this in mind that all personnel are to be conversant with the fire potential of materials and substances that they use, and should exercise maximum care in their use, especially those marked 'flammable'.

Fire evacuation procedures, fire prevention training and fire alarm testing are to be carried out in accordance with current legislation. The Business Manager is responsible for liaising with venues to ensure that they are compliant with such legislation.

Visitors

It is the duty of all VLC personnel to ensure the health and safety of all visitors to VLC.

Visitors should not be allowed to enter unaccompanied and, where protective clothing or measures are in place for a specific area or task, the same level of protection is to be afforded to any visitor proceeding to that area.

Contractors

Contractors working within VLC are required to comply with the working rules as issued by LVLC. Any breach of these rules is to be reported to the Principal and/or safety adviser.

Use of vehicles

Only those persons authorised and in possession of the appropriate licence are to drive vehicles on VLC business. Such persons will be required to drive their own vehicle, and are responsible for ensuring that they must have the appropriate insurance.

Manual handling of loads

Personnel are not to lift, drag, push or carry heavy or awkward loads unless training has been undertaken and risk assessments carried out.

Additional arrangements will be appended as they are developed out of risk assessments carried out in accordance with this policy.