

Working at Height Policy

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Governor Leadership: Finance, Resources and Health and Safety Committee

Executive Leadership: Andrew Foord

Key Manager: **School Business Manager**

Consultation/signing group:

What every member of staff needs to know:

- If you can avoid the need to work at height then do so – with a little planning many activities can be conducted safely from the ground
- Where you can't avoid working at height then you must take steps to prevent falls either by working from a safe place of work at height, or if this is not available, by selecting the most suitable equipment for working at height. You should take into consideration the risks and factors such as the duration of the work and the environment in which the equipment will be used
- If there is any remaining risk of a fall you should take steps to mitigate the effect, for example by using fall arrest equipment

What every adult needs to know:

Cromwell High School will

- **Without 'Working at Height' training, only use the steps provided - never stand on a chair or table!- read and understand the Risk Assessment for the steps prior to use**
- **Assess the risk to help decide how to work safely**
- Plan and organize the work properly, taking account of weather conditions and possible emergencies
- Make sure you are competent and physically able to work at height
- Only use appropriate work equipment
- Manage the risks from working on or around fragile surfaces and from falling objects
- Inspect and maintain work equipment and inspect the place where work at height will be carried out.



Cromwell High School

Working at Height Policy 2021

Falls from height are the biggest single cause of fatal injuries and the second biggest cause of major injuries, caused by accidents at work.

Work at height regulations

The Regulations adopt a risk-based approach, ensuring that measures to be taken to comply with the law are proportionate to the risk involved.

Where do the Regulations apply?

The Regulations apply to all work activities where there is a need to control a risk of falling a distance liable to cause personal injury. This is regardless of the work equipment being used, the duration of the work, or the height at which the work is being performed. It includes access to and egress from the place of work. Examples of where the Regulations will apply include:

- Working on a scaffold or from a mobile elevated work platform
- Working on the back of a lorry, e.g. sheeting a load
- Using cradles or ropes to gain access to parts of buildings
- Climbing permanent structures, such as gantries or telegraph poles
- Working close to an evacuation area or cellar opening, where someone could fall into it and injure themselves or others
- Work on staging or trestles, for example at a concert or for filming
- Using a ladder/step ladder or kick stool for shelf filling, window cleaning, or other maintenance tasks such as changing a light bulb

The risk assessment and action required to control risks from using a kick stool to collect books from a shelf should be simple (e.g. not overloading yourself, not overstretching etc). However, the action required for a construction project would involve significantly greater considerations and assessments.

There are three main steps to compliance of our school policy:


1. If you can avoid the need to work at height then do so – with a little planning many activities can be conducted safely from the ground
2. Where you can't avoid working at height then you must take steps to prevent falls either by working from a safe place of work at height, or if this is not available, by selecting the most suitable equipment for working at height. You should take into consideration the risks and factors such as the duration of the work and the environment in which the equipment will be used
3. If there is any remaining risk of a fall you should take steps to mitigate the effect, for example by using fall arrest equipment

Risk assessment is the key to the proper planning and organisation of all work at height and should inform the selection and use of appropriate equipment.

Before working at Height we must meet out duties to:

- Assess the risk to help decide how to work safely
- Follow the hierarchy for safe work at height – avoid, prevent, mitigate; and give collective measures priority
- Plan and organize the work properly, taking account of weather conditions and possible emergencies
- Make sure those working at height are competent
- Use appropriate work equipment
- Manage the risks from working on or around fragile surfaces and from falling objects
- Inspect and maintain work equipment and inspect the place where work at height will be carried out, including means of access or egress

There are also detailed requirements for places of work at height, guard rails, working platforms, scaffolding, fall-arrest devices, rope access techniques, ladders, scaffold inspection reporting. Much of this detail was previously contained in construction legislation or guidance representing “good practice”.

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- Use any equipment or safety device provided to him/her for work at height, in accordance with any training and instructions given to him/her

Every employer must ensure that no person engages in any activity, including organisation, planning and supervision, in relation to work at height or work equipment for use in such work unless he/she is competent to do so or, if being trained, is being supervised by a competent person.

Competence is a combination of appropriate practical and theoretical knowledge, training and experience, which collectively should enable a person to:

- Undertake safely their specified activity at their level of responsibility
- Understand fully any potential risks related to the work activity (tasks and equipment) in which they are engaged
- Detect any defects or omissions and recognise any implications for health and safety with the aim of specifying any remedial actions that may be required

What is the likely impact on the school's activities?

The competence of staff who work at height should be assessed and additional training provided if necessary. This will include staff who plan and organise the work, as well as those carrying it out. Specific training should continue to be provided in selection and safe use of equipment for work at height e.g. ladders and tower scaffolds. Guidance documents will be displayed around school.

Contracts for work at height should include method statements that comply with the Regulations and any relevant industry "good practice". Permits for work should be required for "higher risk" work at height, e.g. roof work and any work on fragile surfaces.

The use of ladders is now discouraged, except as a means of access or egress. The new Regulations do not "ban" other uses of ladders, but they can only be used where the risk of falls is low, the duration of work is short (e.g. less than 30 minutes), and the worksite is such that alternatives (e.g. tower scaffold or mobile elevated work platform) can't be used. In future greater use must be made of alternatives to ladders.