

Welburn Hall School



Working at Heights Policy

Review Period: Three yearly

Next review Due: Summer Term - 2018

**Reviewed and Amended: Policy dated 2009; Reviewed HS 7.6.10,
18.5.11, 22.5.13, 23.4.15**

Adopted by Governors: 20.5.15

1.0 GENERAL

- 1.1 This policy is to be used in conjunction with relevant CYPS Health and Safety Policy.
- 1.2 It is important that any contractor whose employees are working at height provides the appropriate policy and risk assessments for that work.
- 1.3 The following policy is intended for those employees of North Yorkshire County Council and the Area Health Trust who work at Welburn Hall School. Equipment available for working at height includes ladders, stepladders and the tower scaffold. All staff must receive appropriate training in the use of the stepladders; the tower scaffold and ladders are for the sole use of the site manager who will receive training prior to their use.
- 1.4 In principle, staff must:-
 - know when to use a ladder/stepladder
 - decide how to select the correct type of ladder/stepladder
 - understand how to use it
 - know how to look after it
 - take sensible safety precautions

2.0 THE RISK ASSESSMENT

- 2.1 This must be completed before any work at height is undertaken using the ladders or tower scaffold. This must take into account the hierarchy of controls:-
 - firstly to avoid any work at height where possible,
 - then to prevent falls from height; and, failing that,
 - to reduce the consequences of a fall.

In addition, a Working at Heights Checklist must be completed.

- 2.2 A visual check of the stepladder must be made by staff before use, and reference made to both the generic and individual Classroom Risk Assessments as prepared by the Health and Safety Co-ordinator.

3.0 STAFF MUST ENSURE THAT USING A LADDER/STEPLADDER IS A SUITABLE ACTIVITY

- 3.1 Only use a ladder or stepladder:
 - In one position for a maximum of 30 minutes
 - For light work – it may be necessary to complete a manual handling assessment
 - Where a hand hold is available on the ladder/stepladder
 - Where three points of contact (hands and feet) can be maintained at the working position; Staff may use other surfaces for mounting pupils' work and window opening (eg cupboard tops) when identified in the individual Classroom Risk Assessment
- 3.2 On a ladder/stepladder the user must not:-
 - Overload it – see ladder/stepladder for guidance
 - Overreach – the belt buckle must be kept inside the stiles and both feet on the same rung throughout the task

- 3.3 Do NOT work sideways on when working on a stepladder. The steps must always face the work activity.
- 3.4 Holding items must be avoided, if possible, when climbing
- 3.5 The ladder/stepladder must be set up:-
- On firm ground, or the load be spread out (eg by using a board)
 - On level ground
 - On clean, solid surfaces
 - Where it is secure
 - ◆ Tied
 - ◆ By use of stability device
 - ◆ Wedged
 - ◆ Footed
 - ◆ Secured by guy ropes
- 3.6 A ladder/stepladder must be used only:-
- Where they will not be struck by vehicles – eg use cones as a warning
 - Where they will not be pushed over by hazards such as doors or windows – have a person standing guard
 - Where pedestrians are prevented from walking under them or near them – again use cones, a warning notice, or a person standing guard
 - Where ladders can be put up at the correct angle of 75 degrees – this could be marked on the stiles, or the “1 in 4” rule could be used (1 unit out for every 4 units up)
 - Where the restraint devices on stepladders can be fully opened, with any locking devices engaged
- 3.7 An operator on a ladder/stepladder must:-
- Not work within 6 metres horizontally of any overhead power lines – unless the line is dead or has temporary insulation
 - Always use a non-conductive ladder or steps for any necessary live electrical work
 - Not rest ladders against weak upper surfaces – eg glazing or plastic gutters
- 4.0 STAFF MUST ENSURE THAT THE LADDER/STEPLADDER IS SAFE TO USE**
- 4.1 Staff must only use ladders/stepladders that have no visible defects – the County “Pre-Use Checklist” must be completed for ladders and a visual check must be made for stepladders
- 4.2 All ladders and stepladders used in school must be recorded in ladder register and each given an identification number which will be indelibly marked on
- 4.3 All ladders and stepladders must be examined by the Site Manager/Health and Safety Co-ordinator every 6 months to ensure they are in a safe condition, and a record maintained
- 4.4 Any ladder/stepladder found to be defective will be taken out of use until repaired, or destroyed
- 4.5 Ladder/stepladder inspections will include checks for:-

- Mechanical damage to metal ladders/stepladders including wear, distortion, oxidation, or corrosion
- Splits, cracks, warping and splinters/sharp edges on stiles and treads on timbers
- Loose, damaged or missing rungs
- Wedges and tie rods tightly secured and non-protruding
- Ropes and chains in good condition, correct length and securely fixed
- Feet in good repair and clean

4.6 Ladder/stepladder storage is important:-

- Must be stored in covered, well ventilated areas protected from the weather, excess heat and damp
- Ladders stored vertically must be secured at the top with a bracket
- A ladder must never be hung from its rung, only from the stiles
- Must not be stored in areas accessible to pupils and students
- Should be stored horizontally using a rack or wall brackets

5.0 STAFF MUST KNOW HOW TO USE LADDERS/STEPLADDERS SAFELY

5.1 Staff should only use a ladder/stepladder if:

- They have received training and are competent
- The ladder/stepladder is long enough:-
 - Ladder
 - ◆ The top three rungs must not be used
 - ◆ The ladder should project at least 1.05 metres above any landing point and be tied unless a safe and secure handhold is available
 - ◆ For extension ladders the overlap of any two adjacent sections will be :

CLOSED LADDER LENGTH	OVERLAP
Less than 5m	1.5 rungs
5m-6m	2.5 rungs
over 6m	3.5 rungs
 - Stepladder
 - ◆ The top 2 steps must not be used unless a suitable handrail is present
 - ◆ The top 3 steps of a swingback or double-sided stepladder must not be used where a step forms the very top of the stepladder
- The rungs or steps are level
- The weather is suitable – avoid using in strong or gusting winds
- The user is wearing robust, sensible footwear
- The user is fit – certain medical conditions could prevent the use of the equipment

5.2 On a ladder/stepladder, the user must not:-

- Move them while standing on the rungs/steps
- Support them by the rungs or steps at the base
- Slide down the stiles
- Stand them on moveable objects
- Extend a ladder while standing on the rungs

5.3 It is **STRONGLY ADVISED** that assistance is obtained for stepladders; assistance **MUST** be obtained where the Classroom Risk Assessment allows for using cupboard tops. When using a ladder, a second person **MUST** be present to “foot” the ladder.

6.0 TOWER SCAFFOLDS

- 6.1 It is most important that the Site Manager and any other member of staff who may need to use the tower scaffold attend an appropriate training course in their assembly and use. The tower must be vertical and rest on firm, level ground
- Wheels and outriggers must be locked
- An internal ladder must be used for access
- Guard rails/toe boards must be in place if a person could fall over 2 metres
- The tower should be tied to a structure if:-
 - ◆ It is sheeted, likely to be used in high winds, for grit blasting or water jetting or for lifting heavy materials up the outside of the tower
 - ◆ The tower base is too small for the tower height
 - ◆ The height is over 9.6 metres
- Any ties used need to be inspected
- Formal inspection by a competent person is required and a record kept if the tower is in place for 7 days or over
- The height to base ratio should not exceed –
3:1 for external use
3.5:1 for internal use
- The user must not:-
 - ◆ Use a ladder on a working platform, or apply horizontal loads that could tilt the tower over
 - ◆ Overload the platform
 - ◆ Fix ties to the centre of thin walled aluminium tubes
 - ◆ Move tower if:
 - Overhead obstructions are in the way
 - There are holes or dips in the ground
 - If people or materials are on the tower

The tower scaffold must be recorded in the ladder register and inspected by the Site Manager/Health and Safety Co-ordinator every 6 months and a record kept.