Health and Safety Policy

Document control

Policy owner	The Bursar
Senior leader responsible	The Head
Approval authority	Governors. Approval dates are not shown on the face of the policy. The policy is approved by the Governors in accordance with the policy approval schedule maintained by the Clerk to the Governors, and is deemed approved unless and until the Governors resolve otherwise.
Effective date	1 September 2026
Review cycle	Annual
Next review	September 2027
Version	V2026.5
Applies to	All employees, pupils, contractors, volunteers, visitors (including parents) and others affected by the School's activities

Policy summary

A safe and healthy environment is the foundation on which effective learning, wellbeing and work depend.

This policy sets out how Cokethorpe School protects the health, safety and welfare of everyone in our community and everyone affected by what we do. It explains:

- who is responsible for what;
- how we assess and control risk;
- how we train and inform people; and
- how we check that our arrangements are working.

Contents

1. Why this matters 3
2. What we are seeking to achieve 3
3. How we manage health and safety 3
4. Our legal framework 4
5. What we provide 4
6. Governance and oversight 4
7. Roles and responsibilities 6
8. Respect and safety for staff 8
9. The Risk Management Health and Safety Committee 8
10. Accidents, first aid, fire safety and emergency response 9
11. Incident reporting, near misses and RIDDOR 9
12. Managing specific risks 10
13. Contractors, vehicles and transport 10
14. Mental health and wellbeing 11
15. Information and training 11
16. Communication, monitoring and review 12
17. Related School policies and procedures 12
18. Legislation, regulation and guidance 12
Appendix A — Operational registers and arrangements 14
A1. First aid box locations 14
A2. Fire safety checks 14
A3. Equipment and general safety checks 14
A4. Dangerous substances 14
A5. Specialist advice 15

1. Why this matters

A safe and healthy environment is the foundation on which effective learning, wellbeing and work depend. Cokethorpe School is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of everyone in our community and everyone affected by what we do.

Health and safety at a school is not a paper exercise. It is what allows a Science lesson to be interesting, a minibus to leave the site, a workshop to be used and a building to be evacuated calmly. Done well, it enables activity rather than restricting it.

2. What we are seeking to achieve

So far as is reasonably practicable, we provide a safe and healthy School for all employees, pupils, contractors, volunteers, visitors and others who could be affected by our activities. The Governors give high priority to health and safety across both educational and support operations and are committed to promoting the welfare of all in the community so that effective learning can take place.

We ask everyone to take reasonable care for their own safety and that of others, to co-operate with the arrangements set out in this policy, and to report concerns promptly so that they can be put right.

3. How we manage health and safety

The School manages health and safety through a continuous cycle, following the framework set out in the Department for Education guidance "Health and safety: responsibilities and duties for schools":

- **Plan** — Governors and the Senior Leadership Team set the direction and priorities for health and safety.
- **Do** — management systems and practices are put in place so that risks are dealt with sensibly, responsibly and proportionately.
- **Check** — arrangements are monitored, inspected, audited and reported on.
- **Act** — health and safety performance is formally reviewed and the arrangements are adjusted in response.

Regulation 7 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 requires the School, as employer, to appoint one or more competent persons to assist it in undertaking the measures needed to comply with health and safety law — someone with the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to give sensible guidance about managing the risks at the School. The School has appointed the Bursar, as the School's Safety Officer, as its competent person for the purposes of regulation 7, supported by the School's Risk Management Advisor, an external appointment. The security of the site falls expressly within the scope of that appointment; the Facilities Manager is responsible for the day-to-day operational delivery of physical site security on the Bursar's behalf, as set out in the Access, Security and Visitors Policy.

The School's health and safety management arrangements are modelled on ISO 45001, the international standard for occupational health and safety management systems. The School does not hold, and does not seek, certification to that standard; ISO 45001 is used as the reference framework against which the arrangements described in this policy are structured and reviewed.

4. Our legal framework

The School understands and accepts its obligations under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated legislation to provide a safe and healthy environment for all users of the premises. The Governors have a statutory duty to provide, so far as is reasonably practicable, a safe and healthy place of work for all employees; in certain circumstances this duty extends to those for whom the School provides services and to others engaged to provide services for the School.

In meeting these duties the School has regard to the current DfE guidance "Health and safety: responsibilities and duties for schools" and to guidance published by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

5. What we provide

So far as is reasonably practicable, the School provides:

- safe systems of work and healthy working conditions;
- first aid facilities and trained first-aid personnel, and access to the School Counsellor and the Employee Assistance Programme;
- safe premises, plant and equipment;
- arrangements for the safe use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances;
- safe means of access and egress;
- appropriate security arrangements; and
- opportunities for employees' representatives to participate in promoting health and safety at work.

6. Governance and oversight

The Governors recognise their collective responsibility for health and safety. They fulfil this by appointing a Governor with responsibility for overseeing health and safety as part of their responsibilities for the upkeep and maintenance of the estate and buildings. Day-to-day responsibility for the operation of health and safety rests with the Head.

The Governors have adopted the following framework:

- the Governor with responsibility for health and safety attends the School's Risk Management Health and Safety Committee twice each term and receives all relevant papers;
- the Governors appoint one or more competent persons under regulation 7 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and ensure that the appointment and its scope are formally recorded; the Bursar, as Safety Officer, holds that appointment, with the security of the site expressly within its scope;

- a health and safety report is tabled at each term's Full Governing Board meeting, together with any matters to bring to the Board's attention;
- the external fabric of the School, its plant, equipment and systems of work are surveyed and inspected regularly by industry-recognised professionals, whose reports are considered by the Finance and Estates Committee and inform the routine maintenance programme;
- catering and cleaning of food preparation and eating areas are subject to external inspection by the Environmental Health Officer (EHO); the General Services Manager arranges an independent annual hygiene and safety audit, together with regular external deep cleaning and pest control, and the Bursar reports on these to the Finance and Estates Committee;
- fire risk assessments are carried out by a competent person, reviewed annually for progress against the action plan and updated at least every three years (or sooner following significant changes to buildings); the Risk Management Health and Safety Committee reviews each amended assessment;
- the Risk Management Advisor reviews the overall arrangements for health and safety, including fire safety and the general state of the School, through monthly visits, and reports on actions required with recommended timescales, monitored by the Finance and Estates Committee;
- a competent person carries out a legionella risk assessment at least every two years, with a quarterly water sampling and testing regime in place; and
- the School maintains arrangements for the induction and training of staff in health and safety, including manual handling and working at height, with role-specific training provided in addition.

The Risk Management Health and Safety Committee reports termly to the Governors' Compliance Committee. The Compliance Committee scrutinises the operational detail and makes recommendations to the Full Governing Board through its committee report at the Board meeting.

7. Roles and responsibilities

The Head

The Head holds overall and final responsibility for health and safety in the School and for ensuring this policy is implemented at Cokethorpe School, Witney, Oxon OX29 7PU. The Bursar acts as deputy.

The Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership Team:

- organise the School so that risk to staff, pupils and other users is minimised;
- ensure staff are properly briefed and trained in their duties as part of staff development;
- set a personal example and encourage a safe attitude to work;
- ensure there are safe systems of work and that protective equipment and legal standards are observed; and
- co-operate with the safety representatives of recognised employee groups.

The Safety Officer (the Bursar)

The Bursar is the School's Safety Officer and the competent person for the purposes of regulation 7 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, supported by the School's Risk Management Advisor. The Bursar:

- monitors and implements the general safety programme;
- carries out a regular programme of inspections on behalf of the Head;
- analyses accident reports and prepares an annual report of reportable (RIDDOR) incidents for the Governing Body;
- establishes and monitors first aid and emergency fire procedures;
- establishes protective clothing and equipment needs and monitors their use;
- holds relevant health and safety information, including HSE guidance notes, codes of practice and this policy and its appendices; and
- reports accidents and ill health at work to the HSE under RIDDOR.

The Facilities Manager

The Facilities Manager delivers day-to-day physical site security on the Bursar's behalf and reports to the Bursar on security matters. The Facilities Manager:

- carries out and records defined-cycle safety checks on escape routes, fire alarms, emergency lighting and fire extinguishers, supported by the School's fire alarm contractor;
- manages the Permit to Work system for contractors;
- holds and maintains the asbestos survey and register;
- holds and maintains the legionella register and records of checks;
- is responsible for the regular inspection of portable electrical equipment, and for ensuring that new or personal electrical items are safety-tested before use;
- is responsible for car parking and vehicles on site, school bus arrangements, and ensuring that School minibuses and other vehicles are properly maintained and roadworthy; and

- refers any doubt about the safety or suitability of plant, machinery, tools or equipment to the Bursar.

The School Nurse

The School Nurse leads the School's first aid and medical provision, including paediatric first aid arrangements for the Early Years Foundation Stage. The School Nurse:

- carries out and reviews the first aid needs assessment;
- collates medical information for pupils and staff and makes relevant details available to those who need them;
- maintains first aid equipment and emergency medication across the School;
- records all accidents and injuries involving pupils in the Medical Centre;
- provides an overview of accidents and injuries to the Risk Management Health and Safety Committee, which meets twice each term;
- draws up and reviews Individual Healthcare Plans; and
- advises staff, pupils and parents on health matters.

Detailed first-aid arrangements are set out in the First Aid Policy.

The Head of HR

- ensures that pre-employment health questionnaires are completed and reviewed for all new appointees after an offer is made, in line with the Equality Act 2010 and the Safer Recruitment Policy and Procedures;
- manages specific-population risk assessments, including those for new and expectant mothers and young persons or pupils on work experience;
- maintains training records and monitors that required health and safety training is current; and
- supports staff wellbeing, including through the Employee Assistance Programme and referrals to occupational health where appropriate.

Line Managers and Heads of Department

Line Managers and Heads of Department ensure that suitable training required by health and safety legislation is undertaken in their areas, and that risk assessments and safe systems of work are maintained and followed.

All employees

Every member of staff is responsible for taking reasonable care of their own safety and that of pupils, visitors, temporary staff, volunteers and contractors, and for co-operating with the Head, the Bursar and the SLT so that the Governors can meet their health and safety duties. In particular, employees are expected to:

- support and implement this policy, including its appendices;
- set a personal example through safe behaviour and comply with safety warnings;
- use the protective equipment provided and ensure pupils do so;
- familiarise themselves with emergency evacuation and lockdown procedures;
- satisfy themselves that plant, machinery, tools and equipment are safe and suitable before use, and refer any doubt to the Facilities Manager;
- carry out required testing and keep valid test certificates where appropriate;

- ensure equipment purchased, hired or installed is suitable and complies with safety regulations, with operating and maintenance instructions available in English;
- report in writing to the designated person any inadequacies in safety procedures;
- report all accidents, near misses, reportable diseases, dangerous occurrences and potentially hazardous incidents in accordance with School procedures;
- engage in continuous improvement of risk assessments;
- teach safety as an integral part of their courses, by instruction and by example; and
- inform contractors and others not employed by the School of the relevant health and safety requirements.

Where a pupil declines to follow safe working procedures, staff should stop the activity for that pupil and refer the matter to the Head of Department so that appropriate action can be taken.

Members of staff must be aware that failing to discharge the obligations placed on them by this policy, its appendices or any relevant statutory provision may make them liable to enforcement action by the HSE, or to action under the School's disciplinary procedures.

8. Respect and safety for staff

We are committed to a School community in which staff can work free from abuse or intimidation. We expect everyone — pupils, parents, visitors and colleagues — to treat staff with respect. Physical or verbal violence towards staff is not acceptable and will be responded to promptly, whether it comes from pupils, parents, visitors or other members of staff.

9. The Risk Management Health and Safety Committee

Most health and safety matters are dealt with promptly within each department. Matters that cannot be resolved within a department, or that are of a more general nature, are referred to the Risk Management Health and Safety Committee, which meets twice each term to develop safety rules and to consider hazards and potential safety problems across the School. Minutes are circulated, displayed on the Common Room notice board and shared with the Head and Governing Body.

Membership (by role): Bursar (Chair), Deputy Head — Pastoral and Wellbeing, Designated Safeguarding Lead, Director of Co-Curricular, Facilities Manager, General Services Manager, School Nurse, a Prep School representative, a Science department representative, Director of Sport, Head of Design Technology, Head of Outdoor Education, Events Manager and the Risk Management Advisor.

The Committee's functions are to:

- monitor and implement the general safety programme;
- study accidents, near misses, notifiable diseases, statistics and trends;
- commission external audits of processes and procedures and examine safety audit reports;
- consider reports from safety representatives and from inspectors of the enforcing authority;
- assist in developing School safety rules and safe systems of work;

- monitor departmental procedures and risk assessments and share best practice;
- monitor the adequacy of health and safety communication across the School;
- provide a link with the relevant inspectorate of the enforcing authority; and
- make recommendations to the Head and the Governing Body.

10. Accidents, first aid, fire safety and emergency response

First aid boxes are located across the School and on School vehicles, and a list of Qualified First Aiders is held in the Medical Centre (located under the Bell Tower). The School Nurse is responsible for maintaining accident records and for reporting notifiable accidents. Accidents are investigated by the School Nurse and/or the Bursar and reported to the Risk Management Health and Safety Committee. Detailed first-aid arrangements are set out in the First Aid Policy and in Appendix A.

Escape routes, fire extinguishers, alarms, emergency lighting and fire drills are checked on defined cycles by the Facilities Manager and the School's fire alarm contractor. Full arrangements are set out in the Fire Safety Management Plan and summarised in Appendix A.

The School's arrangements for responding to protective security incidents — including lockdown, shelter/invacuation and bomb threats — are set out in the Protective Security Response Policy. The Governing Body is the responsible person for the purposes of the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2023 (Martyn's Law). Wider emergency planning, including adverse weather, power failure, flooding, gas leaks and structural damage, is set out in the Emergency Plan.

Head injuries, however minor they may appear, are reported to parents on the day they occur. The School's approach to head injuries, including red-flag symptoms and graduated return to activity, is set out in the Head Injuries Policy.

11. Incident reporting, near misses and RIDDOR

The School reports incidents to the HSE as required by the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR):

- **for staff:** deaths, specified injuries, over-seven-day absences and occupational diseases;
- **for pupils and visitors:** injuries requiring hospital treatment that arise from school activities or a failure of equipment. Sports injuries to pupils are reportable only where the injury requires hospital treatment and arises from a failure in the School's duty of care (for example unsafe equipment, poor supervision or inadequate organisation); injuries arising from the normal conduct of sport are not reportable;
- **dangerous occurrences:** for example gas leaks or equipment failures.

Reporting timeframes: deaths and specified injuries within 10 days; over-seven-day injuries within 15 days; diseases on diagnosis. The Head holds ultimate accountability, the Safety Officer prepares and submits reports, and all staff report potential incidents promptly.

Near misses: All staff should report near misses — incidents that did not result in injury but could have done so — to the Bursar or the School Nurse. Near misses are recorded,

reviewed by the Risk Management Health and Safety Committee, and used to identify patterns and prevent future incidents. A culture of reporting near misses, without blame, is an essential part of keeping our community safe.

12. Managing specific risks

The School assesses and manages the following in line with HSE requirements, with detailed assessments held under the Risk Assessment Policy:

- **hazardous substances (COSHH)**, including laboratory chemicals, cleaning chemicals, LPG, paints and grounds chemicals;
- **manual handling and working at height;**
- **display screen equipment (DSE)** for regular users;
- **asbestos** — the asbestos survey and register are held in the Maintenance Department (Facilities Manager);
- **legionella** — the register and records of checks are held in the Maintenance Department (Facilities Manager);
- **radon** — a radon assessment has been carried out for the School site; the site is not within a radon-affected area and no further action is currently required. The position is reviewed as part of the regular health and safety audit cycle;
- **construction and building works** under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (Bursar);
- **electrical equipment** — regular inspection of portable equipment, with new or personal items safety-tested before use (Facilities Manager);
- **allergy safety** — the School's arrangements for managing allergy risk, including anaphylaxis, food allergens, emergency adrenaline and allergy awareness training, are set out in the Allergy Safety Policy. Allergy is considered in the risk assessment for every activity and event, on and off site;
- **outdoor education and water activities** — the School operates a boathouse on the River Thames, which is a remote location with specific risks including water safety, limited emergency vehicle access and no mains services. Risk assessments for outdoor education and water-based activities are maintained by the Head of Outdoor Education and reviewed by the Risk Management Health and Safety Committee;
- **specific-population risks**, including new and expectant mothers and young persons or pupils on work experience (Head of HR); and
- **lettings and out-of-hours use** — where the School premises or grounds are used by third parties, the School ensures that appropriate risk assessments, insurance and safeguarding arrangements are in place and that users are made aware of the School's health and safety and emergency procedures.

Where a risk is identified, control measures are assessed in order of priority rather than by ease of implementation: elimination first, then substitution, then engineering controls, then administrative controls, and only then personal protective equipment. This is the order set out in the Department for Education guidance and applies across all of the areas above.

13. Contractors, vehicles and transport

Contractors report to the Facilities Office (Black Barns), where they sign in and complete the Permit to Work process before any work begins. They read the emergency fire procedures

and this policy and follow proper safety procedures for the work to be done. All contractors are managed through the Permit to Work system.

Visiting professionals who are not undertaking work requiring a permit — for example visiting speakers, peripatetic staff, advisers and other professional visitors — sign in at the Front Office in the usual way. Anyone arriving at the Front Office will be correctly directed by the Receptionist.

There is no smoking anywhere on the School site during school hours. For Events an outdoor smoking area is provided and smoking only permitted in that designated area.

The Facilities Manager is responsible for car parking and vehicles on site, school bus arrangements, and ensuring that School minibuses and other vehicles are properly maintained and roadworthy. The School Bus Code of Conduct is set out in the Transport Policy.

14. Mental health and wellbeing

We recognise that mental health is an integral part of health and safety. In line with HSE guidance, including the HSE Management Standards for work-related stress, and the School's commitment to welfare, we maintain the following arrangements:

- **Training and awareness:** all staff receive basic mental health awareness training, and line managers are trained to recognise signs of stress and mental ill-health and to respond appropriately.
- **Support:** staff have access to confidential counselling through the School Counsellor and the Employee Assistance Programme; pupils are supported through pastoral care and may be referred to the School Counsellor or external services.
- **Stress risk assessments:** the School carries out stress risk assessments where concerns are raised, particularly in higher-pressure roles or following incidents.
- **Reporting and escalation:** staff are encouraged to raise concerns about their own or others' wellbeing with their line manager, the School Nurse, the Head of HR or the Bursar. All reports are handled sensitively and in line with the School's data protection and safeguarding policies.
- **First-aid needs assessment:** the School's first-aid needs assessment takes account of the mental health of employees as well as physical injury and ill health, in line with current HSE guidance (L74, as amended in 2024). Where a member of staff experiences an acute mental health difficulty at work, initial support is provided through the arrangements described above and through the School's first-aid and medical arrangements. Detailed first-aid arrangements are set out in the First Aid Policy.

15. Information and training

On joining the School, all employees are informed of the general health and safety aspects of their employment and of any specific information relevant to their role, through the new staff induction programme. All employees are informed about, and trained in, health and safety matters — including exposure to identified risks and mental health and wellbeing —

with training repeated or adapted where circumstances change. Training is provided during working hours.

Responsibility for training is shared by the Bursar, Facilities Manager, General Services Manager and School Nurse, and records are maintained and monitored by the HR department.

16. Communication, monitoring and review

This policy is published in full on the School website, so that parents, prospective parents, staff and visitors can see how the School manages health and safety. It is also made available to all employees, who are advised where copies can be obtained and are informed when it is reviewed or amended.

The policy is reviewed at least annually, and sooner where legislation, guidance or School circumstances change materially.

17. Related School policies and procedures

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following School policies and procedures:

- Risk Assessment Policy
- Fire Safety Management Plan
- Emergency Plan
- Protective Security Response Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Head Injuries Policy
- Allergy Safety Policy
- Lone Working Policy
- Access, Security and Visitors Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Sports Guidelines and Procedures Policy
- Transport Policy
- Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures
- Employee Handbook

18. Legislation, regulation and guidance

This document has regard to the following. References are to the current version of each source unless a specific edition is material.

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR).
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH).
- Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012.
- Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015.
- Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981.

- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, as amended by the Fire Safety Act 2021 and section 156 of the Building Safety Act 2022.
- Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2023.
- HSE ACOP L8 and HSG274 — legionnaires' disease.
- HSE Management Standards for work-related stress.
- HSE, First aid at work: Guidance on regulations (L74, third edition, published 2013 and amended in 2018 and 2024).
- Department for Education, Health and safety: responsibilities and duties for schools (published 3 June 2013, last updated 5 April 2022).
- Department for Education, Allergy safety in schools: statutory guidance (published 6 July 2026).
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, Part 3, paragraph 16.

Appendix A — Operational registers and arrangements

This appendix holds operational detail that supports the policy and may be updated by the Bursar without full policy re-approval.

A1. First aid box locations

Prep and Senior Art rooms; Catering department; toilets outside Kitchen/Coffee Shop; Costume department (plasters only); Cricket pavilion (first team, Summer Term); Deputy Head of Sixth Form office; DT workshop; Early Years classroom and outside area; Front office; Maintenance Department; Medical Centre; School boathouse; Science prep rooms; Senior School office; Sports Hall; Common Room; Prep School workroom; The Shed; all School minibuses; maintenance buggies, diggers and tractors.

Appointed person responsible for first aid boxes: the School Nurse. Accident record held in the Medical Centre.

A2. Fire safety checks

Item	Responsible	Frequency
Escape routes	Facilities Manager	Monthly
Fire extinguishers	Fire alarm contractor	Yearly
Fire alarms	Facilities Manager / contractor	Weekly (FM); six-monthly (contractor)
Emergency lights	Facilities Manager	Monthly
Fire drill	Director of Co-Curricular	At least termly

A3. Equipment and general safety checks

Item	Responsible	Frequency
Sports Hall equipment	Director of Sport	As required
Design Technology equipment	Head of Design Technology	Termly
Workshop equipment	Facilities Manager	Yearly
Science equipment	Head of Science	Yearly and at other intervals
Grounds machinery (mowers, tractor, etc.)	Head of Grounds	As required
Chain saw, angle grinder, circular saw, planer, drills and other maintenance equipment	Facilities Manager	As required
Outdoor Education equipment	Head of Outdoor Education	As required

A4. Dangerous substances

Substance	Responsible	Storage
LPG and gas cylinders	Facilities Manager (maintained only by official contractors)	Secure area
Laboratory chemicals	Senior Science Laboratory Technician	Secure store
Welding equipment	Facilities Manager (Maintenance) / Head of DT (DT)	Secure area
Cleaning chemicals	Facilities Manager / General Services Manager	Secure store
Paint	Facilities Manager	Secure store
Weed killers and creosote	Head of Grounds	Secure store

A5. Specialist advice

Area	Adviser
Radiation protection	External radiation protection adviser (Oxford Safety and Risk Management Advisers)
Health and safety consultancy and audit	The School's Risk Management Advisor (monthly visits)
Hazard data sheets	Senior Science Laboratory Technician
Medical advice	School Nurse — Medical Centre, tel. 01993 892335 (internal ext. 2335)