



COSHH Policy



Our Lady's Catholic Primary School

COMMITTEE: LAC Committee
DATE APPROVED: January 2025
POLICY REVIEW DATE: January 2027

This policy is designed to comply with the [Health and Safety at Work Act 1974](#) and the [Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1999 \(COSHH\)](#).

Policy

This policy applies to all staff working on the premises, and to all agency and supply staff, contractors, volunteers and work placement students.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that we provide adequate training, instruction and information to prevent staff and others coming into contact with hazardous substances. This will be achieved by providing safety equipment and by having a prescribed procedure to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of all staff, learners and visitors.

This policy applies to all hazardous substances (including biological hazards).

The school recognises the need to provide a safe and secure working environment. Caring for all personnel and minimizing risk is inseparable from all other school objectives. To achieve this, the school accepts that the policy for the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) requires a high level of management commitment, professional competence and adequate resources.

Responsibilities

Trust

The Trust (OLICAT) recognises its responsibilities to implement, in full, its duties in respect of the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1999 (COSHH).

Head Teacher

The Trust delegates to the Head teacher, responsibility for the implementation of this policy and procedures. The Head Teacher is responsible for ensuring that sufficient numbers of trained competent staff, are reasonably practicable.

Staff follow safe systems of work.

The day-to-day implementation and monitoring of this policy and procedures is delegated to **Mr David Short** the Site Supervisor and **Mr Barry Wilcock** the Health & Safety Liaison Officer who have both been COSHH trained, and are the schools COSHH Coordinators.

A range of duties towards employees exist under the COSHH Regulations 1999. These duties also apply to other persons, so far as it is reasonably practicable, who may be affected by the work. The main duties are listed below.

To carry out (and review) a formal assessment of health risks to employees.

- To prevent/control exposure (and monitor any exposure) of employees to health risks.
- To institute proper use of controls and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- To ensure that controls are appropriate and tested and keep records as necessary.
- To ensure that appropriate health surveillance for employees is provided, where necessary.
- To provide information, instruction and training, as appropriate/necessary, regarding all hazardous substances.

Training Responsibilities

Staff who may be exposed to hazardous substances will:

- Be provided with suitable and sufficient information, instruction and training so that they are aware of the risks to their health created by such exposure and the precautions which should be taken to minimise the risks.
- Receive training to a safe level in the handling of hazardous substances, procedures, and the use of control measures and in emergency procedures. Staff training must include accident and defect reporting procedures. Staff issued with PPE should be trained in its use, limitations, storage, cleaning and maintenance.
- All class staff receive annual health & safety internal training, which includes a basic understanding of chemical use. Staff are reminded not to bring in chemicals from home.

Procedures

The COSHH Regulations require employers to undertake a number of evaluation and control measures. These evaluations must be recorded, together with the precautions taken to control or prevent exposure of employees and others to the substance(s). This procedure is carried out by a COSHH coordinator.

There are seven key elements of COSHH:

- Assessment
- Control Measures
- Maintenance of Control Measures
- Monitoring of Exposure
- Health Surveillance
- Provision of Information
- Record Keeping

A significant undertaking is required to determine and record the following:

- What substances are present?
- What activities use, store or transport such substances?
- What hazards are associated with these substances?

The Assessment

- The Head teacher in liaison with the COSHH coordinator(s) will ensure that no work is carried out that is liable to expose employees, or others to substances hazardous to health, unless a suitable and sufficient risk assessment, has been produced in writing, of those risks has been carried out.
- Before carrying out any full risk assessments the COSHH coordinator(s) will compile an initial inventory of substances kept in school and will identify the level of hazard. This initial inventory will be kept updated as new substances are brought onto the premises.

- When it has been identified that a substance(s) is/has been classified as hazardous, the COSHH Coordinator(s) will obtain Safety Data Sheets and then complete a full COSHH risk assessment. The full risk assessment will be stored together with any relevant/available Safety Data Sheets, in the school COSHH file.
- All persons in the area to be assessed should be included. All persons affected by the work, including learners, visitors and staff, should be considered within the assessment.
- The COSHH coordinator(s) will ensure that the risk assessments are made available to all members of staff likely to be affected by the substance(s).

This is normally done by giving a copy to the relevant member of staff and by notifying all staff that a copy is in the main COSHH file which can be found in the Key Stage 1 Office and the Key Stage 2 Office. These documents are also referred to as part of the induction programme for all new staff.

- COSHH risk assessments will be carried out for exposures to biological agents' e.g. blood, vomit and human faeces.
- Anything that is done to eliminate or reduce exposure is known as a control measure. When the COSHH coordinator(s) are considering their preliminary assessment, their first consideration in control is to eliminate the hazardous substance if reasonably practicable. If this cannot be done, then substitution with a less hazardous alternative or the substance in a less hazardous form may reduce the risk potential. So far as is reasonably practicable, control should be provided by measures other than the provision of personal protective equipment. Only where measures taken to prevent, or control exposure, do not prevent, or provide adequate control, should personal protective equipment be considered. Once it is established by the COSHH coordinators that the substance in question is the best alternative (as far as is reasonably practicable) they will complete the necessary COSHH risk assessment.
- The assessment must be reviewed if there is reason to suspect that it is no longer valid, or there has been a significant change in the matters to which the assessment relates, and in any case at least every five years. Where a review indicates changes in the assessment are required, these changes must be made.

Control Of All New Substances

Before any substance(s) is/are brought into the workplace, the COSHH Coordinator(s) will check whether it is classified as hazardous. In each case, where the substance is recognised as hazardous, Safety Data Sheet(s) (SDS) will be obtained from the supplier in order to gain information on how to manage the substance. The SDS give's details of the health effects of exposure. The COSHH Co-coordinator(s) will then complete a full COSHH risk assessment and store this, together with the Safety Data Sheets, in the school COSHH file. Staff using the substance will be fully informed of the precautions and control measures they need to take.

Prevention Or Control of Exposure to Substances Hazardous To Health

The Headteacher, in liaison with the COSHH Coordinator(s), will ensure that:

- Exposure of employees to substances hazardous to health is prevented or where it is not reasonably practicable to do so, then it is adequately controlled.
- Checks are made to see whether, by varying the work routine, the substance used, or by using the substance in a less hazardous form, the risk level can be reduced.
- So far as is reasonably practicable control is provided by measures other than the provision of personal protective equipment.
- Where measures taken to prevent or control exposure, do not prevent, or provide adequate control, employees will be provided with suitable personal protective equipment.
- Employees are aware that they have a duty to make full and proper use of any control measures provided/in place, and that they must report any defects, or necessary changes, immediately to a senior member of staff.
- There is a system for removing hazardous substances deemed to be out of date or no longer required, from the site in a safe and legal manner.
- Emergency procedures including procedures for dealing with spillages are in place.

Monitoring of Employees Health

The Headteacher, in liaison with the COSHH Coordinator(s), will ensure that the exposure of employees to hazardous substances will be suitably monitored as required under the COSHH Regulations.

Audit

At least once per year, an audit will be carried out by the COSHH Coordinator(s). Their remit will be to check the following:

- All hazardous substances being used, stored or transported in school are included on the COSHH register and have been assessed.
- The COSHH register does not contain substances that are no longer to be used, stored or transported in school.
- All hazardous substances are under the day-to-day supervision of suitably trained staff.
- The storage of the hazardous substance is safe and meets any legal requirements.
- The quantity of hazardous substances held is minimized, in order that proper procedural duties can be maintained.
- That staff training and training records are being updated, and that so far as can be ascertained, staff are using the hazardous substances properly so that the risks are minimized.
- Emergency procedures are in place and functional e.g., spillage kits, PPE etc.
- Health surveillance is being carried out where necessary and records of exposure to hazardous substances are kept up to date where applicable.

COSHH Symbols & Meanings



Flammable (Symbol: open flame)



This symbol refers to any flammable chemicals or other substances that ignite on contact with air, a small ignition source, has a low flash point or can evolve highly flammable gases when in contact with water. The symbol is a large open flame.

- Flammable Gas
- Highly Flammable Gas
- Highly Flammable or flammable aerosol
- Highly flammable or flammable liquid and vapour
- A flammable solid

Oxidising (Symbol; open flame over a circle)



Oxidising covers chemicals that in their preparation, can lead to a dangerous reaction with other chemicals. The symbol for this COSHH hazard is a flame over a circle.

- Acts as an oxidiser, increasing the intensity of the fire
- May act as a strong oxidiser, causing a fire or explosion
- The substance is usually found on bleach

Gases under pressure (Symbol: gas cylinder)



This symbol represents situations where gas is under pressure. It is also an example of a hazard that has recently been incorporated into the COSHH classification system. The symbol represents a gas cylinder.

- Gas contained under pressure which may explode when heated
- Refrigerated gas, may lead to cryogenic injuries
- The symbol is normally found on gas containers

Corrosive (Symbol: corrosion on hands and surface)



The corrosive symbol is used to warn against chemicals that may damage living tissue on contact. The image shows a chemical spill causing the corrosion of a hand a surface material.

- Can cause corrosion on metals
- May cause severe skin and eye damage
- Can be found in ammonia, acetic acid, hydrochloric acid, drain cleaners etc

Toxic (Symbol: skull and crossbones)



The toxic symbol represents chemicals that can cause a lot of damage even in low and very low quantities. The symbol is of a skull and crossbones.

- Can cause fatalities when swallowed, inhaled, and put in contact with skin
- Can be toxic if swallowed, inhaled, or put in contact with skin

Health hazards (Symbol: exclamation mark)



The health hazard symbol is an indication of substances that may cause damage to health. The symbol is also used as an indication to take caution.

- Can cause respiratory irritation
- Can lead to dizziness and/or drowsiness
- Can cause allergic reactions
- May lead to serious eye irritation
- Can cause skin irritation
- May be harmful if swallowed
- May cause damage on contact with skin
- Can cause damage when inhaled
- May damage public health by causing damage in the ozone layer.

Serious health hazards (Symbol: internal damage)



The symbol represents serious long term threats to health. The picture in the sign shows a person with internal damage)

- Can lead to death if swallowed or inhaled
- Causes damage to organs
- May cause damage to organs
- Can damage fertility or affect pregnancies
- Can lead to/ is suspected of causing cancer
- Can lead to/ is suspected of causing genetic defects

- Can lead to asthma or breathing difficulties if inhaled

Dangerous for the environment (Symbol: a dead tree and dead fish)



This COSHH symbol represents the risk of substances that may cause serious damage, either immediate or long term to multiple components of an environment. The symbol shows a dead tree alongside a dead fish.

- Highly toxic to marine life with long-lasting effects
- Toxic to marine life with long-lasting effects
- Most commonly found in pesticides, biocides, petrol, turpentine etc

Why is knowing what the COSHH symbols mean important in health and safety?

Knowing the **COSHH** symbols is crucial to ensure you and your employees are properly informed on the relevant dangers of their workplace. These new symbols replace some of the older orange ones which were active until 2017. Good knowledge of the new COSHH symbols will help you stay compliant with health and safety regulations and reduce the number of incidents that occur in your workplaces.

In addition to knowledge of what the COSHH symbols mean, you should also be comfortable filling out a **COSHH risk assessment** and have a basic understanding of the **COSHH regulations** themselves.

COSHH Assessment Process

