

# Health & Safety Policy

<b>This policy has been written for:</b>	All Valence School staff and students, volunteers, visitors and contractors
<b>Copies of this policy may be obtained from:</b>	The School website - <a href="https://www.valenceschool.com/">https://www.valenceschool.com/</a> It is available as a hard copy on request from Reception
<b>Participants and consultees in the formulation of this policy:</b>	The Principal, Senior Leadership Team & School Governing body
<b>The lead member of staff is:</b>	Principal
<b>Edition, Review frequency and dates:</b>	Date written: <b>November 2024</b> Date agreed and ratified by Governors: <b>17 December 2024</b> Date of next review: <b>November 2025</b> <i>This policy will be reviewed at least annually and/or following any updates to national and local guidance and procedures.</i>
<b>The Rationale and Purpose of this policy:</b>	This is a core policy that forms part of the induction for all staff.  It is a requirement that all members of staff have access to this policy and sign to say they have read and understood its contents.
<b>Acknowledgement:</b>	The format and content of this document incorporates information available through Kent County Council's KELSI resource pages & The Education People.
<b>Key Personnel:</b>	<p><b>Matt Strange</b> (Principal) Contact details: email: <a href="mailto:mstrange@valence.kent.sch.uk">mstrange@valence.kent.sch.uk</a> tel: 01959 56216 (ext 1100) / 07894 483673</p> <p><b>Lisa Kavanagh</b> (Vice Principal – Head of Safeguarding &amp; Social Care) Contact details: email: <a href="mailto:lkavanagh@valence.kent.sch.uk">lkavanagh@valence.kent.sch.uk</a> tel: 01959 567810 (ext 1103) / 07912 124724</p> <p><b>Brian Davies</b> (Chair of Governors &amp; and named whistle blowing contact within Governing Body) Contact details: email: <a href="mailto:bdavies@valence.kent.sch.uk">bdavies@valence.kent.sch.uk</a></p> <p><b>Carys Long</b> (Governor for Child Protection &amp; Safeguarding) Contact details: email: <a href="mailto:clong@valence.kent.sch.uk">clong@valence.kent.sch.uk</a></p>

## Introduction and Ethos

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 sets out a duty of care on employers to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees whilst at work. Further legislation states that every employer shall make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the 'foreseeable' risks that employees might face in the course of their duties.

The Governing Body is committed to ensuring staff, volunteers and contractors enjoy a safe working environment. The School recognises that there are occasions when teaching, support, administrative, grounds or peripatetic staff may be required, or chose, to work alone in isolated situations and there may be an increased risk to the health and safety of its employees whilst working alone. This policy sets out our approach in both identifying these risks and adequately managing them. Any questions regarding its operation should be addressed to the Principal.

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## Aims

Our school aims to:

Provide and maintain a safe and healthy environment.

Establish and maintain safe working procedures amongst staff, students, and all visitors to the school site.

Have robust procedures in place in case of emergencies.

Ensure that the premises and equipment are maintained safely and are regularly inspected.

## Legislation

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education on [health and safety in schools](#) and the following legislation:

[The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974](#), which sets out the general duties employers have towards employees and duties relating to lettings

[The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992](#), which require employers to make an assessment of the risks to the health and safety of their employees

[The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999](#), which require employers to carry out risk assessments, make arrangements to implement necessary measures, and arrange for appropriate information and training

[The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002](#), which require employers to control substances that are hazardous to health

[The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations \(RIDDOR\) 2013](#), which state that some accidents must be reported to the Health and Safety Executive and set out the timeframe for this and how long records of such accidents must be kept

[The Health and Safety \(Display Screen Equipment\) Regulations 1992](#), which require employers to carry out digital screen equipment assessments and states users' entitlement to an eyesight test

[The Gas Safety \(Installation and Use\) Regulations 1998](#), which require work on gas fittings to be carried out by someone on the Gas Safe Register

[The Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005](#), which requires employers to take general fire precautions to ensure the safety of their staff

[The Work at Height Regulations 2005](#), which requires employers to protect their staff from falls from height

The school follows [national guidance published by Public Health England](#) when responding to infection control issues.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### 3.1 The Governing Body

The governing body has ultimate responsibility for health and safety matters in the school, but will delegate day-to-day responsibility to the Principal

The governing body has a duty to take reasonable steps to ensure that staff and students are not exposed to risks to their health and safety. This applies to activities on or off the school premises.

The governing body as the employer, also has a duty to:

Assess the risks to staff and others affected by school activities in order to identify and introduce the health and safety measures necessary to manage those risks

Inform employees about risks and the measures in place to manage them

Ensure that adequate health and safety training is provided

The governing body will identify one or more governors to oversee health and safety on an annual basis.

### 3.2 Principal

The Principal is responsible for health and safety day-to-day. This involves:  
Implementing the health and safety policy.

Ensuring there is enough staff to safely supervise students.

Ensuring that the school building and premises are safe and regularly inspected  
Providing adequate training for school staff.

Reporting to the governing board on health and safety matters.

Ensuring appropriate evacuation procedures are in place and regular fire drills are held.

Ensuring that in their absence, health and safety responsibilities are delegated to another member of staff.

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Ensuring all risk assessments are completed and reviewed.

Monitoring cleaning contracts, and ensuring cleaners are appropriately trained and have access to personal protective equipment, where necessary .

In the Principal's absence the Vice Principals assume the above day-to-day health and safety responsibilities.

### **3.3 Health and safety leads**

Health and Safety is delegated to the leads for the areas and activities for which they are responsible: Teaching & Leadership Team for teaching and learning teams; Residential Education Provision Managers for the residential teams; departmental heads for professional services. Health and safety in relation to the site is delegated to the Site Manager. Issues to be discussed at team meetings and escalated to the Senior Leadership Team as necessary.

### **3.4 Staff**

School staff have a duty to take care of students in the same way that a prudent parent would do so.

Staff will:

Take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by what they do at work.

Co-operate with the school on health and safety matters.

Work in accordance with training and instructions.

Inform the appropriate person of any work situation representing a serious and immediate danger so that remedial action can be taken.

Model safe and hygienic practice for students.

Understand emergency evacuation procedures and feel confident in implementing them.

### **3.5 Students and parents**

Students and parents are responsible for following the school's health and safety advice, on-site and off-site, and for reporting any health and safety incidents to a member of staff.

### **3.6 Contractors**

Contractors will agree health and safety practices with the Principal before starting work. Before work begins the contractor will provide evidence that they have completed an adequate risk assessment of all their planned work.

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## **Site Security**

Senior Leaders on call, the Business Manager and Site Supervisor are responsible for the security of the school site in and out of school hours. The Site Supervisor is responsible for visual inspections of the site, and for fire alarm system.

Senior leaders, the Site Supervisor and resident Domestic Assistant are key holders and will respond to an emergency.

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## **Fire**

Emergency exits, assembly/refuge points and assembly/refuge point instructions are clearly identified by safety signs and notices. Fire risk assessment of the premises will be reviewed regularly.

Emergency evacuations are practised at least once a term.

The fire alarm is a loud continuous alarm in a building where an activation takes place and an intermittent alarm in other buildings.

Main Building (Bells) and All Other Areas – PLC Block/Bungalow 7-8, Bungalow 1-6, Harness & Stable, Cedar & Knoll (Sounders & Strobes)

Fire alarm testing will take place once a week.

New staff will be trained in fire safety and all staff and students will be made aware of any new fire risks.

In the event of a fire:

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The alarm will be raised immediately by whoever discovers the fire and emergency services contacted. Evacuation procedures will also begin immediately.

Fire extinguishers may be used by staff only, and only then if staff are trained in how to operate them and are confident they can use them without putting themselves or others at risk.

Staff and students will congregate at the assembly points which are listed in the Fire Procedure.

A register of students is maintained by reception or when it is closed by the on-duty Residential Education Provision (REP) Manager. The register is used to enable a roll call to be undertaken.

The Senior Leader on call will take a register of all staff.

Staff and students will remain at external assembly points until the emergency services say it is safe to re-enter.

The school has individual arrangements in place for the evacuation of residential students outside of the school day including when they are in bed. All students have Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPS).

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## COSHH

Schools are required to control hazardous substances, which can take many forms, including:

Chemicals

Products containing chemicals

Fumes

Dusts

Vapours

Mists

Gases and asphyxiating gases

Germ that cause diseases, such as leptospirosis or legionnaires disease

Control of substances hazardous to health (COSHH) risk assessments are completed by site and domestic managers and the Swimming Pool Supervisor and circulated to all employees who work with hazardous substances. Staff will also be provided with protective equipment, where necessary.

Staff use and store hazardous products in accordance with instructions on the product label. All hazardous products are kept in their original containers, with clear labelling and product information.

All substances that may be harmful to students are locked away when not in use by a staff member.

Any hazardous products are disposed of in accordance with specific disposal procedures.

Emergency procedures, including procedures for dealing with spillages, are displayed near where hazardous products are stored and in areas where they are routinely used.

### 6.1 Gas safety

Installation, maintenance and repair of gas appliances and fittings will be carried out by a competent Gas Safe registered engineer.

Gas pipework, appliances and flues are regularly maintained.

All rooms with gas appliances are checked to ensure that they have adequate ventilation.

### 6.2 Legionella

A water risk assessment is arranged by Kent Property and Infrastructure Support every two years in line with statutory requirements. The Site Manager is responsible for ensuring that the identified operational controls are conducted and recorded.

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The risks from legionella are mitigated by for example, taking water temperatures and recording these and de-scaling shower heads.

### **6.3 Asbestos**

Kent Property and Infrastructure Support arrange for a management asbestos survey to be carried out every three years in line with its policy.

Staff are briefed on the hazards of asbestos, the location of any asbestos in the school and the action to take if they suspect they have disturbed it.

Arrangements are in place to ensure that contractors are made aware of any asbestos on the premises and that it is not disturbed by their work .

Contractors will be advised that if they discover material which they suspect could be asbestos, they will stop work immediately until the area is declared safe.

A record is kept of the location of asbestos that has been found on the school site and this is retained in reception.

### **6.4 Oxygen**

The school uses and stores oxygen both for prescribed use and for emergency first aid purposes, administered by a nurse. The arrangements for administration, transportation and safe storage are outlined in the school's Oxygen Policy

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## **Equipment**

All equipment and machinery is maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. In addition, maintenance schedules outline when extra checks should take place.

When new equipment is purchased, it is checked to ensure that it meets appropriate educational standards.

All equipment is stored in the appropriate storage containers and areas. All containers are labelled with the correct hazard sign and contents.

### **7.1 Electrical equipment**

All staff are responsible for ensuring that they use and handle electrical equipment sensibly and safely.

Any student or volunteer who handles electrical appliances does so under the supervision of the member of staff who so directs them.

Any potential hazards will be reported to the maintenance team immediately. Outside of school hours they will be reported to the senior member of staff on call.

Permanently installed electrical equipment is connected through a dedicated isolator switch and adequately earthed.

Only trained staff members can check plugs.

Where necessary a portable appliance test (PAT) will be carried out by a competent person.

All isolators' switches are clearly marked to identify their machine.

Electrical apparatus and connections will not be touched by wet hands and will only be used in dry conditions.

Maintenance, repair, installation, and disconnection work associated with permanently installed or portable electrical equipment is only carried out by a competent person.

### **7.2 PE equipment**

Staff are taught how to carry out and set up PE equipment safely and efficiently.

Any concerns about the condition of the gym floor or other apparatus will be reported to the maintenance team.

### **7.3 Display screen equipment**

All staff who use computers daily as a significant part of their normal work have a display screen equipment (DSE) assessment carried out. 'Significant' is taken to

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be continuous/near continuous spells of an hour or more at a time. The DSE Self-Assessment is located on the shared drive.

Staff identified as DSE users are entitled to an eyesight test for DSE use upon request, and at regular intervals thereafter, by a qualified optician (and corrective glasses provided if required specifically for DSE use). Any advice or support is referred to HR.

#### **7.4 Specialist equipment**

Specialist equipment such as wheelchairs are not the responsibility of the School but the School monitors the condition and safety of wheelchairs and will make minor repairs and adjustments as required.

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### **Lone Working**

Lone working may include holiday and weekend working and within the Community Shop and staff must refer to the lone working guidance.

Potentially dangerous activities, such as those where there is a risk of falling from height, will not be undertaken when working alone. If there are any doubts about the task to be performed then the task will be postponed until other staff members are available.

If lone working is to be undertaken, a colleague, friend or family member will be informed about where the member of staff is and when they are likely to return.

The lone worker will ensure that they are medically fit to work alone.

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### **Working at height**

We will ensure that work is properly planned, supervised and carried out by competent people who have been trained and who have the skills, knowledge and experience to do the work.

In addition:

Ladders for working at height are stored in secured sheds and managed by maintenance staff.

Students are prohibited from using ladders.

Staff will wear appropriate footwear and clothing when using ladders.

Contractors are expected to provide their own ladders for working at height.

Before using a ladder, staff are expected to conduct a visual inspection to ensure its safety.

Access to high levels, such as roofs, is only permitted by trained persons.

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### **Manual Handling**

#### **10.1 Objects**

It is up to individuals to determine whether they are fit to lift or move equipment and furniture. If an individual feels that to lift an item could result in injury or exacerbate an existing condition, they will ask for assistance.

The school will ensure that proper mechanical aids and lifting equipment are available in school, and that staff are trained in how to use them safely.

Staff and students are expected to use the following basic manual handling procedure:

Plan the lift and assess the load. If it is awkward or heavy, use a mechanical aid, such as a trolley, or ask another person to help.

Take the more direct route that is clear from obstruction and is as flat as possible. Ensure the area where you plan to offload the load is clear.

When lifting, bend your knees and keep your back straight, feet apart and angled out. Ensure the load is held close to the body and firmly. Lift smoothly and slowly and avoid twisting, stretching and reaching where practicable.

#### **10.2 People**

The moving and handling of students is a core activity of the School and is carried out in accordance with best guidance and practice. Staff are trained on an annual basis and a Moving and Handling team monitor the moving and handling practices

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carried out in the School. There is a reporting system for any breaches of moving and handling procedures.

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## Off-site Visits

When taking students off the school premises, we will ensure that:  
Risk assessments will be completed where off-site visits and activities require them.

All off-site visits are appropriately staffed.

Staff will take a school mobile phone, a portable first aid kit, information about the specific medical needs of students along with the parents' contact details.

There will always be at least one first aider with a current paediatric first aid certificate on school trips and visits, as required by the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## Lettings

This policy applies to lettings. Those who hire any aspect of the school site or any facilities will be made aware of the content of the school's health and safety policy and will have responsibility for complying with it.

## Violence at Work

We believe that staff should not be in any danger at work and will not tolerate violent or threatening behaviour towards our staff.

All staff will report any incidents of aggression or violence (or near misses) directed to themselves to their line manager/Principal immediately. This applies to violence from students, visitors or other staff.

Also refer to the Dignity at Work policy.

## Smoking

Smoking and vaping are not permitted anywhere on the school premises including all areas from the A25.

## Infection Prevention and Control

The School follows national guidance published by Public Health England (PHE) when responding to infection control issues. We will encourage staff and students to follow this good hygiene practice, outlined below, where applicable. Where students are unable to carry out good hygiene practices staff will facilitate them to do so as far as it is practically possible

### 15.1 Handwashing

Wash hands with liquid soap and warm water, and dry with paper towels  
Always wash hands after using the toilet, before eating or handling food, and after handling animals.

Cover all cuts and abrasions with waterproof dressings.

### 15.2 Coughing and sneezing

Cover mouth and nose with a tissue.

Wash hands after using or disposing of tissues.

Spitting is discouraged.

### 15.3 Personal protective equipment

Wear disposable non-powdered vinyl or latex-free CE-marked gloves and disposable plastic aprons where there is a risk of splashing or contamination with blood/body fluids (for example, nappy or pad changing).

Wear goggles if there is a risk of splashing to the face.

Use the correct personal protective equipment when handling cleaning chemicals.

### 15.4 Cleaning of the environment

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Clean the environment frequently and thoroughly. This includes surfaces and equipment used by students.

### **15.5 Cleaning of blood and body fluid spillages**

Clean up all spillages of blood, faeces, saliva, vomit, nasal and eye discharges immediately and wear personal protective equipment.

When spillages occur, clean using a product that combines both a detergent and a disinfectant and use as per manufacturer's instructions. Ensure it is effective against bacteria and viruses and suitable for use on the affected surface.

Never use mops for cleaning up blood and body fluid spillages – use disposable paper towels and discard clinical waste as described below.

Make spillage kits available for blood spills.

### **15.6 Laundry**

Wash laundry in a separate dedicated facility.

Wash soiled linen separately and at the hottest wash the fabric will tolerate.

Wear personal protective clothing when handling soiled linen.

Bag children's soiled clothing to be sent home, never rinse by hand.

### **15.7 Clinical waste**

Always segregate domestic and clinical waste, in accordance with local policy.

Used nappies/pads, gloves, aprons and soiled dressings are stored in correct clinical waste bags in foot-operated bins.

Remove clinical waste with a registered waste contractor.

Remove all clinical waste bags when they are two-thirds full and store in a dedicated, secure area while awaiting collection.

### **15.8 Animals**

Wash hands before and after handling any animals.

Keep animals' living quarters clean and away from food areas.

Dispose of animal waste regularly and keep litter boxes away from students.

Supervise students when playing with animals.

Seek veterinary advice on animal welfare and animal health issues, and the suitability of the animal as a pet.

### **15.9 Students vulnerable to infection**

Some medical conditions make students vulnerable to infections that would rarely be serious in most children. The school will normally have been made aware of such vulnerable children. These children are particularly vulnerable to chickenpox, measles or slapped cheek disease (parvovirus B19) and, if exposed to either of these, the parent/carer will be informed promptly and further medical advice sought. Advise these children to have additional immunisations, for example for pneumococcal and influenza.

### **15.10 Exclusion periods for infectious diseases**

The school will follow recommended exclusion periods outlined by Public Health England.

In the event of an epidemic/pandemic, we will follow advice from Public Health England about the appropriate course of action.

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## **New and Expectant Mothers**

Risk assessments will be carried out whenever any employee or student notifies the school that they are pregnant.

Appropriate measures will be put in place to control risks identified. Some specific risks are summarised below:

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Chickenpox can affect the pregnancy if a woman has not already had the infection. Expectant mothers should report exposure to antenatal carer and GP at any stage of exposure. Shingles is caused by the same virus as chickenpox, so anyone who has not had chickenpox is potentially vulnerable to the infection if they have close contact with a case of shingles.

If a pregnant woman comes into contact with measles or German measles (rubella), she should inform her antenatal carer and GP immediately to ensure investigation.

Slapped cheek disease (parvovirus B19) can occasionally affect an unborn child. If exposed early in pregnancy (before 20 weeks), the pregnant woman should inform her antenatal care and GP as this must be investigated promptly.

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## Occupational Stress

We are committed to promoting high levels of health and wellbeing and recognise the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors through risk assessment.

Systems are in place within the school for responding to individual concerns and monitoring staff workloads.

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## Accident Reporting

### 18.1 Accident Reporting

Any accident, near-miss or concern involving a student will be promptly reported to the DSL / Senior on Call and recorded on the CPOMS system.

Accidents to staff, visitors, contractors or others (where a student is not involved) must also be reported to the DSL / Senior on call initially or to the site manager if it occurs during the school holiday period. The accident must then be recorded on an Accident Form available from Reception and returned to Reception as soon as possible. Details will be forwarded to the Principal within 24 hours or to the Vice Principals when the Principal is on leave. The Principal will determine the response and allocate an appropriate investigating officer as required. The investigating officer will report any findings to the Principal within 3 days.

Records will be stored securely in the Accident Folder and in the case of contractors and visitors, retained by the school for a period of three years, in accordance with Regulation 25 of the Social Security (Claims and Payments) Regulations 1979.

For staff and volunteers, a copy of the record will be retained in their Personnel file for future reference.

### 18.2 Reporting to the Health and Safety Executive

The Head of Safeguarding and Social Care will keep a record of any accident which results in a reportable injury, disease, or dangerous occurrence as defined in the RIDDOR 2013 legislation (regulations 4, 5, 6 and 7).

Head of Safeguarding and Social Care will report these to the Health and Safety Executive as soon as is reasonably practicable and in any event within 10 days of the incident.

Reportable injuries, diseases or dangerous occurrences include:

Death

Specified injuries. These are:

- Fractures, other than to fingers, thumbs and toes
  - Amputations
  - Any injury likely to lead to permanent loss of sight or reduction in sight
  - Any crush injury to the head or torso causing damage to the brain or internal organs
  - Serious burns (including scalding)
  - Any scalping requiring hospital treatment
  - Any loss of consciousness caused by head injury or asphyxia
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- Any other injury arising from working in an enclosed space which leads to hypothermia or heat-induced illness, or requires resuscitation or admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours

Injuries where an employee is away from work or unable to perform their normal work duties for more than 7 consecutive days.

Where an accident leads to someone being taken to hospital.

Where something happens that does not result in an injury but could have done.

Near-miss events that do not result in an injury, but could have done. Examples of near-miss events relevant to schools include, but are not limited to:

- The collapse or failure of load-bearing parts of lifts and lifting equipment
- The accidental release of a biological agent likely to cause severe human illness
- The accidental release or escape of any substance that may cause a serious injury or damage to health
- An electrical short circuit or overload causing a fire or explosion

### 18.3 Notifying parents

Parents will be informed of any accident or injury sustained by a pupil, and any first aid treatment given, on the same day, or as soon as reasonably practicable.

### 18.4 Reporting to Ofsted and child protection agencies

The on duty Designated Safeguarding Lead will notify Ofsted of any serious accident, illness, or injury to, or death of, a student while in the school's care. This will happen as soon as is reasonably practicable, and no later than 14 days after the incident.

The on duty Designated Safeguarding Lead will also notify relevant children's social services departments of any serious accident or injury to, or the death of, a student while in the school's care.

## Training

Our staff are provided with health and safety training as part of their induction process.

There is on-going training for health and safety including fire training, risk assessments, moving and handling and training for specific roles and responsibilities.

## Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed by the Health and safety Committee annually unless any significant changes occur to the premises or operation of the School. At every review, the policy will be approved by the governing body

## Links with other policies

This health and safety policy links to the following policies/procedures:

- Asbestos procedures
- Accessibility Plan
- Behaviour Management
- Contractors' procedure
- COSHH procedures
- Dignity at Work Policy
- First aid Policy
- Fire Safety Policy
- Medicine Management Policy
- Moving and Handling Policies
- Personal Care Policy
- Physical Intervention and Positive handling procedures

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- Pool Standard Operating Procedures
  - Risk assessment
  - Supporting students with medical conditions policy
  - Students falling from a wheelchair procedure
  - Severe weather procedures
  - Transport policy