Health & Safety Policy for Cardinal Newman Catholic School Science Department

December 2025

Health & Safety Policy for Science Department

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Summary guidelines for staff

All teachers, technicians and support staff

1. Teachers and technicians have a general duty to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves, of other members of staff and of pupils. They have specific duties: to be familiar with this health and safety policy, its updates, the texts to which it refers and any Appendices. They must cooperate with the employer's instructions, observe the requirements of this policy and fulfil any special responsibilities it gives them. They must cooperate with colleagues in their specific health & safety duties. They have a duty to report to local management any failure of equipment that has a health & safety function.
2. Staff practice must set a good example to pupils and be consistent with pupil laboratory rules, eg, over the wearing of eye protection.
3. Staff must be familiar with emergency drills and with the location in each science room of: the escape route; fire-fighting equipment; the eye wash station; the main gas cock; the main electricity switch and the nearest spill kit.
4. Laboratories must be left safe. Special arrangements must be made for equipment which has to be left running overnight and hazardous equipment which has to be left out. In general, all gas taps should be completely turned off and all mains-operated apparatus switched off. At the end of the day, if practicable, gas should also be turned off at the laboratory main gas cock and electricity at the laboratory main switch.
5. Eating, drinking and the application of any sort of cosmetics must not take place in laboratories, storage areas or preparation rooms. No-one is allowed to drink from water bottles.
6. When staff are alone in the science department, nothing should be done which could lead to an accident requiring remedial measures. A teacher or technician must assess risks very carefully before conducting any practical operation in such circumstances.
7. In general, pupils must not be left unsupervised in a laboratory. Staff needing to leave a class briefly must assess the risks of doing so, perhaps arranging for temporary supervision by a neighbouring member of staff. Special arrangements may be needed for senior students doing project work, depending on the hazards involved, eg, an experienced member of staff in an adjacent room.
8. Science laboratories, preparation rooms and stores must be locked by staff when not in use. Special arrangements must be made if access is required to a fire-escape route. Pupils must never be allowed into preparation rooms unless 100% supervision can be guaranteed. Laboratories must only be used by teachers who are not scientists for teaching or registration after they have received special training. Laboratories must be available for teacher-supervised club activities only by special arrangement.

Teachers

1. At the beginning of each school year, teachers must make sure that their classes have copies of the student laboratory rules, see section 10, and issue them if necessary. They should be stuck into an exercise book, work folder or similar place.
2. Teachers must enforce the student laboratory rules, reminding students of them often enough for them to be familiar. With new students, time should be spent explaining the rules, with appropriate demonstrations.
3. Lesson preparation should be adequate and include checking on risk assessments and, where necessary, the health & safety precautions required. Requisitions must not be handed in at the last minute; technicians must be given adequate time to prepare work safely. Time should be allowed for consulting more-senior colleagues where there is any doubt and to try out practicals, particularly those involving significant hazards. Teachers must only deviate from the scheme of work (for which the activities have been checked against model risk assessments), after considering a further risk assessment, checking with a subject specialist, possibly obtaining a special risk assessment from CLEAPSS. Teachers should explain precautions to students as part of their health & safety education, using the CLEAPSS *Student Safety Sheets*, where appropriate.
4. Open-ended investigations must be organised to allow the teacher to assess any risks and identify precautions before any hazards are met / practical work begins.
5. If, because of large class size or indiscipline, health and safety cannot be maintained during certain practical work, the work should be modified or abandoned. This decision should be reported to the Teacher in charge of Science.
6. A teacher is responsible for the health and safety of any of his/her classes taken by a trainee teacher. If the normal class teacher is absent, another science teacher must be given this responsibility by the Teacher in charge of Science.
7. Teachers in charge of courses are responsible for ensuring that technicians are familiar with the appropriate precautions needed to control any hazards which might be encountered in preparing equipment for their lessons and in clearing the equipment away. Class teachers may need to remind technicians of such warnings.

CARDINAL NEWMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOL, LUTON
SCIENCE DEPARTMENT HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY
Dec 2025

1. The role of this policy

This *Science Department Health & Safety Policy* should be read in conjunction with the employer's general Health & Safety Policy and the detailed arrangements for implementing that policy in this school. The purpose of this document is to record the arrangements made in the science department to implement the policy

This document is maintained by the science department. It is copied to all new members of staff, i.e., teachers, technicians, trainees, etc working in the department. Staff are expected to sign the list kept in the main prep room by the Senior Technician (for science staff) and on SMARTLOG (for all staff who work in Science) to show that they have received a copy. A reference copy, together with various Appendices, is kept in the main prep room available for consultation by staff and for inspection by visiting HSE inspectors or a representative of the employer. A copy of this document has been lodged in the school office and another passed to the Health and Safety Committee for adoption and review.

This document recognises the right of any or every trade union in the workplace to elect health & safety representatives for its members and its right to require a health & safety committee to be set up in the school. The science department will cooperate with any union health & safety representative to promote health, safety and welfare and will address any matters raised by or through such a representative in a manner appropriate to the level of risk.

2. General aims

Science teaching has an excellent health & safety record and this department is keen to promote practical work as an essential component of good science teaching. It is determined that spurious concerns about health and safety should not be allowed to inhibit good teaching. However, it is the duty of all members of the science staff, i.e. staff who work in the department occasionally, technicians, teaching assistants and other support staff (eg, special needs and bilingual staff) and trainees:

- to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions during work;
- to be familiar with this health & safety policy by periodic reference to it;
- to look out for any revisions;
- to follow its provisions, and
- to cooperate with other members of staff in promoting health and safety.

3. Health and safety roles

3.1 Duties, functions and tasks

The employer, St Thomas' Academy Trust, has the ultimate duty to ensure the health and safety of employees and others on the site (and hence in this department).

This employer has issued this policy.

The task of overseeing health and safety on this site has been delegated by the employer to the Trust Operations Manager and Trust Compliance Manager. Within the science department, this task is further delegated to the Teacher in charge of Science, who has the particular function of maintaining this policy document. See section 10 for the names of the staff members currently with specific H&S functions.

The next major review of this policy will take place before July 2026.

3.2 Communications

Communication of health & safety information is of the greatest importance and is the task of the Teacher in charge of Science with the assistance of subject specialists.

In this department, all staff are issued with this policy. A reference copy is kept in the main prep room. Any new instructions, restrictions or rescinded (lifted) restrictions made by the employer are communicated to all staff in writing as well as being attached to the reference copy of this policy.

3.3 Monitoring and checking

The employer expects the science department to monitor the implementation of this policy. Records of monitoring are kept by the Teacher in charge of Science.

Checklists on resources and facilities for termly use by technicians are customised from those suggested in CLEAPSS Guide L248 *Running a Prep Room*. The timetable for such checks is kept with the reference copy of this policy. Records of the checks are kept by the Senior Technician.

4. Training

The person with the task of seeing that training is provided is the Teacher in charge of Science.

Generally, this department follows guidance in the CLEAPSS documents G238, *Health and Safety Induction and Training of Science Teachers* and L234, *Induction and Training of Science Technicians,* suitably customised, to identify the training needs of staff.

Particular training functions are delegated as follows (to be read in conjunction with section 10).

Health & safety aspects of the work of newly-qualified teachers and other new teachers	Teacher in charge of Science
Health and safety of trainees on teaching practice	Teacher in charge of Science and the person in charge of each trainee or in charge of the lesson being taught by the trainee
Induction of newly-appointed technicians	Senior Technician
Immediate remedial measures and other emergency procedures (spills, bench fires, etc)	The teacher in charge of the lesson
Training in the use of specialist equipment, chemicals or procedures (in line with CLEAPSS guides G238 and L234, as customised)	Teacher in charge of Science, appropriate subject specialist, Senior Technician, lead technician for that subject
Health & safety training of non-science support staff	Teacher in charge of Science, Lead teacher of SEND, Cover Manager using CLEAPSS toolkits/resources/training
Health and safety of non-science teachers using laboratories	Teacher in charge of Science, Head of Year based in Science, Cover Manager using CLEAPSS toolkits/resources/training
Manual handling for all staff using laboratories	Teacher in charge of Science, Senior Technician using CLEAPSS toolkits/resources/training
Healthy and safe procedures for laboratory cleaners	Teacher in charge of Science, Senior technician using CLEAPSS toolkits/resources/training
Regular update training (covering new or changed regulations, new equipment etc)	The Teacher in charge of Science, Senior Technician

Records of the training for radiation safety received by members of the science staff are kept in the *Safety Check File.*

5. Risk assessments

Every employer is required under various regulations[1] to supply employees with a risk assessment before any hazardous activity takes place. (Common hazardous activities carried out in science departments are listed in the publications below.) Because it is impracticable for the employer to write risk assessments for each of the many activities in school science, this employer follows the recommendation of the Health and Safety Commission to adopt published 'model' or 'general' risk assessments which school science departments adapt to their local circumstances.

The employer has instructed that the following publications are to be used as sources of model risk assessments

CLEAPSS[2] publications generally

CLEAPSS, *Hazcards*, current edition

CLEAPSS, *Laboratory Handbook*, current edition

CLEAPSS, *Recipe Book,* current edition

CLEAPSS, L93, *Managing Ionising Radiations and Radioactive Substances*

Whenever a new course is adopted or developed, all activities (including preparation and clearing-up work) are checked against the model risk assessments and significant findings are incorporated into texts in daily use, i.e., the scheme of leaning, technician notes. See section 10 for the member of staff with the task of overseeing this process[3].

If a model risk assessment for a particular operation involving hazards cannot be found in these texts, a special risk assessment is obtained, following the employer's instructions, from CLEAPSS and experienced staff. In order to assess the risks adequately, the following information is collected.

- Details of the proposed activity.
- The age and ability of the persons likely to do it.
- Details of the room to be used, i.e., size, availability of services and whether or not the ventilation rate is good or poor.
- Any substance(s) possibly hazardous to health.
- The quantities of substances hazardous to health likely to be used, including the concentrations of any solutions.
- Class size.
- Any other relevant details, eg, high voltages, heavy masses, etc.

Since the scheme of learning has been checked against the model risk assessments, staff should deviate from it only if their proposed activities have been agreed with the Teacher in charge of Science/Head of Subject/experienced teacher.

We encourage the development of new practical activities (including on open evenings, at science clubs, etc) but these should be undertaken only after a prior check against model risk assessments and/or a special risk assessment has been obtained.

Where an activity must be restricted to those with special training, that restriction is included in a note on the text.

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[1] Risk assessments are required by the *Control of Substances Hazardous to Health* (*COSHH) Regulations*), the *Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations*, the *Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations (DSEAR)* and many others.

[2] Current versions of all CLEAPSS publications for secondary schools are available to members on the CLEAPSS website.

[3] See CLEAPSS guide L196, *Managing Risk Assessment in Science* and the guidance leaflet GL90 *Making and recording risk assessments in school science.*

For technicians' activities in and around the prep room, the assessments in CLEAPSS publication PS25, *Model Risk Assessments for Laboratory Technician Activities* have been customised and form an Appendix to this document, kept with the reference set in the main prep room.

6 Equipment and resources

6.1 Fume cupboards

The *COSHH Regulations* require the regular testing of fume cupboards (maximum interval 14 months) with a quick check before use. Testing normally takes place each year in November. The Senior Technician has the function of seeing that this happens. This employer has arranged a contract with Safelab who will be allowed access to carry out the tests.

All users have been trained to carry out a quick check that a fume cupboard is working before use.

Smoking cigarettes is not permitted in the school. However, **demonstrations of a 'smoking machine' are permitted in fume cupboards in designated laboratories**. The following laboratories fitted with efficient fume cupboards, or in which an efficient mobile fume cupboard could be used, are so designated S4, S6, S11, S1.

6.2 Electrical testing

To meet the requirements of the *Electricity at Work Regulations*, this employer requires portable electrical equipment to be inspected and tested regularly. The Senior Technician has the function of seeing that this happens within the science department. Testing normally takes place each year in December.

This employer has arranged a contract with Teacher in charge of Science who must be allowed access to carry out the work. This work will be carried out by the trained technician using a proper earth-bonding and insulation test set, following procedures in the CLEAPSS *Laboratory Handbook* Section 6. Completed schedules are kept in a computer file kept with the Premises Manager and are available for staff reference and for inspection by the employer's representative or an HSE Inspector.

See section 10 for the names of the staff members currently with these functions.

6.3 Radioactive sources

The employer's *Radiation Protection Adviser* (RPA) are identified in section 10.

This school follows the latest guidance in CLEAPSS Guide L93 *Managing Ionising Radiations and Radioactive Sources*.

The Standard Operating Procedures for the use of ionising radiations have been adapted from the CLEAPSS model in consultation with the RPA and it is a function of the Teacher in Charge to see that they are adhered to. Staff using ionising radiations can use the reference set that is filed centrally with this policy in the main prep room.

The *Radioactive Sources History* (i.e. authority to purchase, record of delivery, details of events in the life of the source and eventual certificate showing method of disposal) is kept by the Senior Technician with a copy in the main prep-room.

The *Use Log* (showing the times that any sources are removed from and returned to their store) is kept in the main prep room.

The *Monitoring Record* of tests for leakage of radioactive sources and contamination by radium sources is kept main prep room. Testing normally takes place every two years in July.

It is the function of the Senior Technician to ensure these records are kept up to date.

6.4 Pressure vessels

Pressure cooker needs periodic inspection under the *Pressure Systems Safety Regulations*. Inspection normally takes place each year in July.

In accordance with this employer's Code of Practice, the appropriate written scheme of examination is selected from CLEAPSS Guide G214b *Examining Autoclaves, Pressure Cookers, Model Steam*

Engines: Written Scheme of Examination, certified by the Senior Technician. Records of examinations are kept in the main prep room.

6.5 Animals, plants and microorganisms in schools

The hazards associated with the use of animals, plants and microorganisms are discussed in the texts listed in section 5 which also give advice on controlling them. This advice will be followed and any queries referred to the subject specialist for biology (see section 10).

6.6 Equipment safety

All staff selecting equipment for purchase will check that it is safe and suitable for the intended purpose (to comply with the *Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations*). Equipment listed by specialist educational equipment suppliers is taken to meet these *Regulations* but all other equipment, especially gifts, is treated with caution and carefully assessed. Advice on safety and suitability is sought from CLEAPSS and experienced teachers through publications and directly.

Any user who discovers a hazardous defect in an item of equipment must report it to the Senior Technician.

6.7 Personal protective equipment

The employer accepts the duty to provide eye protection, gloves and laboratory coats for employees where the risk assessment requires them (*Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations*). Prescription safety spectacles are to be ordered from reputable suppliers and the employer will meet the cost of the safety features. Laboratory coats are supplied by the science department and the cost of laundering can be claimed against income tax.

The employer expects eye protection to be available for students and visitors. Safety spectacles are provided for general use, with a set of goggles in each lab and used whenever the risk assessment requires them. The condition of the eye protection is checked regularly (see section 3.3, *Monitoring and checking*).

6.8 Chemicals

Offers of gifts of chemicals are not accepted.

The task of arranging safe storage of chemicals (and, where necessary, disposal), including highly-flammable liquids, in accordance with the requirements of the *Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations (DSEAR)* is given to the Senior Technician who will ensure that chemicals are stored securely, the risks of fire, explosion and spillage are minimised, labels are readable and that a spill kit is available and properly replenished.

See section 10 for the name of the staff member currently with this function.

Hazardous activities involving chemicals restricted to those who have received special training (see section 4, *Training*) are identified in the texts in daily use as part of the risk assessment (see section 5, *Risk assessments*).

6.9 Waste disposal

Waste chemicals and equipment are disposed of in an environmentally-responsible manner in accordance with relevant legislation. Chemical disposal follows guidance on CLEAPSS *Hazcards*. Other disposal follows relevant CLEAPSS guidance.

7 Activities and procedures

7.1 Outdoor activities

When planning any field trips etc, staff consult one or more of the following the CLEAPSS *Laboratory Handbook* and log the trip in EVOLVE

7.2 Manual handling and working at height

All regular operations involving lifting or carrying equipment, pushing trolleys, etc will be assessed to see if any may give rise to risks of injury (*Manual Handling Operations Regulations*) by undertaking online Manual Handling Course as part of Induction.

As it is sometimes necessary to carry chemicals or equipment through heavy fire doors, we have assessed risks under both the *Manual Handling Operations Regulations* and under the *Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order* and will always use two people, one to hold open the door, the other to carry the items or have installed special door closures to minimise risks. Occasional (i.e., one-off) manual-handling operations will be assessed by the staff member(s) before attempting them. Problems will be reported to the Head of Science who in turn will notify the Trust Compliance Manager as additional training may be needed.

See section 10 for the names of the staff members currently with these functions. Following risk assessments under the *Work at Height Regulations*, when it is impossible to avoid storage or display above head height, glass or other fragile items are never stored above head height and only light-weight and rarely-used items are stored there and powders in the chemical store if storage above head height is unavoidable. When displaying items at high level or fetching or replacing items stored at high level, step ladders or kick stools are used; staff never climb onto laboratory stools or benches.

7.3 Security

Access to laboratories and preparation rooms will be controlled to comply with the *Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations*. All laboratories and preparation rooms are to be kept locked at **all times** except when in use. It is the task of the staff member leaving such a room to see that the room is empty and that the door is locked. No class is allowed to be in a laboratory without adequate supervision.

Any non-science staff who have to supervise any class in a laboratory will receive brief training in laboratory rules. The guidance for such staff is filed as an Appendix to this policy in the reference copy kept in the main prep room and laminated copies to give to such staff are kept in the main prep room and to be included in all cover work supplied to lessons covered in labs.

7.4 Concern for others

All science areas are made safe for cleaners or contractors to work in before these persons are allowed to proceed.

8. Emergency procedures

8.1 Fire

Science staff will follow the normal school procedures in case of major fires. Advice on fire-fighting is given in sections 4 of the CLEAPSS *Laboratory Handbook*.

8.2 Spills

Trivial spills are dealt with using damp cloths or paper towels. Spills of any amount which do not give rise to significant quantities of toxic or highly flammable fumes (‘minor spills’) are dealt with by teachers or technical staff using a ‘spill kit’ prepared for this purpose in accordance with section 7 of the CLEAPSS *Laboratory Handbook*. Spill kits are kept in each lab in the teaching bench.

Major spills are those involving the escape of toxic gases and vapours or of flammable gases and vapours in significant concentrations. (Small amounts can be ‘major spills’ if spilt in s See section 4 for the name of the staff member currently with this function.

8.3 Injury

Science staff will follow the normal school procedures in cases that require first aid. Science staff are aware of how to carry out immediate remedial measures (eg, eye rinsing), while waiting for first aiders, after accidents which occur in science. See the most recent edition of the CLEAPSS *Laboratory Handbook* section 5. Instructions for immediate remedial measures are posted on the walls of all laboratories and prep rooms.

See section 4 for the name of the person responsible for coordinating training in immediate remedial measures.

8.4 Reporting procedures

Injuries or suspected injuries to a pupil or a member of staff, dangerous occurrences and instances of damage or theft will be reported using the standard school procedures. Following an injury, so that the Regulations (*RIDDOR*) can be complied with, the accident must be reported to MI room and the trust compliance manager (using EDIS 1 guidance) as quickly as possible.

Dangerous situations and incidents which might have resulted in injury (‘near-misses’) should be recorded in the book kept in the top draw of the ‘exams’ filing cabinet in the main prep room.

9 Laboratory rules for students

The rules for students during science lessons are as follows.

Laboratory Rules

The biggest danger in the lab is ***YOU!*** You are at risk when you don't understand the hazards or you are careless, or both. The person most likely to suffer from your mistakes is ***YOU!*** Report any accident or breakage to your teacher.

1. Only enter a lab when told to do so by a teacher. Never rush about or throw things in the lab. Keep your bench and floor area clear, with bags and coats well out of the way.
2. Follow instructions precisely; check bottle labels carefully and keep tops on bottles except when pouring liquids from them; only touch or use equipment and materials when told to do so by a teacher; never remove anything from the lab without permission.
3. Wear eye protection when told to do so and keep it on from the very start until all practical work is finished and cleared away.
4. When using naked flames (eg, Bunsen or spirit burners or candles), make sure that ties, hair, baggy clothing etc are tied back or tucked away.
5. Always stand up when working with hazardous substances or when heating things so you can quickly move out of the way if you need to.
6. Never taste anything or put anything in or on your lips/mouth in the laboratory. If you get something in your mouth, spit it out at once and wash your mouth out with lots of water. Tell your teacher.
7. Always wash your hands carefully after handling chemicals, microbes or animal and plant material.
8. If you are burnt or a chemical splashes on your skin, wash the affected part at once with lots of water. Tell your teacher.
9. Never put waste solids in the sink. Put them in the bin unless your teacher instructs you otherwise.
10. Wipe up all small spills and report bigger ones to your teacher.

10. Staff roles and Emergency contacts

Staff roles

Staff roles and/or emergency contacts updated on: July 2022.	
Advice on health & safety and all aspects of practical science generally	CLEAPSS ***Helpline*** 01895 251496. Email: science@cleapss.org.uk
Overseeing health and safety for the Trust	Trust Chief Operations Officer – Clark Campbell 07971436844
Overseeing health and safety in the science department	Teacher in charge of Science -Alex Raza internal tel ext 7539 (Mobil tel 07759481738)
Science department health & safety officer	Teacher in charge of Science -Alex Raza internal tel ext 7539 (Mobil tel 07759481738)
Senior technician	Karina Beilskyte internal telephone ext 7538
Various training functions	See table in section 4.
Subject specialist for consultation over health & safety matters in biology	Stephanie Welch
Subject specialist for consultation over health & safety matters in chemistry	Sandra Brown
Subject specialist for consultation over health & safety matters in physics	Buchi Emmanuel
Overseeing the checking of activities against the model risk assessments and recording significant findings	Teacher in charge of Science -Alex Raza
The person trained to test fume cupboards	A contracted service
The person trained to do electrical inspection and testing	A contracted service
The teacher in charge of radioactive sources	Teacher in charge of Science -Alex Raza
[The employer's Radiation Protection Adviser, RPA]	A contracted service (NDT MainCal Limited)
[The person considered competent to examine pressure vessels	A contracted service
[The person in charge of chemical storage and disposal]	Senior technician- Karina Beilskyte
[The person in charge of manual handling]	Senior technician- Karina Beilskyte
[The union health and safety representative(s)]	Mark Waterhouse (NASUWT) Shoala Hentzen (NEU)

Emergency contacts

Emergency advice: CLEAPSS can provide support and guidance with all of these situations.	CLEAPSS ***Helpline*** 01895 251496
Serious accident: Ambulance service	[999] / [9-999]
Serious accident: School first-aiders	Science first aiders- Charlotte Morgan (S1) Mark Waterhouse (S5) Karina Bielskyte (ext 7538) MI room internal tel 7508
Serious accident: **School health & safety officer**	MI Room internal tel 7508
Serious chemical theft: Police or Police anti-terrorist hotline	[999] / [9-999] or 0800 789 321
[*Serious accident:* Employer's health & safety officer]	Trust Compliance Manager – Jen Matthews (tel: 01582361631)
Major chemical spill: Fire & Rescue Service Chemical Incident Unit	[999] / [9-999]
Gas leak: Gas company	Transco tel 0800111999 if mains gas call 0800 111 999
[*Radiation accident:* Employer's RPA]	A contracted service (NDT MainCal Limited) Contact: Susan Archer (RPA Administrator) 07719 306473