

Working at Height Policy

Signed:

Chair: S. Gribbin

CEO: R. Swindells

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Review date: December 2027

Statement of intent

This policy applies to Collective Vision Trust and all its schools.

We recognise that there may be an increased risk to the health and safety of employees when working at height. This policy has been established to identify risks and manage the risks accordingly.

The school has a duty under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees. The school also has obligations under The Work at Height Regulations 2005 (as amended).

Within this policy, 'working at height' refers to situations where staff, in the course of their duties, work at heights and are physically isolated from colleagues, possibly without immediate access to assistance. Working at height applies to all work above ground level, not just work that requires a ladder.

The school adopts the definition of the HSE, which defines work at heights as any place where, if there were no precautions in place, a person could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury or death.

Note: The policy uses the term 'headteacher' that refers to the person legally named as the headteacher. In some schools this person may be referred to as the 'Executive Headteacher'. For these schools, if the action may be delegated to the Head of School, this policy will make that clear.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Work at Height Regulations 2005 (as amended)

This policy operates in conjunction with all other Trust and school policies.

Roles and responsibilities

The trust board, with the aid of the local governing committee will be responsible for:

- Ensuring appropriate procedures are in place for working at height which protect the safety of pupils, staff and other visitors to the school site.

The headteacher will be responsible for:

- Ensuring working at height risk assessments are undertaken as required.
- Authorising a list of approved working at height activities.
- Ensuring procedures are in place to secure the quality and safety of equipment used for working at height activities.
- Ensuring that only individuals with the appropriate training undertake work at height.

The site manager will be responsible for:

- Regularly checking equipment used for working at height activities and arranging for equipment to be replaced when needed.
- Ensuring any equipment used when working at height is used correctly and in line with the school's risk assessments.

Working at heights procedure

The headteacher will be responsible for ensuring suitable procedures are in place for undertaking risk assessments for all situations requiring work at height. These procedures will ensure that all involved are aware of the precautions and methods of work to be followed, including emergency action to be taken if necessary.

Working at height will be avoided where possible, but where work at height cannot be avoided, control measures will be implemented to ensure the risk and consequences of falls are prevented as much as possible. These measures will be implemented on a case-by-case basis, but may include:

- Taking into account weather conditions that could compromise safety.
- Undertaking as much work as possible from the ground.
- Checking that the place where work at height is to be undertaken is safe. Each place where people will work at height needs to be checked each time, before use.
- Preventing materials or objects from falling or, if it is not reasonably practicable to do so, taking suitable and sufficient measures to make sure no one is likely to be injured.
- Ensuring that workers can get safely to and from where they work at height.
- Ensuring equipment is suitable, stable and strong enough for the job, and maintained and checked regularly.

- Storing materials and objects safely to ensure they will not cause injury if they are disturbed or collapse.
- Workers ensuring that they do not overload or overreach themselves when working at height.
- Taking precautions when working on or near fragile surfaces.
- Considering emergency evacuation and rescue procedures.

An approved list of work at height activities will be established, outlining situations where work at height may be authorised, and the necessary precautions and work methods to be followed. Providing the activity is on the approved list, work at height may be deemed 'authorised'. Unless explicitly stated on the approved list, work at height will only be undertaken following authorisation from the headteacher.

It is the responsibility of the individual concerned to ensure all necessary precautions and safety measures are adhered to at all times, in accordance with their instructions and training.

Any person who becomes aware of circumstances involving work at height, where the existing control methods are ineffective must inform the headteacher or head of school as soon as possible.

Risk assessments will cover all work currently undertaken at heights, or proposed to be, where the risk may be increased by the work activity itself, or the lack of available assistance should something go wrong. Once relevant tasks are identified, the following will be considered:

- **Plant and equipment:** Plant and equipment used by individuals working at height will be assessed for suitability and safety.
- **Access and egress:** Some work at height may require access to locations that are difficult to access or egress. Assessments will consider whether these tasks are safe.
- **Lone working:** Work at height will not be undertaken when working alone.

Work equipment will be assembled and/or installed according to the manufacturer's instructions and in keeping with industry guidelines. Where the safety of the work equipment depends on how it has been installed and/or assembled, the headteacher will ensure it is not used until it has been inspected in that position by a competent person.

Any equipment exposed to conditions that may cause it to deteriorate, and result in a dangerous situation, will be inspected at suitable intervals appropriate to the environment and use. A record will be maintained of any inspection for types of work equipment, including guard rails, toe-boards, barriers or similar collective means of protection, and working platforms, both fixed and mobile.

Working platforms used for construction work and from which a person could fall more than two metres will be inspected:

- After assembly or installation in any position.
- After any event liable to have affected its stability.
- At intervals not exceeding seven days.

Where it is a mobile platform, a new inspection and report will not be required every time it is moved to a new location on the school premises.

Any equipment, such as a mobile elevating work platform (MEWP), which has come from an external supplier, will be accompanied by a clear indication to everyone involved, when the last thorough examination has been carried out.

Risk assessment

The school's risk assessment will include the following considerations:

- The safety of pupils, staff, visitors, contractors and the general public
- The hazardous nature of any general work at height on the site, e.g. environmental conditions
- The required competency level of staff to undertake work at height
- The required level of competence and ability to use access equipment
- The required level of supervision
- The safest equipment to use on site
- The condition of access equipment and its maintenance
- Other methods of safe access for higher risk or time-consuming jobs at height

Control measures

In order to manage general risks, the following control measures will be put in place. Members of staff working at height will:

- Not undertake work for which they are not trained.
- Take reasonable care of their health and safety.
- Not put themselves in danger.
- Know, and follow, safe working procedures.
- Wherever possible undertaken with another person
- Never rush or cut corners.
- Follow reasonable targets.
- Stop for regular breaks and, if possible, change activity after prolonged periods.
- Inform the headteacher of any relevant medical conditions.
- Inform the headteacher of any hazards or accidents encountered.

The following communication procedures will also be put in place:

- The worker will carry a mobile telephone at all times when working at height
- The worker will inform someone when they are working at height, how long they will be, and when they expect to be finished
- In the event that a worker has an accident or falls into difficulties, they are to use their mobile telephone to contact the headteacher, their nominated person, or the emergency services

First aid kits will be made available throughout the premises. Their locations will be communicated to all members of staff.

Training

The headteacher will ensure that only individuals with sufficient skills, knowledge and experience are employed to perform a task at height, providing, where necessary, the appropriate training by an accredited trade organisation.

Where staff are currently undergoing training, they will work under the supervision of somebody competent to work at heights.

Where a working at height activity is low-risk and of a short duration, competence requirements may be no more than making sure an employee receives instruction on how to use the equipment and appropriate on-the-job training.

Where a member of staff finds that they are required to use an item of access equipment on which they have not had instruction and/or training, or where they are unsure of correct or safe use, they will be required to contact the Director of Estates prior to use.

An up-to-date record of all instruction and training given to staff members will be maintained. Refresher training will be provided every three years.

This policy will be circulated to every staff member working at height, who will annually sign (this may be done electronically or by email receipt) a statement which affirms that they have:

- Received a copy of the policy.
- Read and understood the policy.
- Agreed to comply with the policy.

This policy will be included in the publication scheme on the school's website and will be made available to the public.