CHINTHURST SCHOOL

TRADITIONAL VALUES | MODERN TEACHING

Chinthurst Preparatory School

Work At Height Policy

Reviewed by TB/WB/SN/JV - September 2016

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Separate Document

This policy is in four sections:

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1.1 - Introduction

1.1.1 - The Working at Height Regulations 2005 (as amended) covers any work with a risk of injury by a fall from any height; this includes work below ground level. In 2007 45 workers died following a fall from height and 3750 were seriously injured. This is the largest cause of workplace deaths in the UK.

1.1.2 - The regulations place duties on employers, the self-employed, and any person that controls the work of others (for example facilities managers or building owners who may contract others to work at height).

1.2 - What is 'work at height'?

1.2.1 - A place is 'at height' if (unless these Regulations are followed) a person could be injured falling from it, even if it is at or below ground level. 'Work' includes moving around at a place of work (except by a staircase in a permanent workplace) but not travel to or from a place of work. For instance, a sales assistant on a stepladder would be working at height, but we would not be inclined to apply the Regulations to a mounted police officer on patrol.

1.3 - What do the Schedules to the Regulations Cover.

1.3.1 - They cover detailed requirements for:	**Schedule**
• collective fall prevention (e.g. guard rails and toe boards)	
• existing places of work and means of access for work at height	
• collective fall prevention (e.g. guard rails and toe boards)	
• working platforms	
• collective fall arrest (e.g. nets, airbags etc).	
• personal fall protection (e.g. work restraints, work positioning, fall arrest and rope access)	
• ladders and stepladders	
• inspection reports (for working platforms in construction only)	
• revocations.	

1.4 - Responsibilities – Headmaster

1.4.1 - The Headmaster must do all that is reasonably practicable to prevent injury due to falling.

1.4.2 - They all have a legal duty to ensure those under their care at Chinthurst School are safe so far as is reasonably practicable.

1.5 - Risk Assessment

1.5.1 - For all significant hazards, the Headmaster, in conjunction with staff, must carry out a written risk assessment of all WAH activities.

1.5.2 - Template risk assessments for working at height can be found in Appendix C.

1.5.3 - The Headmaster must consider the following hierarchy to decide upon the most suitable means to carry out any working at height at Chinthurst School.

1.5.4 - The Headmaster must:

AVOID **work at height where he can look at other means such as** (e.g. extendable tools for window cleaning)

Use work equipment or other measures to **PREVENT** falls where they cannot avoid work at height (e.g. guardrails, edge protection)

Where he cannot eliminate the risk of a fall, use work equipment or other measures to **MINIMISE** the distance and consequences of a fall (e.g. fall restraint harnesses).

1.5.5 - The Headmaster must ensure that all work at height:

- is necessary;
- is properly planned and organised;
- considers weather conditions that could endanger health and safety;
- is carried out by trained and competent people;
- is carried out in a safe environment;
- uses suitable equipment that is appropriately inspected;
- has the risks from fragile surfaces properly controlled;
- has the risks from falling objects properly controlled.

1.5.6 - The Headmaster must also:

- ensure that work is done at height only if it is safe to do so and there are, no other
- means to carry out the work (e.g. extendable tools)
- ensure that the work is properly planned, appropriately supervised, and carried out in as safe a way as is reasonably practicable;
- plan for emergencies and rescue;
- take all this into account in the risk assessment.

1.6 - Location

1.6.1 - The Headmaster must ensure the place where the work will be carried out (including the means of access) is safe and includes features to prevent falls where reasonably practicable. It may be necessary to segregate the area to ensure safety, (e.g. to reduce the risk of a ladder being hit by a vehicle).

1.7 - Edge protection (including guardrails)

1.7.1 - Edge protection is a physical barrier around a structure or location that prevents a person falling:

- an example of temporary edge protection is scaffolding or roofing

1.7.2 - Permanent edge protection is generally built into a structure (preferably during the initial construction of the structure) to protect areas where work may be carried out e.g. where air conditioning units or skylights etc need regular maintenance;

- architects should consider permanent edge protection at the initial design stage of new building; this can then be designed to enhance the aesthetics of the building.

1.7.3 - Also, persons intending to place plant on a roof e.g. air conditioning unit, should consider edge protection when deciding on a protected route of access;

- if working near skylights or other fragile areas, protection must be considered e.g. edge protection and/or by covering the areas with boards, as shown in the pictures below.

1.8 - Equipment

1.8.1 - All equipment used to work at height must be suitable for the task, kept in good condition and regularly inspected. This information must be recorded. Equipment that gives collective protection takes priority over personal protective equipment. Below is a list of examples of working at height equipment. This list is not exhaustive:

- work platforms (See Appendix A)
- crawling boards
- back / top of vehicles (there were 10 fatal accidents where workers fell off their transport in 2004/05 and seven deaths caused by materials falling off vehicles)
- safety harnesses
- ladders
- step ladders
- kick steps

1.8.2 - Using ladders should always be the last option and only used for access or for short duration tasks that takes 30 minutes or less.

1.9 - Fall Arrest Equipment and Harnesses

1.9.1 - If any risk of a fall remains then Headmaster and workers must minimize the distance that may be fallen. This can be achieved through the use of harnesses, scaffolding and/or the use of crash mats (inflatable safety mats) etc.

1.9.2 - Depending on the system used, these can prevent a fall or mitigate the distance and consequences of a fall. The selection of appropriate equipment and training on use is also a requirement.

1.10 - Working on Fragile Surfaces

1.10.1 - No one should control go onto or near a fragile surface unless that is the only reasonably practicable way for the worker to carry out the work safely, having regard to the demands of the task, equipment, or working environment.

1.10.2 - If anyone must work on or near fragile surfaces (sky lights, corrugated cement roofs or conservatories etc), it is essential to ensure they have suitable platforms, coverings, guardrails or other means of control to minimize the risk.

1.11 - Health Condition

1.11.1 - The physical condition of the people involved eg age, fitness, pregnancy and vertigo must always be taken into consideration for working at height.

1.12 - Responsibilities – Employees

1.12.1 - If you are an employee or working under someone else's control, you must:

- follow the procedures for working at height safely;
- report any safety hazard to them;
- use the equipment supplied (including safety devices) properly, following any training and instructions (unless you think that would be unsafe, in which case you should seek further instructions before continuing).

1.12.2 - No one can work at height unless there is suitable protection in place to reduce the risk of a fall.

1.12.3 - These tasks can include:

- Maintenance team retrieving balls of the roof
- roof repairs
- cleaning gutters
- changing light bulbs in high ceilings
- repairing high machinery e.g. air conditioning units on a roof etc
- some waste collection in open backed lorries
- hedge cutting
- cleaning windows

1.13 - Falling Items

1.13.1 - It is important to prevent injury from falling items while working at height. Any person working at height must ensure that their tools are secured and debris or other items will not fall on passers-by. This may mean segregating the area where work is being carried out.

1.14 - Weather Conditions

1.14.1 - Conditions should be considered before work begins. Working outside on a ladder in adverse weather conditions should be postponed to a safer time.

1.15 - Training

1.15.1 - It is essential that staff who work at height are competent to do so (or, if being trained, are supervised by a competent person). This includes involvement in organisation, planning, supervision and the supply and maintenance of equipment. Where other precautions do not entirely eliminate the risk of a fall occurring, (as far as it is reasonably practicable to do so) train those who will be working at height must be trained as to how to avoid falling and how to avoid or minimise injury to themselves should they fall.

1.15.2 - All WAH training will be carried out by James Vetch Dip Grad - Health & Safety Consultant Chinthurst School.

Appendix A

USE OF SAFE WORKING PLATFORMS

1. When the risk assessment identifies the only practicable way to carry out a task is to work at height, then the use of a safe working platform must be considered ahead of using ladders.

2. Safe Working Platforms can also be called - Tower Scaffolds, Mobile Access Towers, 'Towers', MEWPs ('Mobile Elevated Working Platforms', that include cherry pickers and scissor lifts).

3. There are many different types of safe working platform, so it is important to ensure that the right one is used for the task. This should be decided upon during the risk assessment.

4. **Tower scaffolds** are commonly used and have several advantages over using ladders and stepladders:

- provide edge protection
- able to move around more than when using a ladder
- able to take more weight
- more stable than a ladder
- longer working time
- more than one person can use it at a time

5. **Erecting/Dismantling a Tower Scaffold**

Tower scaffolds can be erected in a short space of time, but they can be dangerous if not correctly erected.

6. If a tower scaffold is going to be used:

- consider the location and ground. Is the tower scaffold too tall? Are there any nearby dangers like high voltage cables?
- consider the condition of the tower scaffold;
- use the manufacturers instructions and guidance manual to ensure it is erected correctly. Manufacturers/supplier must provide this information as must hire companies;
- the tower scaffold must be used on firm and level ground suitable for the type of tower scaffold used;
- lock the wheels and outriggers (stabilising legs) in place to secure the base;
- ensure there is suitable access to and from the work platform (for example internal ladders). You must not climb on the outside to the tower scaffold as this may topple it over;
- ensure that suitable edge protection is provided (guard rails and toe boards); if safe to do so, tie the tower to another structure to improve stability.

7. There are two approved safe methods for erecting/dismantling tower scaffolds, both of which have been approved by the Health and Safety Executive and the 'Prefabricated Access Suppliers' and Manufacturers' Association.'

- The first is to use an advanced guard rail system, which uses temporary guards that move up as the tower scaffold is built. This ensures that the worker is never exposed to the risk of a fall.

- The second is the 'through-the-trap' (3T) method as shown below. The worker reduces the risk of falling by working halfway through the trap door, so it is used as his/her fall protection.

8. **Stability**

Always make sure the tower scaffold is resting on firm level ground. Remember that overloading, hoisting materials up to the work platform and wind speed etc can affect the tower.

9. **Additional hazards:**

- **do not** lean ladders or other loads onto the tower scaffold, as the weight can push it over;
- **do not** overload the work platform;
- **do not** try to move the tower when workers or tools are still on it;
- **do not** climb on the outside of the scaffold tower;
- **do not** use the tower scaffold in adverse weather conditions;
- **do not** leave the tower scaffold unguarded if near the public or children;
- **do not** use a tower scaffold with broken or missing parts.

10. **Training**

Suitable and sufficient training must be carried out for all tower scaffolding.

Erecting a tower scaffold should only be carried out by a competent person (see paragraph 17 in the above Policy for training). If the tower is not erected correctly there may be a serious accident. Training can be provided by the manufacturer or supplier of the equipment. Training can also be provided by an outside organisation with suitable expertise or internal staff with the suitable experience and competence.

11. **Inspections and Reports**

To reduce the risk of using a dangerous tower scaffold, it must be inspected by a competent person prior to it being used. This person must have the experience, knowledge and qualifications to identify any problems.

12. Work platforms must be inspected:

- after assembly or alteration;
- after any event which may affect its stability (strong winds, change in ground conditions and impact damage etc);
- at intervals not exceeding seven days.

13. All inspection reports must be recorded and kept.

14. Using Mobile Elevated Work Platforms

Mobile Elevating Work Platforms (MEWPs) can provide a safe way of working at height. They:

- allow the worker to reach the task quickly and easily
- have guard rails and toe boards which prevent a person falling
- can be used in-doors or out
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15. MEWPs include cherry pickers, scissor lifts and vehicle-mounted booms. This guidance should help you to:

- choose the right MEWP for the job
- identify and manage the risks involved with working from MEWPs

16. Example checklist for selection and use of MEWPs

AREA	ISSUE	COMMENTS
Height	How high is the job from the ground?	
Applications	Do you have the appropriate MEWP for the job? (If you are not sure, check with the hirer or manufacturer.)	
Conditions	What are the ground conditions like - is there a risk of the MEWP becoming unstable or overturning?	
Operators	Are the people using the MEWP trained, competent and fit to do so?	
Obstructions	Could the MEWP be caught on any protruding features or overhead hazards, e.g. steelwork, tree branches or power lines? Is there passing traffic, and if so, what do you need to do to prevent collisions?	
Restraint	Do you need to use either work restraint (to prevent people climbing out of the MEWP) or a fall arrest system (which will stop a person hitting the ground if they fall out)? Allowing people to climb out of the basket is not normally recommended – do you need to do this as part of the job?	
Checks	Has the MEWP been examined, inspected and maintained as required by the manufacturer's instructions and daily checks carried out?	

Appendix B

1. SAFE USE OF LADDERS AND STEP LADDERS

The following information has been taken from HSE guidance and does not cover all areas i.e. selection and buying of ladders that are Class 123 Industrial or EN1314

1. Ladders/stepladders are one of the most common tools used for working at height. On average 13 people a year die at work falling from ladders and nearly 1200 suffer major injuries. More than a quarter of falls happen from ladders.

HSE's key message is that ladders should only be used for low-risk, short-duration work.

2. When Can Ladders Be Used?

Ladders can be used for work or access after the risks have been assessed and it is decided that the use of more suitable equipment cannot be justified due to the low risk and short duration of the task. **Using ladders should always be the last option.**

Ladders can also be used for low risk work where there are features on the site that mean a ladder must be used.

3. Short duration tasks take 30 minutes or less to complete depending upon the task.

4. How to Set up a Leaning Ladder

- carry out a daily pre-use check (including the ladder's feet);
- secure the ladder;
- ensure the ground is firm and level;
- if necessary use suitable device to level the footing;
- have a strong upper resting point for the ladder (not plastic guttering etc);
- if the ground is slippery, consider using a ladder footplate or securing the base in another way;
- the ladder's angle should be 75o. This equals **1 out for every 4 up**. This will ensure that the ladder will not slide down and will help reduce the risk of falling.

5. Using the ladder

- always grip the ladder when climbing;
- do not work off the top three rungs as these will provide a handhold;
- do not overload the ladder. Be aware of the ladder's safe working load. Only use ladders for light work, carrying 10kg or less;
- avoid carry items when climbing; use a tool belt or bag. If items must be carried always keep one hand on the ladder at all times.
- do not overreach when working from a ladder as this will destabilise the ladder and increase the risk of it toppling sideways;

- always keep 3 points of contact (two legs and upper body) on the ladder, as this will
- reduce the risk of the worker slipping and falling to the ground;
- keep both feet on the same rung when working. This will improve stability.
- avoid working side on (especially with stepladders) as this increases the risk of the ladder falling sideways, especially when force is being used such as when drilling into a hard material. It also increases the risk of your feet slipping off the rungs;
  if sideways working must be carried out, tie the ladder to a suitable object.

6. Where to use a Ladder

- Ladders and stepladders should only be used in safe locations:
- where they will not be struck by vehicles, or by protecting them with suitable barriers or cones;
- where they will not be pushed over by other hazards such as doors or windows, by securing doors (not fire exits) and windows where possible. If this is impractical, have a person standing guard at a doorway, or inform workers not to open windows until they are told to do so;
- where pedestrians are prevented from walking under them or near them, by using barriers, cones or (as a last resort) by a person standing guard at the base;
- where ladders can be put up at the correct angle of 75o;
- where the restraint devices on stepladders can be fully opened. Any locking devices must also be fully engaged

7. Establishing the Ladder or Stepladder is in a Safe Condition

Always make sure the ladder or stepladder is in good condition before using it by carrying out a visual check. The manager should also check the manufacturer's guidelines to confirm the number of written inspections needed for the equipment.

Check	Yes	No
Is the general condition of the ladder sound? (clean, dry, free from wet paint, oil and mud etc)		
Is the ladder free from cracks?		
Is the ladder free from paint that may hide any defects?		
Does the ladder have all its rungs		
Are the stiles (uprights) free from damage and bends?		
If the ladder is wooden, is it free from warps and splits?		
If the ladder is metal, is it free from corrosion?		
Is the ladder free of sharp edges and dents?		
Are the metal rungs straight and free from bends and damage		
Are the ladder's footpads in good condition?		
Are the rubber fittings in good condition?		

8. Example:

How would an employee safely get footballs from a flat roof, in compliance with the regulations? You would have to consider the safest and most suitable means to carry out the work.

9. The biggest risks are when an employee gets off the ladder and walks on to the roof, or is next to the edge, or is close to a fragile part of the roof (e.g. skylight). These situations are unacceptable unless there is a way to stop the person being injured due to a fall. The following must be considered:

- can the working on the unprotected flat roof be avoided – e.g. using a pole from doorway leading onto flat roof?
- can a fall from the roof be prevented e.g. installing edge protection or using a mobile elevating work platform (cherry picker) or tower scaffold?
- how can we minimize the effect of a fall, e.g. the site manager wearing a secured harness whilst on the roof?
- the least safe option would be to work from the ladder preferably for no more than 15 minutes (i.e. using an extendable pole to reach the footballs).

10. If the Headmaster of the site does not feel the controls are adequate, then s/he should not:

- allow any work to be carried out until adequate controls are in place.

11. If the work cannot be completed safely by the school, taking into consideration the above, the work should not be carried out and advice should be sought from a competent person, e.g Health & safety Consultant.

Is a ladder right for the job?

If you are not sure that it is right to use a ladder speak to your manager or supervisor.

Example of an Accident

Site manager broke his kneecap when he fell off a computer chair whilst trying to close a window at the end of the day. He was able to crawl to a phone to get help, otherwise could have been there all night!

ONLY INDUSTRIAL STRENGTH LADDERS SHOULD BE USED FOR WORK, NOT DOMESTIC LADDERS.