



## **Standards for School Premises – Wales NEU guidance for reps and local officers**

There is a vast range of legislation on health and safety matters which applies in whole or in part to schools. This briefing identifies the most relevant issues and the areas which they cover. It sets out the relevant provisions of the two most important sets of regulations on health, safety and welfare facilities for teachers.

### **The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992**

These regulations apply to all workplaces of all kinds, including schools. They are part of the 'six pack' of regulations implemented in 1992 as a result of EU legislation.

The regulations and their accompanying Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Approved Codes of Practice (ACoP) and guidance notes set out some very detailed requirements for standards at the workplace in terms of heating, lighting, standards for access and egress, welfare facilities, etc. The provisions of the Regulations, ACoP and guidance notes are set out in what is known as the Blue Book.

### **The Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999**

These regulations set out standards which specifically apply to schools. Some of their provisions, such as those on heating, can be more useful than those of the regulations above and others cover areas which are not covered in the Workplace Regulations. The standards in these regulations are not enforced by the HSE, unlike those of the Workplace Regulations but schools are expected to meet them.

The 1999 Education (School Premises) Regulations are the current version for Wales of regulations which first appeared in 1981. A watered-down version of these regulations now applies in England.

### **Health, safety and welfare standards in schools**

The following sections set out the minimum health, safety and welfare standards for accommodation and facilities in schools set out in the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 and the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999. The specific regulation(s) or relevant sections of the HSE ACoP and guidance notes are listed.

Many of the standards set out in the regulations are phrased in terms of 'suitable', 'sufficient' or 'adequate' provision. In many cases, these will be amplified in the accompanying ACoP or guidance. Where they are not, the NEU often considers that the expectations of its members in the school are the relevant standard to pursue.

#### **Toilet facilities for staff**

Toilets must be provided for staff that are readily accessible, adequately lit and ventilated, and kept in a clean condition. Separate facilities must be provided for men



and women unless each toilet is in its own room with a door capable of being secured from inside. Source: Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, Regulation 20.

Toilet facilities and washrooms for staff must be separate from those provided for pupils, except in the case of facilities provided for disabled people. Source: Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999, Regulation 4(2).

**Washing facilities for staff**

Washing facilities must be provided in the vicinity of every toilet, be supplied with hot and cold running water, must contain soap and towels or other means of drying hands, must be sufficiently ventilated and lit, and must be kept clean. Source: Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, Regulation 21.

**Minimum number of toilets and washbasins for staff**

The tables below show the minimum number of toilets and washbasins which should be provided for staff. As noted above, employers must provide separate toilets for use by men and women unless each toilet is in its own room with a door capable of being secured from inside.

Where men and women are provided with separate toilets, then separate calculations should be made for the men's facilities and women's facilities using this table.

Number of people at work	Number of WCs	Number of washbasins
1-5	1	1
6-25	2	2
26-50	3	3
51-75	4	4
76-100	5	5

Source: Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, Regulation 20/21: ACoP, paragraphs 201-202.

Where separate toilets are provided for men and women, the facilities provided for men will usually include urinals as well as WCs. The following table should be used to calculate the number of WCs and urinals required for men when both are provided rather than WCs alone.

Number of men at work	Number of WCs	Number of urinals
1-15	1	1
16-30	2	1
31-45	2	2
46-60	3	2
61-75	3	3
76-90	4	3
91-100	4	4



Source: Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, Regulation 20/21: ACoP, paragraphs 201-202.

Sufficient facilities must be provided to enable everyone at work to use them without undue delay. Consideration should be given to providing more toilets if, as is the case in schools, breaks are taken at set times and employees finish work together. Source: Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, Regulation 20: ACoP, paragraph 193.

### **Toilet and washing facilities for pupils**

All schools must contain at least a basic number of toilet fittings for pupils, based on one toilet for every ten pupils under the age of five; one toilet for every 20 pupils aged five and over; one toilet for every ten pupils in special schools. In each case the figure arrived at should be rounded up to the nearest whole even number. The number may need to be increased to ensure provision is adequate according to any special pupil requirements.

All schools must have separate washrooms for male and female pupils aged eight and over. In mixed washrooms and in washrooms for female pupils, all toilet fittings should be WCs.

In schools where most pupils are under 11, there must be as many washbasins as toilet fittings. In schools where most pupils are 11 or older, washrooms with one toilet fitting should include at least one washbasin and washrooms with two toilet fittings should contain at least two washbasins, while in all other washrooms the number of washbasins should be at least two thirds of the number of toilet fittings.

Nursery schools and schools with pupils under five should have one deep sink, shower or bath for every 40 such pupils. Again the figure arrived at should be rounded up to the next whole number.

Changing accommodation, including showers, must be provided for children over 11 taking PE.

Source: Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999, Regulation 3.

The number of cubicles for boys at least equals the number of urinals. Source: School toilets: good practice guidance for schools in Wales, p18.

### **Water supplies**

An adequate supply of wholesome drinking water must be provided for all persons at work in a workplace. The water must be readily accessible and a sufficient number of cups must be provided unless the source is a drinking fountain. (This provision does not cover pupils' access to drinking water.)

Source: Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, Regulation 22.



A school shall have a wholesome supply of water for domestic purposes including a supply of drinking water. (This provision can be used to support pupils' access to drinking water.)

Washbasins, baths and showers must have an adequate supply of hot and cold water. The temperature of hot water supplies to baths and showers must not exceed 43°C. Source: Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999, Regulation 22.

### **Staff accommodation: facilities for rest and to eat meals**

Employees must be provided with suitable and sufficient rest facilities at readily accessible places. Suitable rest facilities must be provided for pregnant women and nursing mothers at work.

Suitable and sufficient facilities must be provided for persons at work to eat meals where necessary. Source: Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, Regulation 25.

Eating facilities should include a facility for obtaining a hot drink, eg a kettle, vending machine or a canteen. Eating facilities should be kept clean and hygienic.

Facilities for pregnant women and nursing mothers to rest should be conveniently situated in relation to sanitary facilities and, where necessary, include the facility to lie down. Source: Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, Regulation 25: ACoP paragraphs 233 and 237.

Every school, other than a pupil referral unit, must include accommodation for use by teachers for work and social purposes. Every school with more than 120 pupils (other than pupil referral units), and all nursery and special schools, must also include a head teacher's room. Source: Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999, Regulation 6.

### **Accommodation for clothing**

Suitable and sufficient accommodation must be provided both for employees' clothing not worn during working hours (eg coats) and for special clothing worn at work but not taken home (eg protective clothing, overalls etc). Source: Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, Regulation 23.

Such accommodation should enable work and personal clothing to hang in a clean, warm, dry, well ventilated place where it can dry out during the course of the working day if necessary. The accommodation should consist of, as a minimum, a separate hook or peg for each worker. Source: Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, Regulation 23: ACoP, paragraph 218.

### **Medical accommodation**

Every school must include accommodation, including a washbasin, that is relatively near a WC, for medical or dental treatment of pupils and for the care of pupils during school hours. Source: Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999, Regulation 5.



## Heating

During working hours, the temperature in all workplaces inside buildings shall be 'reasonable'. Source: Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, Regulation 7.

The temperature in workrooms shall normally be at least 16°C unless much of the work involves severe physical effort, in which case the temperature should be at least 13°C. Source: Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, Regulation 6: ACoP, paragraph 43.

Where the temperature in a workroom would otherwise be unreasonably high, all reasonable steps should be taken to achieve a reasonably comfortable temperature. Where a reasonably comfortable temperature cannot be achieved, local cooling should be provided. In extremely hot weather, fans and increased ventilation may be used instead of local cooling. Source: Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, Regulation 6: ACoP, paragraphs 46 & 47.

Thermometers should be available at a convenient distance from every part of the workplace but need not be provided in every workroom. Source: Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, Regulation 6: ACoP, paragraph 57.

Every school room or other space shall have appropriate heating systems capable of maintaining the following temperatures where the external air temperature is -1°C:

- areas with normal level of physical activity (eg classrooms) 18°C
- areas with below normal level of physical activity (eg sick rooms) 21°C
- areas with above normal level of physical activity (eg gymnasias) 15°C

Source: Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999, Regulation 20.

Where part of the school is occupied, and has a heating system, and is colder than the appropriate temperature, it must be heated up to that temperature for as long as it is being used. Source: Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999, Regulation 20; Department for Education and Skills (DfES) guidance document 0029/2000, paragraph 80.

## Ventilation

'Effective and suitable' provision must be made to ensure that every enclosed workplace is ventilated by a sufficient quantity of fresh or purified air. Source: Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, Regulation 6.

The fresh air supply should not normally fall below 5-8 litres per second per occupant. Factors to be considered include the floor area and the nature of the work involved. Source: Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, Regulation 6: guidance, paragraph 38.

All occupied areas in a school building must have controllable ventilation at a minimum rate of 3 l/sec of fresh air for each of the maximum number of persons that the area will accommodate. All teaching accommodation, medical examination and sick rooms must



be capable of being ventilated at a rate of at least six air changes per hour. Source: Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999, Regulation 21.

### **Lighting**

Every workplace must have suitable and sufficient lighting which, so far as is reasonably practicable, should be by natural light. Source: Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, Regulation 8.

Each room or other space in a school building shall have lighting appropriate to its normal use. The maintained illuminance of teaching accommodation shall be not less than 300 lux on the working plane. Where visually demanding tasks are carried out, provision must be made for maintained illuminance of not less than 500 lux on the working planes. The 'glare index' must not exceed 19. Source: Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999, Regulation 19.

### **Cleanliness**

Every workplace including furniture, furnishings and fittings must be kept sufficiently clean. Waste materials must only be allowed to accommodate in suitable receptacles. Source: Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, Regulation 9. Floors and indoor traffic routes should be cleaned at least once a week. In cases where dirt and refuse accumulates, any dirt and refuse which is not in suitable receptacles should be removed at least daily. Cleaning should also be carried out when necessary in order to clear up spillages or to remove unexpected soiling of surfaces. Workplaces must also be kept free from offensive waste matter or discharges, for example, from drains or sanitary conveniences. The cleaning process must not expose anyone to a health or safety risk. Source: Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, Regulation 9: ACoP paras 90-92.

### **Action points for safety representatives**

Make sure that:

1. you are familiar with the above standards and refer to them during your safety inspections
2. these standards are actually met in your school.

### **Further guidance**

The Blue Book containing the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, Approved Codes of Practice and guidance notes are available from the HSE website at: [hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l24.htm](http://hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l24.htm)

The Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999, available at: [legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1999/2/contents/made](http://legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1999/2/contents/made)

NEU guidance on reasonable adjustments – Making Work Fit  
[neu.org.uk](http://neu.org.uk)



## **Appendix**

### **Accommodating staff with disabilities**

This appendix gives NEU advice on employers' obligations with regard to employees who have or develop disabilities and on sources of guidance with regard to redesigning school premises, accessing funds and getting assistance.

### **Employers' responsibilities: The Equality Act 2010**

The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful for employers to discriminate against current or prospective employees with a disability. The definition of a disability under the terms of the Act is "a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities".

The Act requires employers to make reasonable adjustments to prevent physical features of their premises, or equipment or any arrangements, from causing substantial disadvantage to a disabled employee or disabled applicant for employment. Where teachers are covered by the terms of the Act, therefore, their employers are legally obliged to make such adjustments to enable them to continue to provide effective and efficient teaching.

Even where teachers are not specifically covered by the terms of the Act, employers should consider reasonable adjustments as a matter of good practice in complying with their general statutory obligations under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 to take steps to ensure their employees' health, safety and welfare.

The Equality Act also incorporates that Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 to require local authorities and schools to increase progressively the accessibility of schools to disabled pupils. Many of the features introduced to make schools more accessible to pupils will also benefit disabled teachers.

### **Funding for adjustments**

Financial assistance which might help with adjustments may be available from the Government's Access to Work programme. Access to Work (AtW) is a Government scheme that was introduced in 1994, bringing together a range of services available to disabled people and their employers.

The type of help that can be accessed from AtW can include:

- communicators for people who are deaf or have a hearing impairment
- additional fares to work
- equipment or adaptations to existing equipment to suit individual needs
- adaptations to a car, or taxi fares or other transport costs for someone who cannot use public transport to get to work
- alterations to premises or to the working environment so that a disabled employee can work.