



## **HEALTH AND SAFETY STATEMENT AND POLICY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This policy describes the Education Authority's (hereafter known as the EA) approach to the management of health and safety.

### **PURPOSE AND AIMS**

- To provide a safe and healthy environment for its employees, children and young people, clients, visitors, contractors, and others who may be affected whilst at work, by the services it provides or whilst on its premises. A safe working environment can only be achieved and maintained with close co-operation and active participation from staff of all grades and disciplines.
- To ensure that the EA complies with its statutory responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000 and all other relevant associated legislation and requirements to which the EA must comply and to actively promote a positive health and safety culture.
- To ensure that health and safety management in the EA is based on a continuous improvement model.

### **SCOPE OF POLICY**

This policy applies to all employees and those undertaking work on behalf of the EA and refers to all services and activities of the EA.

## **PART 1: GENERAL STATEMENT OF INTENT**

The Education Authority (EA) has been established to support the operational delivery of education across Northern Ireland. The EA employs around 42,000 employees, working in multiple locations, including around 8,200 teachers in controlled schools and 34,800 support staff in a wide variety of service areas including classroom assistants, kitchen staff, youth workers and transport staff as well as Headquarters administration.<sup>1</sup>

The EA believes that excellence in the management of health and safety is an essential element of its work. The EA recognises that health and safety is a key corporate risk and acknowledges that minimising risk in all areas is inseparable from its other corporate business objectives and expects all managers and employees to contribute towards achieving these objectives.

The EA is actively engaged and committed to improving health and safety standards, irrespective of an individual's location, role, or responsibility. Health and safety is a key responsibility for all managers and is a shared responsibility for employees, at all levels within the organisation. The EA aims to encourage initiative and adopt best practice within an organisational culture where all employees are aware of their individual health and safety responsibilities.

It is the EA's objective to provide and maintain, so far as is reasonably practicable, a safe and healthy working environment for all its employees, children and young people and other persons likely to be affected by its activities or processes, in accordance with its statutory duties set out in the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000 and all other relevant associated legislation and requirements with which the EA must comply.

The EA will achieve this by:

- actively identifying health and safety hazards and unsafe processes/systems of work with a view to eliminating, controlling or minimising risk where practicable through a recognised assessment process;

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<sup>1</sup> Headcount (41,913) is derived by counting distinct employees current on HR/Payroll system as at 31/12/2020; As Teachers may hold a non-teaching post e.g. lunchtime supervisory assistant adding teaching (8,201) and non-teaching employees (34,809) gives an inflated total (43,175)

- ensuring its continued commitment to the prevention of injury and ill health through health and safety policy development, health at work initiatives, undertaking risk assessments and promoting health and safety awareness;
- continually improving health and safety management and performance in line with the standards set out in HSG65<sup>2</sup> so as to ensure its suitability, adequacy and effectiveness;
- ensuring that effective arrangements and adequate resources are allocated to support the Health and Safety Policy and management system;
- monitoring and reviewing the health and safety performance of the organisation to ensure effective governance, through regular review meetings of the Governance, Risk and Audit Committee.
- providing suitable and sufficient health and safety information, instruction and training to enable employees to develop and improve their competencies within their working environment in order to carry out their work or activity in a safe and effective manner; and
- engaging and consulting with all employees and their representatives on health, safety and wellbeing by establishing and maintaining consultative committees.

The EA is committed to the continuous improvement of its health and safety management system and will carry out a review of the Health and Safety Policy on an annual basis or more frequently as required to verify that its contents are still valid.

Signed:   
**Chief Executive**

1<sup>st</sup> June 2021  
**Date**

Signed:   
**Chairperson**

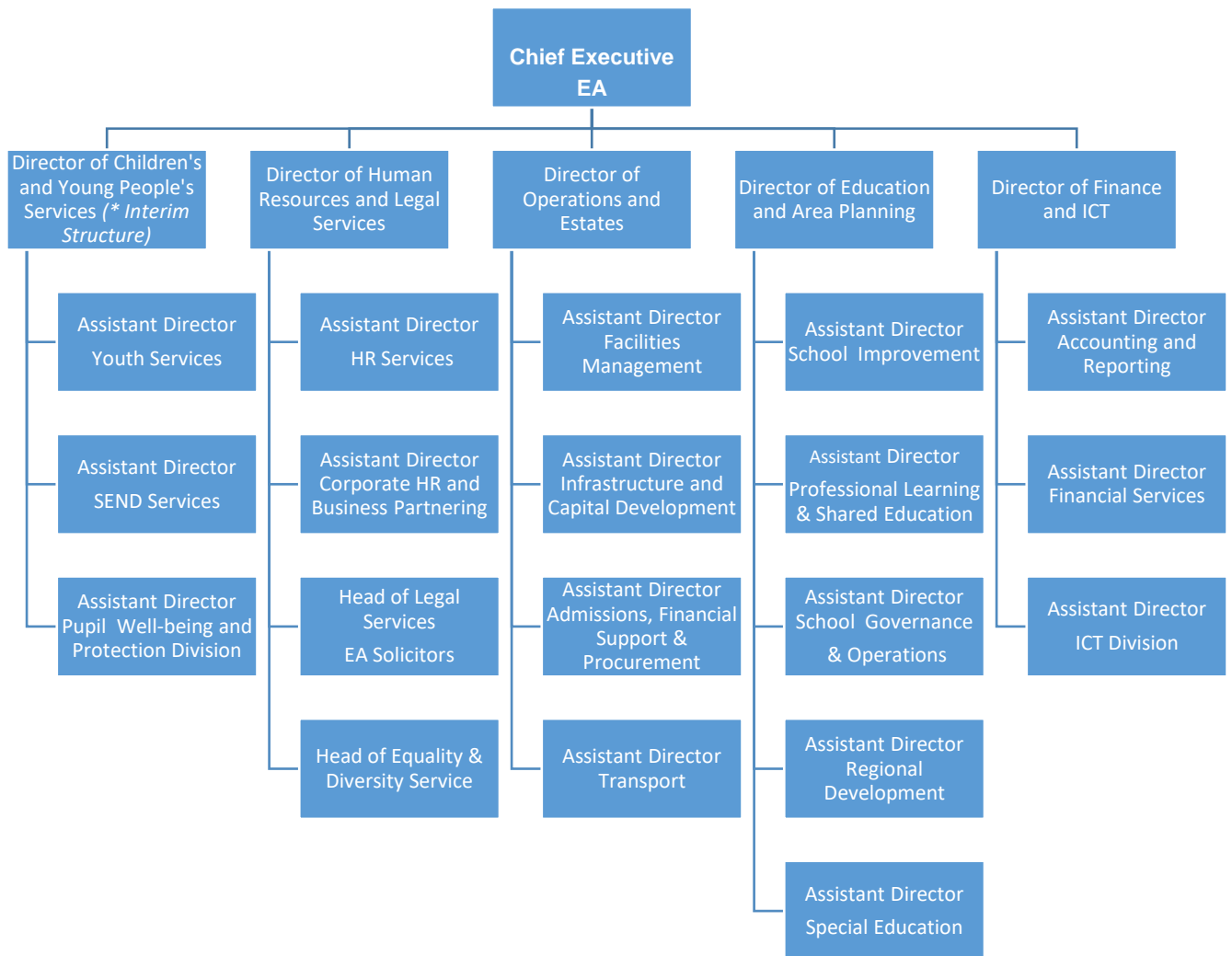
1<sup>st</sup> June 2021  
**Date**

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<sup>2</sup> HSG65 – Managing for health and safety – 2013 – Health and Safety Executive. ISBN 978 0 7176 6456 6

## PART 2: ORGANISATION and RESPONSIBILITIES FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY

### ORGANISATION



## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **EA BOARD**

The EA Board is responsible for the setting of the strategic direction for effective health and safety management.

### **CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for all matters relating to health and safety within EA. They will put in place processes to ensure that anyone who may be affected by any activity undertaken by, or on behalf of, EA is not exposed to foreseeable risk, so far as is reasonably practicable.

The Chief Executive is accountable for:

- setting the strategic direction for health and safety management and ensuring it is integrated into the health and safety business objectives for the organisation;
- ensuring that strategic health and safety issues are addressed at senior management team meetings;
- ensuring that Directors have effective safety management systems and arrangements in place; monitoring the effectiveness of the Authority's health and safety objectives through regular review meetings of the appropriate EA Committee; and
- reporting to the EA Board on the application and development of the Health and Safety Policy.

### **DIRECTORS**

The Directors are responsible for the implementation and realisation of the strategic direction for health and safety management, as set by the EA Board and its Chief Executive.

Directors are responsible, within their respective Directorate, for all matters relating to the health and safety of employees, children and young people and persons likely to be affected by their activities.

Each Director is responsible for:

- ensuring that health and safety forms an integral part of their operational management processes; ensuring that health and safety objectives are cascaded throughout their Directorate;
- ensuring that procedures are established for implementing an appropriate safety management system (which encompasses safety policy, procedures, risk profiling and performance review) for their Directorate;

- ensuring the allocation of resources including human and financial, which are essential to establish, implement, maintain and improve the safety management system;
- ensuring that all employees have appropriate experience and training to undertake their work safely and to continually develop and improve their competencies in order to carry out their work or activity in a safe and efficient manner;
- monitoring the progress of health and safety objectives and the performance of the safety management system through regular meetings with their Assistant Directors;
- reviewing the overall performance of the safety management system in conjunction with their Health and Safety Practitioners and ensuring that plans for any improvements are implemented; and
- developing arrangements to actively engage with employees through consultative committees.

## **ASSISTANT DIRECTORS**

The Assistant Directors are responsible for the development of operational health and safety plans for their respective Directorates/Divisions/Service area or equivalent.

Each Assistant Director is responsible for:

- ensuring that health and safety objectives are interpreted and implemented throughout their area of responsibility;
- developing and monitoring the performance of working procedures designed to reduce the risks of personal injury and/or damage to workplace resources;
- ensuring that regular inspections of the workplace and procedures are undertaken to identify hazards and that steps are taken to eliminate or minimise associated risks;
- initiating risk assessments where there is a significant risk to health and safety, and communicating the results of those assessments to employees and other persons likely to be affected by the activity or process;
- ensuring that all employees are provided with training and adequate supervision to allow them to work safely;
- ensuring that all accidents and incidents are investigated, taking appropriate action to prevent recurrence; and
- participating in the arrangements which have been developed to ensure active communication with employees through local consultative committees.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY PRACTITIONERS**

All Health and Safety Practitioners are responsible for:

- the interpretation of relevant health and safety legislation, regulations and Codes of Practice in order that the organisation and schools may comply with relevant legislation and regulations within their area of responsibility;
- providing competent professional support and advice to the Chief Executive and Directors on the development of an effective Health and Safety Policy supported by an effective safety management system;
- providing competent professional support and advice to Boards of Governors and School Principals, on their responsibilities and obligations under health and safety legislation;
- advising on the formulation and development of the Health and Safety Policy to take account of new or existing activities and processes;
- participating as necessary in the consultative committees used as a forum for health and safety discussions with employees;
- monitoring, inspecting, auditing and reviewing the safety management system and reporting performance through the appropriate EA Committee;
- advising on procedures for reporting, investigating, recording and analysing accidents and incidents to prevent recurrence;
- advising, in conjunction with other specialists, on training programmes for employees, and delivering training as appropriate;
- communicating, on behalf of EA, with the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland and other statutory bodies on all matters regarding health and safety at work; and
- establishing a close working relationship with appointed safety co-ordinators in both schools and EA operational services, offering advice and guidance as and when required.

## **MANAGERS (Heads of Service/Section or Equivalent)**

Each Manager is responsible for:

- developing health and safety targets for their Service/Section or equivalent and to monitor progress against these targets;
- undertaking regular inspections of the workplace and procedures to identify hazards and ensuring that steps are taken to eliminate or minimise associated risks;
- undertaking risk assessments where there is a significant risk to health and safety and communicating the results of those assessments to employees and other persons likely to be affected by the activity or process;

- conducting a regular review of health and safety procedures to ensure their continued effectiveness within the manager's area of responsibility;
- arranging for all employees to be provided with such training and supervision as is considered appropriate for them to perform their work safely;
- developing safe systems and procedures to reduce the risk of personal injury and/or damage to plant or equipment and monitor their performance on a regular basis; and
- investigating and reporting on all accidents and incidents and initiating appropriate measures to prevent recurrence.

## **EMPLOYEES**

Each employee is responsible for:

- taking reasonable care not to endanger their own health and safety and that of other persons likely to be affected by their acts or omissions;
- undertaking their tasks as instructed and in line with training received;
- reporting to their manager any health and safety concerns;
- not interfering with or misusing any equipment provided to ensure safe working practice in the workplace;
- reporting any accident involving injury, damage to plant and equipment, or potential injury, damage or loss;
- co-operating with and assisting other management colleagues in implementing the Health and Safety Policy; and
- adhering to all applicable risk assessments and method statements.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY FOR SCHOOLS**

### **ORGANISATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

Boards of Governors of all schools have a statutory duty to ensure health and safety on premises under their control. They have a statutory responsibility under the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 for ensuring that the EA's Health and Safety Policy is both understood and implemented in schools under their control and that risk assessments are carried out to address significant risks.

The Scheme of Management and the Common Funding Scheme for the Local Management of Schools also places responsibility on the Board of Governors for a number of functions and duties in respect of health and safety.

Each Board of Governors is responsible for:

- ensuring that the school Principal and Management Team develop a safety management system throughout the school;
- monitoring the effectiveness of the school's health and safety arrangements;
- developing and implementing arrangements to ensure that:
  - all school risk assessments are completed and are implemented;
  - equipment and materials purchased by the school are safe and suitable for their intended use;
  - contractors carry out their work in a safe manner;
  - prompt and efficient maintenance is carried out on:
    - all non-structural repairs;
    - all equipment;
- ensuring that arrangements are developed for the annual inspection of the school premises in accordance with the guidance set out in the Health and Safety Monitoring section of the Manual for Principals and Governors available at <https://www.eani.org.uk/school-management/health-safety/manual-for-principals-and-governors>
- ensuring that both teaching and non-teaching staff are issued with a copy of the employer's Health and Safety Policy.

#### **PRINCIPALS**

Principals of schools are responsible for the day-to-day application of this Health and Safety Policy for teaching staff, non-teaching staff and pupils.

Principals will be responsible for:

- developing and implementing an effective safety management system for the school;
- ensuring that health and safety forms an integral part of subject planning within the school;
- ensuring the availability of resources to maintain and improve the safety management arrangements;
- ensuring that all employees have appropriate qualifications, experience and training to safely undertake their work and to continually develop and improve their competencies in order to carry out their work or activity in a safe and efficient manner;
- monitoring the safety performance throughout the school as part of senior management team meetings;
- developing arrangements for ensuring effective maintenance of a safe working environment; and
- initiating a risk assessment process where there is a significant risk to health and safety, and communicating the results of those assessments to employees and other persons likely to be affected by the activity or process and ensuring implementation of the findings of the risk assessment.

In the absence of the Principal, the Vice-Principal or a nominated senior teacher will assume the role.

#### **VICE PRINCIPAL/HEAD OF DEPARTMENT/SUBJECT CO-ORDINATOR**

Vice Principals/Heads of Department/Subject Co-ordinators are responsible for ensuring that the Safety Policy and Procedures are followed in practical terms in areas under their control.

Each Vice Principal/Head of Department/Subject Co-ordinator is responsible for:

- developing and implementing safe working procedures for all activities and practices within their subject area;
- implementing a risk assessment process where there is a significant risk to health and safety, and communicating the results of those assessments to employees and ensuring implementation of the findings of the risk assessment;
- ensuring the availability of resources to maintain and improve the safety management arrangements;

- ensuring that all employees have access to regular training within their discipline to undertake their work safely and to continually develop and improve their competencies in order to carry out their work or activity in a safe and efficient manner;
- ensuring that health and safety procedures are an integral part of the subject planning and teaching of all subjects and activities; and
- ensuring that regular inspections of the workplace and procedures are undertaken to identify hazards and that steps are taken to eliminate or minimise associated risks.

In the absence of the Head of Department, the Principal or a senior teacher nominated by the Principal will assume the responsibility.

### **TEACHING STAFF**

Each member of the teaching staff has a responsibility to exercise care and attention regarding the safety of themselves and pupils under their control.

Each teacher is responsible for:

- carrying out risk assessments where there is a significant risk to health and safety and integrating the results into teaching practice;
- ensuring that health and safety forms an integral part of subject planning within their teaching practice;
- practicing and teaching safe working during class lessons;
- ensuring that all protective clothing and equipment as required is both available and used by themselves and pupils;
- reporting all accidents to the Head of Department and ensuring that Accident Forms are fully completed; and
- co-operating fully with the Head of Department and the Principal on all matters pertaining to Health and Safety.

### **EMPLOYEES**

Each employee is responsible for:

- taking reasonable care not to endanger their own health and safety and that of other persons likely to be affected by their acts or omissions;
- undertaking their tasks as instructed and in line with training received;
- reporting to their manager any health and safety concerns;

- not interfering with or misusing any equipment provided to ensure safe working practice in the workplace;
- reporting any accident involving injury, damage to plant and equipment, or potential injury, damage or loss;
- co-operating with and assisting other management colleagues in implementing the Health and Safety Policy; and
- adhering to all appropriate risk assessments and method statements.

## **PART 3: ARRANGEMENTS FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **Introduction**

In line with HSG65, the EA has developed a safety management system that includes policies, procedures and safe systems of work. Below is an outline of significant parts of the system. Further specific details are available from local managers. Guidance for schools is available in the Health and Safety Manual for Principals and Governors.

### **Risk Assessment**

To comply with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000, the EA is required to make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to the health and safety of its employees to which they are exposed whilst they are at work and the risks to the health and safety of persons not in its employment, including children and young people, arising out of or in connection with the conduct of its undertakings.

Risk assessments are undertaken by managers in consultation with their affected employees. Where the risk is considered significant, this is recorded and appropriate controls put in place. Controls are monitored regularly by managers and reviewed on a quarterly basis, or more frequently where the need arises. A risk assessment should be undertaken where a new activity or new equipment is introduced. Employees should be informed by their manager of any risks involved in their daily work activities and of the safe system of work in place to mitigate, so far as is reasonably practicable, the risk of injury.

Risk assessments made under these regulations include an assessment of the risks posed to new and expectant mothers.

### **Fire Safety and Emergency Evacuation**

The EA will ensure that a fire risk assessment for all its premises is carried out by a suitably qualified person in compliance with the requirements of The Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 supported by the Fire Safety Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010.

Recommendations arising from the fire risk assessment will be implemented by the EA or school management as appropriate.

Fire Marshalls/Wardens will be appointed at each location to ensure that all employees are aware of the fire evacuation policy and procedure and that all occupants are evacuated from the building in an emergency.

Suitable means of raising the alarm in the event of a fire shall be provided and the alarm system shall be inspected and maintained at suitable intervals by qualified persons. All EA locations shall carry out "Evacuation Drills" in accordance with the requirements of the Fire Risk Policy.

Emergency exit signs shall be provided in prominent places to provide clear instruction on the means of escape in a fire. Means of escape shall be suitably maintained to ensure that they are not obstructed. A fire log book should be maintained at each location.

### **Health and Safety Inspections (Proactive Monitoring)**

To improve health and safety performance and to assist in promoting a positive health and safety culture, managers will ensure that health and safety inspections are carried out on a regular basis. The involvement of Health and Safety Representatives in this process will be encouraged. It is the responsibility of the relevant manager to eliminate unsafe acts, and unsafe conditions and take immediate corrective action to prevent recurrence. Health and safety inspections, associated actions, recommendations, responsibilities and timescales should be recorded.

### **Accidents and Incidents**

The EA aims, so far as is reasonably practicable, to prevent or reduce the number of accidents and incidents. It will monitor all accidents and incidents and implement the necessary control measures to prevent any recurrence.

All accidents and incidents must be recorded in line with the EA's accident reporting policy. Initial investigation will be undertaken by the local service manager/supervisor. Where required, in compliance with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1997 (RIDDOR), accidents and/or incidents will be reported to the appropriate enforcing authority in accordance with the accident reporting procedures.

### **First Aid**

The EA will ensure, through the risk assessment process that adequate provisions are made to administer first aid for any injuries sustained by employees whilst at work. Where it is assessed as being necessary, competent persons will be appropriately trained and supported to carry out their roles in accordance with the duties in the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1982. Names and locations of specific first aiders will be prominently displayed in the workplace.

## **Instruction and Training**

The EA is committed to providing instruction and training for all employees on safe working practices and procedures. The EA will ensure, through its internal and external training programmes that all employees have the appropriate level of competence to be able to safely carry out their roles. Managers must ensure that all new employees receive induction training and that all employees are competently trained in the safe use of any equipment that they may use during the course of their employment. They must also ensure that all employees receive refresher training and any further training necessary as a result of changes in the workplace arising from the introduction of new procedures or new equipment. Health and safety training records for all employees must be held and relevant managers will be responsible for ensuring that all the necessary training is implemented. The EA will continue to meet its statutory and mandatory Health and Safety training requirements with the mitigation of risk as the key priority.

## **Working Environment**

All managers will monitor the general working environment as required. This will include the monitoring of noise, lighting, ventilation, fumes, dust levels and infestation. Any problems in these areas will be reported to the appropriate section for measurement and the implementation of remedial measures if necessary.

## **Housekeeping**

The EA is committed to ensuring that a good standard of housekeeping is maintained on its premises. This includes arrangements to ensure:

- the safe condition of floors, passageways and stairs;
- the provision of unobstructed corridors and passageways;
- the proper storage and stacking of materials;
- the proper disposal of waste materials;
- adequate access and egress to stored materials, packing, passageways and emergency exits;
- the safe condition and positioning of furniture and equipment;
- the identification and rectification of potential hazards; and
- the general cleanliness/tidiness of work areas, toilets and washrooms.

This is maintained on a daily basis by all managers in collaboration with the Premises Manager/responsible person, but is the responsibility of all employees.

## **Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)**

It is the aim of the EA to replace substances hazardous to health with safer alternatives.

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 (amended 2005), (COSHH (NI)), require an employer to undertake an assessment of health risks within work areas where substances deemed to be hazardous to health are in use and to take any necessary actions required to control and monitor employees' exposure to those substances.

Managers will undertake an assessment and implement controls to eliminate risk, so far as is reasonably practicable. It is the responsibility of the relevant manager to ensure an assessment is carried out and that information related to the hazards, associated risk and required safety measures are communicated to their employees who use the substance.

## **Display Screen Equipment**

In compliance with the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1992, the EA will ensure that users of display screen equipment are identified and workstation assessments conducted by a suitably qualified person. Eye tests will be made available to users on request and in line with the EA's display screen equipment policy.

## **Provision and Use of Work Equipment**

In line with the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999, the EA is committed to ensuring that all machinery and equipment used on its premises is suitable and fit for purpose. All employees will be provided with adequate information and training to enable them to operate the equipment safely. All managers will be responsible for ensuring that equipment is maintained in good order and repair.

Managers are required to ensure all equipment is regularly inspected and all defective equipment withdrawn from use until faults are rectified or the equipment is replaced.

## **Personal Protective Equipment and Clothing**

The EA is committed to ensuring that the duties enshrined in the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1993 (PPE) are met. Suitable and sufficient PPE will be made available to employees carrying out operations and activities where the risk assessment has identified a need for this. All users of PPE will be provided with information and instruction as to the correct use of the equipment. PPE must comply with current regulations and meet European standards. All instances of damage or loss to PPE should be notified to the relevant manager who will arrange for repair or replacement.

## **Transportation and Manual Handling of Materials**

The EA is committed to the safe transportation, manual handling and storage of materials used in its work processes in line with the Manual Handling Operations Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1992. The EA is committed to the elimination of the requirement for manual handling where possible and managers will undertake a risk assessment of all manual handling activities which cannot be eliminated.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that the correct procedures for handling and transportation are used and for identifying any additional training requirements. Control measures will be implemented to reduce the risk of injury. Suitable and sufficient training on manual handling techniques will be provided to all relevant employees.

## **Use of Vehicles for EA Business**

The EA is responsible for maintenance and regular servicing of its vehicles. Only authorised and properly licensed drivers may drive EA vehicles. All EA vehicles will comply with existing Northern Ireland road traffic regulations.

For employees who use their own vehicles for EA business, a mileage allowance will be paid. Employees must also ensure that:

- they hold an appropriate licence and insurance to drive their vehicle for business purposes;
- the vehicle is taxed and has an in-date MOT certificate where appropriate; and
- they do not use a mobile phone while driving.

The EA retains the right to examine these documents periodically to ensure that they remain current.

## **Safety Signs**

The EA will comply with the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996 and ensure that safety signs are displayed throughout all of its premises. All managers will be responsible for ensuring that the instructions outlined in the signage are being adhered to.

## **Working on other People's Premises**

EA employees or persons acting or working on the EA's behalf on other people's premises must ensure that they are made aware of and comply with that company or organisation's health and safety policy and practices.

### **Control of Contractors, Service Engineers and Other Visitors**

Contractors must comply with the EA's Health and Safety Policy and will be required to carry out and provide details of risk assessments where required.

Contractors, service engineers and visitors, etc. who enter EA premises to conduct business are the responsibility of the officer to whom they are reporting. Each visitor must report to reception to be signed in and given a visitor's pass.

### **Electricity at Work**

The EA will ensure compliance with the Electricity at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1991. The inspection of portable electrical appliances should be undertaken on an annual basis and fixed wiring tests every five years. Only suitably qualified electrical contractors will be employed for all electrical work which includes wiring, installing and repairing electrical equipment.

### **Smoking Policy**

The EA operates a no smoking policy in all its premises as required by the Smoking (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 and in accordance with JNC Circular 33 (Revised June 2014).

### **Occupational Health and Wellbeing**

The EA is committed to ensuring the health and wellbeing of all employees. An occupational health and wellbeing service exists to meet the needs of the organisation.

### **Liaison with Enforcing Authorities**

The EA is committed to the establishment of good working partnerships with all statutory enforcing authorities.

### **Security of EA Premises and Schools**

The EA is committed to ensuring the safety of its employees, children and young people and visitors whilst on their premises and will take steps to ensure that suitable and sufficient electronic, physical and procedural security measures, based on risk assessments, are implemented.

The EA will undertake to provide competent security advice to ensure that its employees, children and young people and other persons who may be affected by its activities, and its properties are not put at risk, so far as is reasonably practicable.

### **Health and Safety Policy - Audit and Review**

The EA is committed to the continuous improvement of its health and safety management system and will carry out a review of the Health and Safety Policy on an annual basis or more frequently as required to verify that its contents are still valid.