



LONG FIELD ACADEMY

Working At Height Policy

(including Safe Use of Stepladders guidance)

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Senior Team Responsibility	
Governors' Reviewing Committee	FRHP
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Associated Documentation:	Health and Safety Policy Use of Stepladders Guidance

1. Introduction

Staff are only to work at height if using suitable access equipment. Standing on tables, chairs, benches or an unstable surface is strictly forbidden. Elephants foot stools and step ladders are available if required. Staff who believe that they work at height or use step ladders on a regular basis are to request training through the Estates and Facilities Manager.

2. Guidance and Legislation

2.1 All work undertaken at height within the Academy must be conducted safely and comply with all current guidance and legislation on this activity:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
- Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- Work at Height Regulations 2005.

2.2 The Premises Officer (Health & Safety Co-Ordinator) has been designated as the trained member of staff who will be responsible for implementing and monitoring the Working at Height practices in the Academy and ensuring that all legislation is effectively implemented.

2.3 Working at height includes any work activity where a person could fall from a place of work and could suffer an injury or be killed. Working at height includes any place where a person can fall a distance liable to cause personal injury. Detailed below are the safe working procedures and precautionary measures for all work at height where step stools, stepladders, ladders or mobile towers are being considered for use by staff.

2.4 Access equipment is the collective term for equipment that is selected for work at height. It typically includes step stools, stepladders, ladders and mobile towers, although this list is not exhaustive.

2.5 Competence to use access equipment will vary from the qualifications that are required for mobile tower users through to simple instructional training in the use of step stools.

- 2.6 Staff, students, visitors and contractors must not undertake any activity that involves Working at Height or use equipment designed for tasks that involve working at height **unless they have received formal training as outlined below**. Instead the Premises Officer should be called to carry out the work. Staff must not use a ladder if they suffer from dizziness, epilepsy, heart conditions, lung conditions, significantly impaired joint function or are taking medication which recommends machinery should not be used. Anyone who has a fear of heights must also not use a ladder.
- 2.7 Within the school and its grounds, work at height should always be avoided whenever possible. Sometimes, this may not be practical and for particular low risk light work at height of short duration (i.e. work that last for minutes not hours) a step stool, stepladder or ladder may be considered as the most appropriate method of access.
- 2.8 Stepstools in the school must be at one of the minimum standards or class:
- BS 7377
 - EN 14183
 - GS Approved
 - Have a maximum capacity rating of 150kgs.
- 2.9 Stepladders and ladders in the school must be at one of the minimum standards or class:
- BS 1129 / Class 1 (wood)
 - BS 2037 / Class 1 (metal)
 - BS EN 131 (wood, metal & glass fibre)
 - GS Approved (wherever this marking/standard is used)
- 2.10 Use of Mobile Tower (Platform)
- For anything other than low risk, short duration work at height, the use of a mobile tower is to be considered in the first instance. A mobile tower (also known as a work platform) must be properly and safely erected by

competent, trained people and have suitable edge protection which physically prevents falling. In some cases a hired (vehicular) mobile elevated working platform for high risk tasks (e.g. access to work on a roof) may be the most appropriate access equipment.

- All users are to have received appropriate training before using a mobile tower for work.
- Mobile towers are to be periodically inspected in accordance with the formal training provided to the mobile tower user, who should carry out the required safety inspections at intervals including:
 - Following initial assembly
 - Following every movement of the mobile tower prior to further use
 - Weekly inspections (or more frequently as dictated by local circumstances)
- A mobile tower found to be defective is to be dismantled and safely disposed of as soon as is practical.

2.11 Training

It is a legal requirement that all persons must be appropriately trained before they use any access equipment. Records must be retained of all instruction and training given to members of staff.

Where a member of staff finds that they are required to use an item of access equipment on which they have not had training, or where they are unsure of correct or safe use, then they must request formal training from the Premises Officer or on-line training.

The following sets out the minimum instructional training and/or training course requirements for typical access equipment:

- **Step Stools** - A simple instructional training brief is to be given by the Premises Officer to all users
- **Step Ladders** (low risk work) - Where low risk work at height may be required to be undertaken using stepladders, staff members must be

trained first by the Premises Officer. Alternatively, this training may be provided by any external competent training course provider

- **Step Ladders** (high risk work), Ladders and Mobile Towers - Where higher risk work at height is expected to be undertaken using stepladders, ladders or mobile towers (platforms), the member of staff must attend a formal stepladder, ladder or mobile tower safety training course provided by any external competent training course provider.

2.12 Procedures for trained staff

When selecting suitable equipment the work conditions, distance and consequence of a fall, duration and frequency of the task and the ease of rescue should all be considered. Ladders should only be used in low risk situations, for work of short duration (i.e under 30 minutes in one position) and where the site condition is suitable (i.e. where the ladder can be tied or secured, the ground is level and not slippery, there are no adverse weather conditions which could affect stability and where the user will have at least 1 hand free to grip the ladder.

The following procedures must be followed:-

- Pre-use checks of the equipment (general condition sound, clean, dry, free from oil or wet paint, no signs of damage or corrosion, no missing rungs, no sharp edges or splinters, footpads at the base of the ladder secure and not damaged)
- Visual inspection of the ladder in situ (is the ladder secure, is it long enough to ensure the top three rungs do not need to be used, is there a secure hand hold, not resting on weak surfaces, is the ladder angle safe, is the ground stable, is the ladder a safety risk for people on the ground – i.e. tripping, at risk from dropping items if walking under the ladder). If using an a-frame step ladder can the restraint be fully opened.
- Is there someone available to hold the ladder and hand up tools/equipment. If not, a tool best should be used to ensure hands are free to grip the ladder and balance is not compromised while reaching for tools/equipment.
- Over-reaching must be avoided – keep navel inside the stiles and both feet on the same rung throughout the task. Suitable shoes should be worn to avoid slipping

- The ladder must be moved and stored securely when not in use and as soon as the job is finished

3. Risk Assessments

The Business Director and Premises Officer are responsible for carrying out a general risk assessment for working at height across the school, identifying all expected risks, reporting findings, proposing control measures and procedures and detailing resources required. For specific, hazardous work (i.e. accessing the roof to clear guttering or weeds) a live risk assessment must be drawn up and agreed by the Business Director before work commences. Risk assessments should be reviewed annually or when circumstances change.

4. Maintenance and Inspections

- A register of all access equipment held by the school is to be maintained by The Premises Officer. The register is to include the equipment unique serial number and a record of all inspections and maintenance to ensure that it is maintained in a safe condition and fit for use by staff members who are trained in its use.
- At no time are any items of access equipment (including stepladders and ladders) to be loaned (even for a short period), borrowed or hired out to non-employees.
- Termly inspections of all stepladders and ladders are to be carried out by the Premises Officer who has the necessary experience and understanding of ladders and stepladders. Such inspections are to be recorded in the register for The Action Manager (TAM).
- Any maintenance carried out by properly a trained and competent person is to be recorded in the register of access equipment.
- Where any access equipment fails a periodic formal inspection or user's pre-use check, it should be clearly marked or tagged as defective and removed from service. Ideally, it is to be locked away and safely disposed of as soon as is practical. The Premises Officer will be responsible for updating of the register of access equipment.

5. Storage

- Storage areas should be readily accessible.
- Where possible and practical, ladders and stepladders should be stored on suitable racking designed to provide protection when not in use.
- Racking should have sufficient support points to prevent sagging.
- Materials and equipment should not be placed on top of stored ladders/stepladders.
- Wooden ladders/stepladders should be stored away from areas which may be exposed to the elements and stored in well ventilated and dry areas.
- Ladders/stepladders should never been hung from their rungs – only their stiles.

6. Stepladder Guidance

See document below:

USE OF STEP LADDERS



- ❑ Every employer shall ensure that a ladder is used for work at height only if a risk assessment under regulation 3 of the Management Regulations has demonstrated that the use of more suitable work equipment is not justified because of the low risk and -
 - ❑ the short duration of use; or
 - ❑ existing features on site which he cannot alter
- ❑ A formal written risk assessment will be carried out for each individual task and all findings shared with appropriate staff.
- ❑ Ladders must be set on a firm, level base and there must be no makeshift use of bricks, blocks or timber packing etc. to gain extra height or to level up the stiles.
- ❑ Ladders should be sited clear of any excavation, and in such a position that they are not causing a hazard, or placed anywhere where they may be struck or dislodged. Barriers should be placed around the foot as added protection where necessary.
- ❑ Ladders should not be placed on or leant against any fragile surface or fitting.
- ❑ Bracing boards should be used where the ladder is required to rest adjacent to windows and other openings.
- ❑ Ladders should be set, as near as possible, at an angle of 75° (1 metre out up to 4 metres up).
- ❑ Ladders must not be secured by their rungs; lashings should be around the stiles, or proprietary ladder ties should be used.
- ❑ A ladder stay or stand-off may be used, if necessary.
- ❑ Lashing or clamping ladders, at the mid point of a ladder, will make them safer and help to prevent sway, particularly with ladders that are over 6 metres in height.
- ❑ If the vertical height of a ladder is over 9 metres, an intermediate landing with toe-boards and guard-rails must be provided, wherever practicable.
- ❑ Only one person should be on a ladder at any one time.
- ❑ Always face the ladder when climbing or descending it.
- ❑ When climbing or descending a ladder, both hands must be kept free for holding onto the ladder.
- ❑ Footwear worn by persons using a ladder must be suitable for maintaining a satisfactory grip.
- ❑ Tools and materials required for work can be carried in a shoulder bag, on a special belt, or be hoisted up or lowered afterwards.
- ❑ Tools requiring the use of two hands should not be used.
- ❑ Tools not in use should be hooked or otherwise secured to the ladder.
- ❑ The top of the ladder must not be repositioned, by jumping, while standing on rungs.

- ❑ Over-reaching leads to over-balancing. The most satisfactory method for working safely on a ladder is for both thighs and hips to be kept between the stiles. The working position should not be less than five rungs from the top of the ladder.
- ❑ Ladders must be properly maintained, of sound construction and materials, free from any defects and kept in good repair. If a rung is missing or damaged, the ladder must not be used.
- ❑ Ladders must be supported on each stile and prevented from sagging or swaying.
- ❑ All ladders should, in the interests of safety, be securely fixed or lashed to prevent slipping, either near the top, or if this is not possible, at the bottom.
- ❑ Where the length of a ladder used exceeds 3 metres it must be secured. Where this is not possible a person must be at the foot of the ladder to prevent slipping.
- ❑ Ladders must extend at least 1 metre above the landing place, unless some other suitable handhold is available and must be placed so that there is adequate space behind each rung for a proper foothold.
- ❑ Where a ladder rises a vertical distance above its base by more than 9 metres, rest platforms must be provided at suitable intervals.
- ❑ The timber in ladders, (or step ladders) must not be painted or treated in any manner which prevent defects being easily seen.
- ❑ Ropes or lashings which are used to secure a ladder must be in good condition.
- ❑ Ladders should only be used as a working place for light work, e.g. maintenance or painting for short periods. Where longer periods of work are anticipated other access equipment, such as trestles or scaffolds, etc., should be used.
- ❑ No part of a building should be used to support a ladder unless it is safe to do so and strong enough for the purpose.

Inspection of Ladders

Every ladder should carry a label identifying the classification. The standards applicable to manufacturers are of little significance to us as users, as long as we recognise that they are classified, labelled and we understand the classification. There are three classifications assigned to commercially manufactured ladders and a label must be affixed on the ladder showing the classification i.e.

Class 1	Industrial	Duty Rating = 130kg (20 stone)
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Class 3	Domestic	Duty Rating = 115kg (15 stone)
Class EN131	European Standard Ladders to BS/EN 131 (all types)	Duty Rating = 95kg (18 stone)

Do not use domestic ladders in the workplace. All ladders must be purchased from a reputable supplier with evidence of their origin.

A written record should be kept of all inspections, defects and repairs.

Ladders should not be used if defective in any way and, if damaged beyond repair they should be destroyed.

Ladders must not be painted or otherwise treated in any way that would hide or conceal any defects. They may be treated with a transparent coating such as varnish, shellac or clear preservative. It should be remembered that some timber preservatives may not be compatible with aluminium fittings.

During the inspection of ladders attention should be paid to the following points.

There should be no:

- Damaged or worn stiles, particularly at the head or foot of the ladder.
- Broken, missing, loose or worn rungs.
- Mud or grease on the rungs.
- Rungs supported solely by nails, screws or spikes, etc.
- Movement in the rungs or stiles.
- Decayed timber, or the corrosion of fittings.
- Insecure tie-rods.
- Warping, sagging or distortion; check that the ladder stands firmly.

The condition of any ropes and cords, along with pulleys, hinges and any other fittings, should be checked for fraying to ensure that they are all secure with no sign of damage.

Carrying a Ladder

A short ladder may be carried comfortably by having it vertical against the shoulder and holding one of the lower rungs, using the other hand to hold the stile. Longer ladders should be carried horizontally by two people. Care should be taken in negotiating corners and obstacles.

Step Ladders

Many of the general rules for the safe use of ladders also apply to step ladders. In addition, the following points should be considered.

- ❑ The treads (or steps), hinges, bolts, screws and fixings must all be sound and secure.
- ❑ Retaining cords or hinges should be of equal length and in good condition.
- ❑ The step ladder must be stable when open and standing on a level base.
- ❑ The legs of step ladders should be positioned as far apart as the retaining cord or hinges allow, with all four legs firmly and squarely on the ground.
- ❑ Steps should be on a firm, level base and be stable.
- ❑ They should be set at right-angles to the work, whenever possible.
- ❑ When stepladders are used, the knees of the person using the stepladder should be kept below the top of the steps.
- ❑ The top tread of a stepladder should not be used as a working platform, unless it has been constructed as a platform with a secure handhold.

Safety Checklist

Ladders

- Is a ladder the right piece of access equipment to be using?
- Are ladders only used for very light work of short duration/access?
- Are all ladders properly stored and inspected regularly?
- Are the ladders, which are being used, suited to the purpose or use to which they are being put?
- Are there any damaged, loose or missing parts?
- Are the rungs of ladders clean and free of mud and grease?
- Are sufficient persons available to handle and place ladders properly and safely?
- Are ladders set on firm and level ground?
- Are ladders properly erected and secured?
- Does the ladder project at least 1 metre above the landing place?
- Is there the correct overlap on extension ladders?
- Are the methods for raising tools or materials safe?
- Are ladders placed so that the work does not involve over-reaching?
- Is suitable footwear, that will give a satisfactory grip and prevent slipping, being worn?
- Are ladders set at the correct angle of 75°
- Are all ladders properly secured or footed at all times?
- Are ladders clear of evacuations or other potential hazards?
- Are ladders being leant on or secured to any fragile material?
- Are all lashings used of sound material, and made properly secure.

Safety Checklist

Step Ladders

Is the step ladder level and stable?

Is it open to the full extent of the retaining cords or hinges?

Are steps set at right-angles to the workface wherever possible?

Are the user's knees below the top of the steps?

