

Staged Health and Safety Audits for schools

School Advice Note

The CHSS carryout Staged Health and Safety Audits across the authority and its schools.

Outlined below is the process that is followed and each stage of the audit process involving a school:

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) define health and safety audits as “the systematic examination to determine whether activities and related results conform to planned arrangements and whether these arrangements are implemented effectively and are suitable for achieving the organisation’s policy and objectives”.

Whilst an audit is used to assess Health and Safety management systems, it is important to view an audit as a positive – it’s a chance to highlight company successes, but also to assist managers identify any gaps so that appropriate controls can be put in place to reduce risks.

The Corporate Health and Safety Service (CHSS) will provide managers/head teachers with guidance and support in order to achieve positive outcomes. Overall, an audit demonstrates that the school management team and governing body are committed to the health and welfare of employees, pupils/parents and all other stakeholders.

Previously audits were carried out in the event of a serious incident/accident, a rise in incidents in general or a rise in RIDDOR reportable incidents, or due to the period of time elapsed since the previous audit or due to specific concerns being raised.

To ensure focus on the most significant areas of risk a staged audit process has been developed. Triggers for this will be based on; specific concerns being raised, accident-incident analysis identifying trends such as; lack of or over reporting, high levels of over 7 day or specified RIDDOR incidents, failure to update Manager’s Reviews, lack of engagement and/or information provided and non-completion of identified actions. The service manager – health, safety and employee wellbeing may also direct audits or act on requests from CMT or service leads.

In the event of a Stage 1 Audit being triggered, the head teacher/manager will receive an email from CHSS requesting them to complete a Stage 1 Audit Questionnaire and provide associated evidence as appropriate. Further stages of the audit may be triggered as per the guidance below.

Stage 1

Stage 1 Audit Questionnaire QA and Incident Database Analysis (completed by the school)

QA process using a standard form, which automatically generates a percentage score. Primarily a question and answer process but examples requested where applicable to aid verification of scores entered.

Form completed by school with scores reviewed by H&S Officer based on responses given and evidence supplied.

- If positive responses – low risk assigned with recommended review period of 24 months, unless there is significant change (percentage 85% and above)
- If mainly positive responses but some minor areas of concern – medium risk assigned with recommendations for improvement provided and review period of 12 months recommended, unless there is significant change (percentage 75% and above)
- If several areas of non-compliance or major non-conformity identified – high risk assigned and stage 2 audit (Assurance Audit) to be scheduled (percentage below 75%)
- If no response received within a reasonable period (2 weeks), reminder to be send and if still no response within a reasonable period (further 2 weeks), or insufficient evidence provided, escalation to a stage 2 audit.

Stage 2

Assurance Audit (full school assurance question set completed by H&S Officer)

Onsite visit by CHSS to verify responses provided in Stage 1 Audit and review documents accordingly. Mainly a desktop (assurance) audit but may require inspection of some areas if concerns raised previously by incident analysis or responses to QA's. May just focus on areas of concern depending on outcome of the self-audit suggesting significant gaps in certain areas but none in others.

- If positive responses – low risk assigned with recommended review period of 24 months, unless there is significant change (percentage 85% and above)
- If mainly positive responses but some minor areas of concern – medium risk assigned with recommendations for improvement provided and review period of 12 months recommended, unless there is significant change (percentage 75% and above)
- If several areas of non-compliance or major non-conformity identified – high risk assigned and stage 3 audit (Full Audit) to be scheduled (percentage below 75%)

Stage 3

Full audit of high risk operations/areas (Full school audit completed by H&S Officer)

Full audit and inspection carried out. Focused to identify specific areas of concern towards creating a gap analysis and action plan.

Note;

Cost are applicable when it is deemed necessary for a stage 2 or 3 audit to be carried out due to indicators identified above. Costs will vary depending on the size and nature of the school.

Schools who have signed up to the Enhanced SLA will receive a Stage 3 Audit annually and ongoing guidance and support as part of the SLA and therefore will not be subject to the staged audit process.