

# Fulfilling the first aid requirements in schools

*Schools may struggle to navigate the legislation surrounding first aid requirements in schools. Emma Hammett provides an overview of the requirements that need to be met and offers useful advice.*

We are frequently asked to help schools navigate through the legislation surrounding their First Aid requirements and to help them ensure they are fulfilling all the necessary obligations. This article aims to give clear guidance as to exactly what is required to comply with the health and Safety Executive (HSE, 2015), Ofsted and with the *Children and Families Act 2014* (Section 100: supporting pupils at school with medical conditions).

## Training Should schools have regulated First Aid at Work training or Paediatric qualifications?

Schools operate as businesses, and as such are governed by the *HSE Regulations 1981*. Under health and safety legislation (*HSE Regulations 1981*) employers have to ensure that there are adequate and appropriate equipment and facilities for providing first aid in the workplace. In schools this includes responsibility for the headteacher and teachers, non-teaching staff, pupils and visitors (including contractors). It is therefore advised that these HSE courses are specifically tailored to include children and be relevant to a school environment.

However, schools with nurseries and reception classes are also subject to Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Ofsted regulations. Under current rules, early years providers must have at least one paediatric first aider available on each premise at all times. From September 2016—new legislation comes into effect requiring all new recruits to have a paediatric first



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aid qualification; meaning that a nursery recruiting a level 2 or level 3 member of staff who had newly completed their early years/childcare qualification must have an emergency paediatric first aid or a full

paediatric first aid certificate, in order to count towards the staff/qualification ratios under the EYFS (DfE, 2015a; 2016). The emergency first aid training course is equivalent to 1 day of training and the full

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paediatric course is 12 hours practical or blended. This training needs to be refreshed every 3 years in order for the staff member to keep counting in the ratios. Ideally all staff operating in an early years setting should have a paediatric qualification.

The *Children and Families Act 2014* was passed in September 2014 and section 100 designates specific responsibility to schools to ensure that pupils with medical needs can fully participate in all aspects of school life (DfE, 2015b; 2015c). Schools and nurseries need to consider all relevant parts of this act when drawing up individual health plans and considering children with known medical conditions. Schools should also have an emergency asthma kit and policy to support this too (Department of Health, 2015; Asthma UK, 2016).

Schools and local education authorities need to develop their own first aid policies and procedures based on a detailed risk assessment and local need.

All schools must provide:

- Suitably stocked first-aid kits in appropriate locations throughout the school and off site
- Appointed person and first aider cover to provide for their first aid needs on and off-site and include cover for sickness, absence and holidays
- Information for employees on first-aid arrangements.

To comply with HSE legislation, first aiders must complete a training course approved by HSE.

A one-day EFAW for schools course will comply with the HSE requirements for someone to be a first aider in a low-risk school setting responsible for up to 50 employees. Pupils and other staff are excluded from these numbers. For more than 50 employees there should be a qualified first aider available at all times for every 50 employees. Ideally one day EFAW training should include heart attack, head and spinal injuries, allergic reaction and asthma and all the training should cover adults and children in a school setting. First Aid at Work training is now available as a 3-day practical course and a regulated blended learning option—with 6 hours pre-learning and 2 days practical covering adults and children.

Appointed persons are not first aiders. They should not give any first aid treatment for which they have not been trained. If they are just operating as an 'appointed

person' then their training does not have to comply with HSE regulations and a short practical or online course will suffice.

It is good practice for schools to upskill all staff with basic first aid skills to enable them to competently support first aiders in an emergency.

The *Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981* do not oblige employers to provide first aid for anyone other than their own staff, but employers do have health and safety responsibilities towards non-employees. The Health and Safety Commission (HSC) guidance recommends that organisations, such as schools, which provide a service for others should include them in their risk assessments and provide for them. In the light of their legal responsibilities for those in their care, schools should consider carefully the likely risks to pupils and visitors, and make allowance for them when drawing up policies and deciding on the numbers of first-aid personnel.

Additional points to consider when calculating how many first aid personnel are needed:

- The size of the school and whether it is on split sites and/or levels.
- The location of the school—Is it remote from emergency services? It is good practice to inform the local emergency services, in writing, of the school's location (giving Ordnance Survey grid references, if necessary) and any particular circumstances that may affect access to the school. If the school has more than one entrance, emergency services should be given clear instructions on where or to whom they should report. (If an ambulance needs to be called, someone should meet the emergency vehicle at the specified entrance and take them to the casualty.)
- Are there any specific hazards or risks on the site?—hazardous substances, dangerous tools and machinery. Temporary hazards, such as building or maintenance work, should also be considered and suitable short-term measures should be put in place.
- Are there members of staff or pupils with special health needs or disabilities? What age range does the school cater for? Different first-aid procedures may apply to pupils in primary and secondary schools.
- Adequate provision for lunchtimes and

breaks. It is good practice to encourage all lunchtime supervisors to have first-aid training

- Adequate provision for leave and in case of absences
- First-aid provision for off-site activities—i.e. school trips. If a first-aider accompanies pupils off-site, will there be adequate first-aid provision in the school?
- Adequate provision for practical departments, such as science, technology, home economics, physical education;
- Adequate provision for out-of-hours activities (e.g. sports activities, clubs)
- Any agreements with contractors (e.g. school meals) on joint provision for first aid for their employees.

Unless first-aid cover is part of a member of staff's contract of employment, people who agree to become first aiders do so on a voluntary basis.

Procedures need to be in place that are known, understood and accepted by all. Information should be given about the location of first-aid equipment, facilities and personnel. First-aid notices should be displayed which are clear and easily understood by all.

A first aider must hold a valid certificate of competence, issued by an organisation whose training and qualifications are approved by the HSE or an awarding body. First aid at work certificates are only valid for 3 years. Employers should arrange refresher training and retesting of competence before certificates expire. Schools should keep a record of first aiders and certification dates.

## First aid containers

Every employer should provide at least one fully stocked first aid container for each site. Additional first aid containers will be needed for split sites/levels, distant sports fields or playgrounds, any other high-risk areas and any off-site activities. All first-aid containers must be marked with a white cross on a green background.

There is no mandatory list of items for a first-aid container. However a list of recommended items can be found on the First Aid for Life website (<http://firstaidforlife.org.uk/what-put-in-first-aid-kit/>).

## First aid room

The *Education (School Premises) Regulations 1996* require every school to have a suitable

Further information

**First Aid for Life**

First Aid for Life is a training provider and offers a number of free resources, including free posters, an emergency check list and advice on what to include in first aid kits available at: [firstaidforlife.org.uk](http://firstaidforlife.org.uk) 0208 675 4036

**Guidance**

Department for Education and Employment (2014 update) *Guidance on first aid for schools*. [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/306370/guidance\\_on\\_first\\_aid\\_for\\_schools.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/306370/guidance_on_first_aid_for_schools.pdf) (accessed 31 August 2016)

Department for Education (2014) *Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five*. [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/335504/EYFS\\_framework\\_from\\_1\\_September\\_2014\\_\\_with\\_clarification\\_note.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/335504/EYFS_framework_from_1_September_2014__with_clarification_note.pdf) (accessed 31 August 2016)

Department for Education (2015) *Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions Statutory guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools and proprietors of academies in England*. [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/484418/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/484418/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions.pdf)

Health and Safety Executive (2015) *First aid at work: The Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981. Guidance on Regulation*. <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l74.htm>

room that can be used for medical or dental treatment when required, and for the care of pupils during school hours. The area, which must contain a washbasin and be reasonably near a toilet, need not be used solely for medical purposes, but it should be appropriate for that purpose and readily available for use when needed.

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All staff should take precautions to avoid infection and must follow basic hygiene procedures. Staff should have access to single-use disposable gloves and hand-washing facilities, and should take care when dealing with blood or other body fluids and disposing of dressings or equipment.

**Reporting accidents and record keeping**

There are statutory requirements under the *Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995* and some accidents must be reported to the HSE.

The employer must keep a record of any reportable injury, disease or dangerous occurrence. This must include:

- The date and method of reporting
- The date, time and place of the event
- Personal details of those involved
- A brief description of the nature of the event or disease.

In an emergency, the headteacher should have procedures for contacting the child's parent/guardian/named contact as soon as possible. It is also good practice to report all serious or significant incidents to the parents (e.g. by sending a letter home with the child, or telephoning the parents). **BJSN**

*Conflict of interest: Emma Hammett is the founder of First Aid for Life.*

*The author provides this information for guidance and it is not in any way a substitute for medical advice.*

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