

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT COMMITTEE
8 MARCH 2012

Agenda Item	9.
Report No	ECS/13/12

First Aid strategy for schools

Report by Director of Education, Culture and Sport Service

Summary

This report seeks approval for the implementation of a first aid strategy in all schools that ensures compliance with the relevant statutory requirements and related Approved Code of Practice.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981 require employers to provide adequate and appropriate first-aid equipment and facilities and trained staff in order that employees can be given immediate assistance if they are injured or taken ill at work. In addition there is a related Approved Code of Practice 2009 and guidance that requires to be considered in conjunction with the legislative requirements.
- 1.2 In order to provide adequate and appropriate first-aid cover a number of factors have to be taken into account. These include:
 - The level of potential risk in a school that will have a direct bearing on the level of first-aid provision required.
 - The minimum recommended first-aid provision required in a school that takes into account the number of people in a school other than employees, for example the number of pupils and other users of the school facilities.
 - That first-aid provision needs to be available all times people are at work
 - Cover for first-aiders when they are absent
- 1.3 This report recommends a first-aid strategy for all Highland schools. This strategy will therefore relate to all staff, including catering and cleaning staff, within Pre, Primary, Secondary and Special School provision. This strategy will operate within the framework outlined within the Highland Council First Aid Policy and the Guidance on the Provision of First Aid training.

2.0 THE FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN ASSESSING THE LEVEL OF FIRST AID PROVISION REQUIRED.

- 2.1 **The level of potential risk in a school** (this will have a direct bearing on the level of first-aid provision required): it is recommended that a risk assessment should be carried out in each school that takes into account the following factors:

- The number of employees within the school
- Although it is important to note that there is no statutory duty to provide first-aid for non-employees (e.g. pupils and other users of the school) it is recommended that account is taken of these numbers when considering the appropriate first-aid cover required
- The layout of the school campus including the number of separate buildings
- Remoteness of the school from emergency services
- The nature of the curriculum being delivered in the school, for example subjects involving working with machinery or use of hazardous substances.

In general terms the Pre School and Primary School environments can be regarded as relatively low risk, although the remoteness from emergency services is a factor which must be taken into account in the risk assessment. Secondary and Special Schools can be regarded as moderate risks as a result of the nature of the curriculum provided in the former and the nature of the client group in the latter.

2.2 **The minimum recommended first-aid provision required in a school –**

2.3 There are 2 relevant first-aid qualifications. These are:

- Emergency first aid at work (EFAW) - this qualification enables a first aider to give emergency first aid to someone who is injured or who becomes ill.
- First aid at work (FAW) – this qualification provides the level of competence required for an emergency first-aider and in addition provides the level of competence required to apply first aid to a specific range of injuries and ailments.

2.4 The duration of the training for the above qualifications is 1 day for EFAW and 3 days for FAW. It is recommended that there is annual refresher training for the FAW qualification.

2.5 In addition to the trained first-aiders there can be an appointed person who has the responsibility for ensuring that the first-aid box is adequately stocked and for contacting the emergency services when appropriate.

2.6 It is recommended that, whilst the nature and level of first-aid provision at each school is determined by the outcome of a risk assessment, the following levels of first-aid provision should be made, as a minimum:

- Primary School with up to 50 employees on site – one EFAW plus one appointed person
- Primary Schools with more than 50 employees on site – one FAW for every 100 employed (or part thereof) plus one appointed person
- Secondary and Special Schools with up to 50 employees on site – one EFAW and one FAW plus one appointed person
- Secondary and Special Schools with more than 50 employees – one FAW for every 50 employed (or part thereof) plus 2 appointed persons.

2.5 **The availability of first aid provision at all times** - in larger schools there is a larger pool of employees present on site throughout the school week. However, in the smaller Primary Schools and Primary School clusters, there are a limited number of employees present on site throughout the school week. Under these circumstances the Head Teacher would be the only employee present throughout and therefore, by default, would be the trained first-aider. The extent of this training would be determined by the risk assessment carried out for each school. In addition appointed persons could be used to cover for the trained first-aider when he or she is not present on site. It should also be noted that certain employee groups have the possession of first aid qualification as an essential attribute within the post's person specification, for example Pre School staff and Learning Support Auxiliaries.

2.6 **Adequate cover for absent first-aiders** – the risk assessment should also recognise that from time to time the trained first-aider will not be available. Under most circumstances an appointed person will be present to fulfil the cover role.

2.7 **Transitional arrangements** – it is recommended that, subject to approval, the revised first aid arrangements are implemented as soon as practical. The existing levels of first aid cover in schools are variable and it is important that priority is given to those sites where the level of first aid cover is below what is required by statute. The ECS training strategy, which is the subject of a separate report to this Committee today, will include the appropriate framework to ensure that the appropriate training is provided to ensure that the required first aid provision is available in each school and that refresher training is provided as required. In recognition of the mandatory nature of this provision the ECS Health and Safety Co-ordinator will work in conjunction with Head Teachers to work towards the adequate first aid provision in schools.

3.0 IMPLICATIONS

3.1 **Resource implications** – the current cost of EFAW training is £80 per delegate and £260 per delegate for FAW training. These costs are as a result of a corporate procurement exercise. The First Aid Training is only provided through Employment Development. In addition, there are cover costs to be provided when teachers are out of school on training courses, the current average daily cost for teacher cover is approximately £220. In addition, a first aid payment of £362.34 per annum is made to those employees who are requested by their Service Director to undertake FAW duties having completed the appropriate training course, although this payment is not made where a FAW qualification is a requirement of the post. Also this condition applies to all SJC employees across the school and non-school sites, including teachers. On this basis there is clearly a significant resource implication to ensure that this first aid strategy is implemented universally across the school estate. In recognition of the significant resource implication, particularly for smaller schools with limited devolved budgets, it is proposed that the costs associated with initial first aid training are met centrally and that the costs of periodic refresher training are met from devolved school budgets. Those employees in possession of the FAW qualification will be paid the current First Aid Allowance payment. Funding will be provided wherever First Aid Payments are made.

3.2 **Legal implications** – clearly there is a statutory requirement to provide adequate and appropriate first aid cover at all sites where there are employees. For this reason it is essential that this first aid strategy is implemented universally across all schools as a priority.

3.3 **Equality implications** – there are no specific equality implications associated with the implementation of this strategy.

3.4 **Climate change implications** - there are no specific equality implications associated with the implementation of this strategy.

3.5 **Risk implications** – the Council has a statutory responsibility to ensure that appropriate first-aid cover is available on all school sites. In addition the Head Teacher as Responsible Premises Officer has a duty of care for all employees on site. It is recognised that the provision of the requisite level first-aid cover on a school site relies on employees volunteering to participate and that there is no compulsion for employees to become appointed persons or trained first-aiders. The provision of first-aid cover therefore relies on the good-will of staff. This factor is recognised as a risk and one that has to be mitigated by the Council where such a scenario arises.

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Agree to the implementation of a first aid strategy in schools on the basis of the framework out-lined in section 2 that will comply fully with the relevant legislation and code of practice
- Agree that this strategy should be fully implemented during academic year 2012-13.

Signature:

Designation: Director of Education, Culture and Sport

Date: 20th February 2012.

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Reference Documents available on Highland Council web-site:-

The Highland Council First Aid Policy

Guidance on the Provision of First Aid training