

# Richmond School

## Working Safely at Heights (Ladder & Scaffolding) Policy



### Preamble

Falls from a height greater than two meters account for almost a third of all accidental deaths at work.

Each year, more accidents arise from the use and/or misuse of ladders and steps than from any other single piece of equipment.

To reduce the risk of death or injury when using ladders and steps, a clear Policy for inspection and maintenance is necessary.

The law requires that scaffolding work be done with competent and experienced supervision. The loading for which scaffold has been provided should be known. The loading should be evenly distributed and the scaffold should not be overloaded.

It is the implementation and application of this Policy, where reasonably practicable, that will prevent accidents and maintain safety standards.

***It is the responsibility of the person working with the equipment to ensure that it is in good working order.***

### 1. Ladders And Steps (N.B the School has no wooden ladders or steps)

All ladders and steps, fixed and portable, are to be identified and an asset number allocated. An asset register will be maintained with a record of the location and type. The location for a portable ladder or steps shall be its normal place of storage.

A permanent record shall be made of all inspections and repairs. The Senior Maintenance Officer will be responsible for ensuring these records are kept up to date.

#### 1.1 Fixed Ladders

Fixed ladders or steps for access to plant-rooms, water or fuel tanks etc shall be inspected once per year to ensure that they are in a safe condition. Any damage shall be reported to the Senior Maintenance Officer immediately to ensure that prompt action is taken for repairs. The area around the base of fixed ladders and steps must be kept clear and free of oil and water to avoid slipping.

#### 1.2 Portable Ladders & Steps

All portable ladders and steps are to be inspected every six months. The Senior

Maintenance Officer is to be responsible for ensuring that these inspections are carried out on all ladders and steps.

During inspections of ladders and steps the following points should be checked:

- a) The stiles for undue wear or misalignment.
- b) The rungs for undue wear.
- c) Non-slip boots for wear and tear.
- d) The stay bars and locking bars on all steps and extension ladders.
- f) Safety stops on triple extension ladders.

Ladders should be placed on a firm, level base, where possible and if used on a sloping surface an adequate safety foot must be used.

The ladder should be lashed or cramped near the top to some convenient secure anchorage to prevent slipping. Only the stiles (i.e. the sides) should be lashed and each stile lashed separately. The correct slope for a ladder is approximately 75 degrees to the horizontal (i.e if the ladder is to access a height of 4 metres its base should be 1 metre out from the point of contact). If no means of securing the top of the ladder is available, either someone must hold the base to prevent slipping or, alternatively, use a safety foot. Footing is the last resort and should be avoided, where reasonably practicable, by the use of other access equipment. Avoid overloading ladders - only one person should be on the ladder at any one time.

Rest the top of the ladder against a solid surface. It should not rest against plastic gutters or other such surfaces - appropriate equipment, such as ladder stays, should be used instead. Proprietary spreader arms or similar equipment can be used to span windows or other openings.

All ladders must extend at least 1m or three rungs above any landing place or beyond the highest rung from which a person may be working to ensure an adequate handhold.

## **2. Guidance Note On The Use Of Step Ladders**

A second person is required to hold the steps when:

- i) the work necessitates standing on the step ladder at a height of 2m or above;
- ii) at a lower height if two hands are required to carry out the work and additional support to the body e.g. the legs, is not possible.

Where the work is in excess of a minor repair a more substantial platform e.g. a tower scaffold, should be used.

It is not permissible, under any circumstances, to stand on the platform of a "platform pair of steps".

### 3. Scaffold

No scaffolding erected by scaffolding contractors shall be used by directly employed labour, unless a safety certificate has been issued.

Once the scaffold has been erected and certified safe, no part of the structure shall be altered by School staff which would render the scaffolding unsafe. A description of the scaffold will be entered into a register and inspected weekly by the Senior Maintenance Officer. In external situation, the scaffolding should be inspected after any adverse weather conditions which may affect the scaffolding.

If any person using the scaffold feels that it is unsafe or is not sure, contact the Senior Maintenance Officer, who will arrange for the scaffolding to be inspected.

Safety harnesses **MUST** be used where it is not practicable to provide a standard working platform or gangway with guard rails and toeboards. If used, the belts should always be worn and always secured to a safe anchorage.

#### 3.1 Mobile & Free Standing Tower Scaffolds

The height of the working platform on the above scaffolds should not be more than three times the minimum base width when used outside and three and a half times when used inside (including the out-riggers, if fitted).

The working platform must be fully boarded and the boards must be at least 38mm (1.5") thick.

Guard rails and toeboards are necessary on all four sides with possibly a small break in one side at the stepping off point from the ladder access. Toeboards must be at least 150mm (6") above the platform level. Guard rails must be between 0.914m (3') and 1.143m (3'9") above the platform.

Mobile scaffolds should only be used on ground which is firm and level. Moving scaffold should only be effected by pulling or pushing at the base. The working platform shall be clear of people and materials when the scaffolding is being moved and its path unobstructed. Also check above for overhead powerlines/obstructions.

The platform must have a safe means of access on the narrowest side of the tower. Do not climb the frame unless it has built-in ladder sections with rungs not more than 300mm apart and the stiles not more than 480mm apart. If the frame can be used, climb it from the inside. If not, use internal ladder or stairways fixed firmly to the tower. **Never** climb up the outside, this may cause the scaffold to over-turn.

The wheels should be turned outwards to provide maximum base dimensions and wheel brakes must be **on** and locked when the scaffold is in use.

All scaffolding must be inspected by a competent person before being put into use.

If the scaffold is to be in use or left for more than 7 days, a description of the scaffold shall be entered into the prescribed register and the scaffold inspected at least weekly by the appropriate officer.

### **3.2 Roof Working**

Access doors to all roof areas will be kept locked. Only authorised access will be permitted after a risk assessment has been conducted.

Where necessary a written "Risk Assessment" will be prepared and a "Permit to Work" issued to the contractor or member of staff, by the Site/Finance Manager.

**Date for Review: July 2011**