



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Use of Tools Policy

September 2026

This **Working with Tools Policy and Framework** provides a comprehensive guidance document for schools to develop a policy ensuring the safe, inclusive, and effective use of tools across the curriculum. It covers statutory duties, risk management, curriculum integration, staff training, and safeguarding, in line with guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), Health and Safety Executive (HSE), and Ofsted expectations.

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidance on the safe and responsible use of tools within the school environment. It seeks to:

- Promote a strong culture of safety and awareness among staff and pupils.
- Ensure compliance with legal obligations relating to health and safety.
- Support the development of pupils' practical skills through structured, supervised experiences.
- Provide a framework for managing risks associated with tool use in a way that balances safety with practical learning.

1.2 Scope

This policy applies to:

- All pupils participating in practical activities involving tool use.
- All staff responsible for planning and supervising tool-based activities.
- All subject areas and extra-curricular activities involving manual tools or powered equipment, particularly Design and Technology (D&T), Science, Art, Forest School, and vocational education.
- External contractors or educational providers delivering sessions involving tool use.

1.3 Statutory Context

This policy supports the school's duty under the following legislation and guidance:

- **Education Act 2002**, Section 175 – Duty on schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils.
- **Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974** – Responsibility to ensure the health and safety of employees and others in the workplace.
- **DfE Health and Safety: Advice for Schools (2014)** – Non-statutory guidance on managing risks.
- **Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF, 2023)** – Areas of judgement covering quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, and safeguarding.



- **BS 4163:2021** – Health and Safety for Design and Technology in schools and similar establishments.

2. Aims and Objectives

The aims of this policy are to:

- Enable all pupils to have the opportunity to learn and apply practical tool-handling skills safely.
- Ensure all tool use within the curriculum and extra-curricular activities is conducted under strict safety protocols.
- Promote pupils' understanding of risk management and accountability during hands-on activities.
- Support national curriculum objectives for subjects such as Design and Technology, Science, and Art and Design.
- Ensure all staff are appropriately trained and confident in supervising practical activities.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

The Headteacher and SLT will:

- Ensure the policy is implemented and reviewed effectively across departments.
- Provide adequate resources, time, and training opportunities for staff.
- Monitor the effectiveness of the policy through routine audits and performance reviews.

3.2 Teachers and Educational Support Staff

All teaching staff are responsible for:

- Planning and delivering safe, curriculum-aligned lessons involving tool use.
- Completing and reviewing risk assessments before activities.
- Closely supervising pupils during activities and modelling correct use of tools.
- Ensuring all incidents and near misses are reported appropriately.

3.3 Technical Support and Site Staff

Designated support staff will:

- Maintain tools and equipment according to a planned maintenance schedule.
- Conduct regular safety checks of all tools and maintain usage logs.
- Ensure tools are stored securely and appropriately in designated areas.

3.4 Pupils

All pupils are expected to:

- Follow safety instructions and comply with stated rules during tool use.



- Use tools only under supervision and for their intended purpose.
- Report defective tools, accidents, or misuse immediately to an adult.

3.5 Parents and Carers

Parents and carers will:

- Support the school's expectations for tool use by encouraging safe practices at home and in the community.
- Sign consent forms where external tool-based activities are planned, if required.
- Notify the school of any relevant medical or behavioural needs that may impact on a child's safe participation.

4. Curriculum Integration

4.1 National Curriculum Alignment

Tool use supports key aims across:

- **Design and Technology (DfE, 2014):** Pupils should develop practical skills by selecting and using a range of tools.
- **Science:** Enables pupils to carry out investigations using appropriate apparatus and measuring instruments.
- **Art and Design:** Pupils explore techniques using tools for sculpting, printing, and other creative forms.
- **Cross-curricular contexts:** Forest Schools, outdoor learning, and enterprise or STEM projects.

All tool-based learning must be mapped against subject-specific curriculum outcomes and be age-appropriate.

4.2 Skills Progression

Skill acquisition should be sequenced and progressive:

- **EYFS:** Begin with supervised use of scissors, construction toys, and safe crafting tools.
- **KS1:** Introduce basic hand tools such as screwdrivers, glue spreaders, and junior hammers.
- **KS2:** Support the use of hand drills, glue guns (under direct supervision), and basic saws in controlled settings.

Adaptations will be made for pupils who require additional support, and the complexity of tool use will increase with age and skill level.



5. Health and Safety

5.1 Risk Assessment

- All activities involving tool use must be accompanied by a written risk assessment.
- Risk assessments should be completed by the class teacher or a subject leader and be reviewed regularly.
- Activities posing higher levels of risk, such as using powered tools, require a more detailed assessment and approval by SLT.

5.2 Control Measures

To reduce risk, the following should be standard practice:

- Establish and teach clear tool-use rules.
- Maintain low noise levels and order to promote concentration and safety.
- Define 'tool-use zones' within the classroom or specialist room.
- Provide pupils with personal protective equipment (PPE) such as goggles, gloves, or aprons where needed.
- Ensure only competent staff supervise tool-based activities.

5.3 Incident Management

- Accidents, near misses, and misuse incidents must be recorded in the school's incident log.
- First aid treatment must be provided and recorded following the First Aid Policy.
- RIDDOR reporting procedures will be followed where necessary for serious incidents.

6. Tool Use Protocols

6.1 Selection of Tools

- Tools must be appropriate for the task and the pupil's developmental stage.
- All tools must be CE marked, safe for educational use, and regularly maintained.
- Teachers must assess whether tools are appropriate based on task complexity and pupil safety.

6.2 Tool Handling Instruction

Before using any tool, pupils must receive:

- A demonstration of correct and safe usage.
- Guidance on transporting tools (e.g., carrying sharp tools with blades pointing down).
- A talk-through of potential risks and how they are mitigated.
- Reinforcement on using tools only for their intended purpose.

Classroom posters and reminders should support consistent behaviour and understanding.



6.3 Storage and Maintenance

- Tools must be stored securely in locked cabinets or purpose-built tool storage areas.
- An inventory of tools must be maintained and reviewed termly.
- Tools should be cleaned, repaired (where applicable), and replaced when worn or broken.
- Staff should document and date regular maintenance checks.

7. Staff Training and CPD

7.1 Induction and Ongoing Training

- All staff delivering tool-based lessons must receive appropriate training upon induction.
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD) should be offered regularly, addressing updates to guidance and safe practices.
- Training logs must be kept and made available to SLT and relevant authorities.

7.2 Competence and Supervision

- Teachers must be confident and competent in using any tool they intend to teach with.
- Support staff can assist, but should not lead, tool-based activities without relevant training.
- Supervision ratios should reflect the complexity of activity and the risk rating of tools being used.

8. Safeguarding Considerations

8.1 Preventing Misuse

- Tool misuse is a serious breach of school behaviour expectations and must be dealt with swiftly.
- Behaviour plans should consider tailored measures for pupils with identified risk behaviours.
- Any incident suggesting intentional misuse may be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

8.2 Inclusion and SEND Access

- Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure pupils with SEND can participate safely in appropriate tool-based activities.
- Risk assessments should be individualised where needed to accommodate specific needs.
- Tools designed or adapted for reduced motor skills or accessibility issues will be provided where possible.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation

9.1 Policy Review

- This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if significant changes occur in staffing, tools, or curriculum content.



9.2 Monitoring Implementation

- Subject leaders and SLT will monitor implementation through:
 - Learning walks
 - Classroom and workshop observations
 - Health and safety audits
 - Pupil voice surveys
 - Staff feedback

9.3 Reporting

- A termly report summarising tool usage, incidents, and training updates will be shared with governors and included in the SLT's health and safety report.

10. Links to Other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Design and Technology Policy
- Science Policy
- Art and Design Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- First Aid and Medical Needs Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy

Evidence Base

- DfE (2014) *Design and Technology: National Curriculum in England*
- DfE (2014) *Health and Safety: Advice for Schools*
- HSE (2021) *BS 4163:2021 - Health and Safety for Design and Technology*
- Ofsted (2023) *Education Inspection Framework*
- CLEAPSS Guidance for Safe Practical Work
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- RIDDOR 2013 Regulations