Reducing the Risk of Needle Stick Injuries Policy

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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline Hillside Primary School's position regarding the prevention and management of needle stick injuries and provide guidance and procedure for staff. Needle-stick or sharps injuries are wounds caused by an object or device with a sharp point, protuberance or cutting edge that are capable of puncturing or piercing the skin. This presents a potential exposure to blood borne viruses (BBV). Those blood borne viruses of most concern are HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C. Whilst the risk of acquiring a needle stick injury within the school environment is low, it is vitally important that all needles are disposed of safely thereby ensuring that staff and pupils are not harmed.

2. SCOPE

This document explains the procedural arrangements for the control of sharps and will ensure that staff are aware of the appropriate action to take in the event of the inoculation of blood or bodily fluids by a needle or other sharp. This document should ensure consistency across the organisation.

3. OBJECTIVE

The objective of this policy is to ensure that school staff adopt practices which minimise the risk of needle stick exposure.

4. PROCEDURE DETAILS

Where staff are required to assist in the administration of medication with young or disabled children, they should receive training from a member of the medical profession. In relation to the storage and disposal of used sharps:

a) All sharps bins/containers used should be BS7320: 1990 and UN3921 approved.
b) Sharps bins/containers should be sealed and replaced when the sharps reach their fill line.
c) Sharps bins/containers should be in a safe and secure position.
d) Needles should not be re-sheathed after use.
e) Sharps should be disposed of immediately after use and not left lying around. Pupils must be advised on the safe disposal of sharps, in their own personal care. Needles are only to be disposed of in the sharp's bin/container.
f) Never carry sharps in hands or pockets, take the sharps bin/container to the syringe, do not walk with the needle or syringe (e.g. have the bin with you when you're using the needle/syringe).
g) Contents of the sharp's bins/containers should not be decanted into another container.

Cleaning Staff, Grounds Maintenance or Building Supervisory staff should be instructed not to place their hands into any area or object where they cannot see as there may be concealed sharps. Visual inspections and appropriate risk assessments should be carried out prior to work commencing to check for the presence of any sharps. Risk Assessments will identify the requirement for suitable PPE such as gloves, thick soled footwear and litter pickers.

In the case of a needle stick injury occurring: -

a) Encourage the wound to bleed by gently squeezing the site (Do not suck).
b) Wash the area with running water and soap.
c) Dry area and apply waterproof dressing.
d) Report the incident to your manager/supervisor, who is required to report the incident to the Health and Safety Exec. using the accident injury report form.
e) Seek urgent medical attention through your Doctor or A&E Department.
f) Staff may need access to confidential counselling service if they have any concerns after a needle stick injury. This can be dealt with through our Employee Assistance Programme and full details are available from the HR team.
g) In the case of a spillage from a sharp's container, the following procedure should be followed: -
    - Wear protective clothing, e.g. gloves
    - Gather up spilled sharps using a dustpan and a brush and put them into the appropriate sharp's container.
    - Dispose of protective clothing, e.g. gloves
    - Wash and dry hands thoroughly.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITES

The Senior Leadership Team and Board of Governors in School are responsible for ensuring this policy and procedure is adopted as part of the overarching safety policy and promulgated appropriately throughout their area of control.

School Principals and Line Managers are responsible for implementing this procedure and ensuring that it is adhered to by staff and pupils for whom they are responsible.

The School Nurse Team will manage this procedure and ensure its relevance and consistent application across the organisation. They will amend and update its requirements in light of changes in legislation and good practice.

All employees are obliged to comply with the procedure.

6. GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS

BBV - Blood Borne Viruses

Sharps - an object or device with a sharp point or protuberance or cutting edge which is capable of cutting or piercing the skin.

7. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

www.hse.gov.uk/healthservices/needlesticks/actions.htm

Additional Regulatory References and Best Practice (Updated 2025):

HSE – Needlestick Injuries Guidance: https://www.hse.gov.uk/biosafety/blood-borneviruses/needlestick-injuries.htm

HSE – RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries): https://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/reportable-incidents.htm

HSE – COSHH (Hazardous Substances Control): https://www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/

NHS – What to Do After a Needlestick Injury: https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/needlestickinjuries/

Staff Training Reminder (2025 onwards):

• All staff involved in the handling or disposal of sharps should complete annual CPD or refresher training.

• Training records should be maintained and monitored as part of health and safety Compliance

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