

**Safety Information**  
**Guidance Notes**  
**SIGN 07**  
**New and Expectant**  
**Mothers**



## Cumbria Schools Safety Information Guidance Notes

Cumbria Schools Safety Information Guidance Notes support Cumbria County Council's Health and Safety Policy and Corporate Safety Procedures. Developed by CCC's Health and Safety Team, they are specifically for use by Local Authority maintained schools to assist School Management Teams interpret relevant safety legislation, adopt best practice, and establish and implement suitable health and safety management arrangements.

Schools must have their own current Health and Safety Policy in place. A template model policy document is provided for schools to tailor via the Schools' Portal. The Safety Information Guidance Notes cover a wide range of general health and safety topics that would apply to all schools.

Health and Safety advice and guidance is, as always, provided free of charge to all LA maintained schools.

Please contact the team for advice either by e-mail [healthandsafety@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:healthandsafety@cumbria.gov.uk) or by telephone **01228 221616**.

Full contact details for the Health and Safety Team can be found in the health and safety reference library of the [Schools' Portal](#).

Document No: 07

Revision: 02

Author: Corporate Health and Safety Team

Approval Chain: Health and Safety Practitioners, Schools Health and Safety Committee

Date: March 2021

Review Date: March 2023 (2 years)

#### AMENDMENT RECORD

Version	Date	Description
01	2005	Original Safety Advice Note SAN(G)24
02	Mar 2021	Reviewed and reformatted to reflect new style SIGN

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## Introduction

The purpose of this guidance document is to define the procedures for managing the health, safety and wellbeing for new and expectant mothers, and provide advice on what to do to comply with the law. A new and expectant mother is someone (staff or student) who is pregnant, has *given birth*<sup>1</sup> within the previous six months, or who is breastfeeding.

Pregnancy should not be confused with ill health but regarded as a part of everyday life, with the health and safety implications being addressed under normal health and safety management procedures.

## General duties

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSWR) require employers to assess the risks to all staff and students, including new and expectant mothers, and do everything reasonably practicable to control those risks. The unborn child or the child of a mother who is breastfeeding must be included when risks are being assessed – not just the mother herself.

An employee does not have to tell you that they are a new or expectant mother, but it is in their interests to let you know so you can make any necessary changes to support them, from adjusting working conditions to arranging maternity pay.

## Risk assessment

You must, by law, include risks to female employees of childbearing age in your general workplace risk assessment. This includes risks to new and expectant mothers, who can be exposed to harm through certain working conditions and the use of physical, chemical, or biological agents.

### When a worker informs you that they are a new or expectant mother

When an employee has informed you in writing that they are a new or expectant mother, you should immediately check your existing workplace risk assessment for any known risks that could affect them. In doing this you must take account of any medical recommendations provided by their GP or midwife

If you identify a significant risk through this process you must act. If you cannot remove the risk, you should do the following:

*Action 1 – Adjust her working conditions or hours to remove the risk*

If that is not possible:

*Action 2 – Give her suitable alternative work on the same terms and conditions*

The **Employment Rights Act 1996** states that suitable alternative work should be offered, where appropriate, before any suspension from work. This alternative work should be on the same terms and conditions, including pay.

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<sup>1</sup> The definition of 'giving birth' is defined as 'delivering a living child or, after 24 weeks of pregnancy, a still born child.'

If that is not possible:

*Action 3 – Suspend your employee on paid leave for as long as necessary to protect the health and safety of her and her child*

You do not have to conduct a new standalone risk assessment for new and expectant mothers, though you might find this helpful in deciding if additional action needs to be taken.

Regardless of whether your risk assessment review identifies risk, employers have a legal duty to revisit, review and revise the general risk assessment if they suspect it is no longer valid or there have been significant changes to anything it relates to (including employees).

Having regular discussions with a new or expectant mother is an important way to monitor any changes and address any concerns about health and safety.

Depending on the work involved, this might mean ongoing reviews for a pregnant worker because their dexterity, agility, co-ordination, speed of movement and reach could be impaired as their size increases. Working conditions can also present a risk to mother and child at different pregnancy stages.

### Common risks for new and expectant mothers

The most common risks from working conditions for new and expectant mothers include:

- standing or sitting for long periods;
- lifting or carrying heavy loads;
- long working hours;
- temperature;
- working at height;
- workstation and posture issues;
- work-related stress.

There are also risks through exposure to:

- lead;
- radioactive material;
- toxic chemicals like mercury and pesticides;
- carbon monoxide;
- infectious diseases.

### Rest and breastfeeding at work

You must provide an area where pregnant workers and breastfeeding mothers can rest. Where necessary, the rest area should include somewhere for them to lie down. New and expectant mothers are entitled to more frequent rest breaks so you should discuss this with them, agreeing on their timing and frequency.

There are no legal restrictions on breastfeeding at work or any time limits on how long this should take. **Before your employee returns from maternity leave you should ask for written confirmation if they are breastfeeding and their intention to do so on their return to the workplace. This will give you the opportunity to provide a healthy, safe, and suitable rest environment for them to do this.**

## Infection risks to new and expectant mothers

The HSE have produced a guidance document that deals with the *[Infection risks to new and expectant mothers in the workplace](#)*.

## Confidentiality

All medical advice, reports and certificates should take working/studying conditions into consideration. The employer must not make it known that a female is pregnant if she does not wish it to be known or does not consent to it. In certain circumstances it may be necessary to take steps (including limited disclosure) to protect her health and safety, but this should follow consultation with and agreement from the concerned female.

## Auditing, compliance and measuring performance

Compliance with this guidance may be audited in LA maintained schools by the Corporate Health and Safety Team as part of its three-year rolling health and safety management audit programme.

Any personal data the council holds will be kept in accordance with the six principles of the GDPR and in line with the council's Retention and Disposal Schedule. For further details please refer to the Council Data Protection Policy.

## References and related documents

The following documents are available to download from the Schools' Portal – Reference Library (All documents) – Health and Safety – New and Expectant Mothers:

HSE document: New and expectant mothers who work – a brief guide to your health and safety

Model risk assessment for new and expectant mothers

Other useful documents are as follows:

[Coronavirus infection and pregnancy \(rcog.org.uk\)](#)

[Employment Rights Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

[Employment Relations Act 1999 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

[Equality Act 2010 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

[Breastfeeding and going back to work - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

## Appendix 1 – Model risk assessment for new and expectant mothers

<b>RA reference</b>	Click or tap here to enter text.	<b>Activity description</b>	<b>Model risk assessment for new and expectant mothers</b>
<b>Assessment date</b>	Click or tap to enter a date.	<b>Assessor name</b>	
<b>Assessment team members</b>		<b>Review date</b>	Click or tap to enter a date.
<b>Location</b>		<b>Number of people who might be affected</b>	Click or tap here to enter text.
<b>Overall residual risk level following implementation of effective control measures</b>		<b>People who might be affected</b>	All employees Vulnerable children/adults Visitors/foster carers Persons with pre-existing medical conditions First aiders New/expectant mothers
<b>Date record created</b>		<b>Is this an acceptable risk?</b>	Choose an item.
<p>This risk assessment is in addition to the standard risk assessments we have in place for operations and premises, and identifies some additional hazards that might affect the new and expectant mother along with some suggested controls. It includes control measures for supporting new and expectant mothers during the current Coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p><b>NOTE: Where a member of staff wishes to continue to breastfeed when they return to work, they should confirm in writing beforehand. This will give you the opportunity to provide a healthy, safe, and suitable rest environment for them to do this.</b></p>			



Severity

1. Insignificant

No injury

2. Minor

Minor injuries requiring first aid

3. Moderate

First aid/RIDDOR reportable incident

4. Major

Serious injury/hospital attendance

5. Most severe

Disabling injury, long term ill health, fatality

Likelihood

1

Very unlikely, e.g. 1 in 1,000,000 chance of it happening

2

Unlikely, e.g. 1 in 100,000 chance of it happening

3

Possible, e.g. likely to occur during standard operations

4

Likely, e.g. has been known to happen before

5

Very likely, e.g. it is almost certain that something will happen

15-25 Unacceptable.

Stop activity and make immediate improvements

6-12 Tolerable

Look to improve within a specified timescale

1-5 Acceptable

No further action, but ensure controls are maintained

		Severity				
		1 Insignificant	2 Minor	3 Moderate	4 Major	5 Most severe
Likelihood	5 Very likely	5 Low Risk	10 Medium Risk	15 High Risk	20 High Risk	25 High Risk
	4 Likely	4 Low Risk	8 Medium Risk	12 Medium Risk	16 High Risk	20 High Risk
	3 Possible	3 Low Risk	6 Medium Risk	9 Medium Risk	12 Medium Risk	15 High Risk
	2 Unlikely	2 Low Risk	4 Low Risk	6 Medium Risk	8 Medium Risk	10 Medium Risk
	1 Very unlikely	1 Low Risk	2 Low Risk	3 Low Risk	4 Low Risk	5 Low Risk

Hazard description and how people are at risk	Potential risk	Current control measures	Additional control measures	Residual risk	Action to be taken by whom and when
<b>Risk of infectious diseases due to inadequate or poor hygiene facilities</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>COVID secure arrangements are in place.</li> <li>We follow the guidance issued by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists regarding <a href="#">Coronavirus infection and pregnancy</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Additional arrangements to be implemented when staff member reaches the third trimester (28 weeks).</i></li> <li><i>Refer to HSE infection guidance document <a href="#">Infection risks to new and expectant mothers in the workplace</a> .</i></li> </ul>		
<b>Postural problems associated with standing and other physical work</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff are advised to be aware of fatigue.</li> <li>Stay seated where possible.</li> <li>Take regular breaks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Ensure that staff member alternates between sitting and standing.</i></li> <li><i>Check whether more workspace is required .</i></li> </ul>		
<b>Slips, trips, strains and other manual handling injuries when moving around inside or outside the school site</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff are encouraged to take extra care when moving around the school site.</li> <li>Site staff will ensure that main pathways are gritted during adverse weather.</li> <li>Staff are advised not to carry loads such as books etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Ensure that there are trolleys available to assist with moving heavy loads.</i></li> </ul>		
<b>Musculoskeletal problems due to working with display screen equipment</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Separate DSE risk assessment will be carried out to ensure the workstation is set out appropriately.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Check that chair is adjustable.</i></li> </ul>		

<b>Musculoskeletal problems due to low frequency vibration (such as driving)</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff will not be expected to drive the school minibus whilst pregnant.</li> </ul>			
<b>Injury due to falls from height</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff will not be permitted to carry out any working at height.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Ensure arrangements are in place for suitable support to assist any working from height.</i></li> </ul>		
<b>Stress due to lack of rest or welfare facilities</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suitable facilities have been made available to staff for rest/breastfeeding.</li> <li>Staff will be encouraged to take plenty of rest, meal and refreshment breaks and have unrestricted access to drinking water.</li> <li>Existing COVID-19 measures will be followed regarding access to food and drink.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Arrangements to ensure that appropriate facilities are available to store food and drinks etc. during current COVID-19 measures.</i></li> <li><i>Appropriate cover to be available for extra visits to the toilet.</i></li> <li><i>Check that ventilation and heating can be altered to ensure comfortable working temperatures.</i></li> </ul>		
<b>Stress due to noise</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff will not be exposed to noise levels that exceed the national exposure limits.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Where exposure to excessive noise is unavoidable, appropriate PPE will be provided.</i></li> </ul>		
<b>Slips and falls when working alone</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff are discouraged from lone working during their pregnancy.</li> <li>Where lone working cannot be avoided staff will have access to a mobile phone or pager.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Ensure that pagers/mobiles are available and fully charged.</i></li> <li><i>Consider 'buddy system' calls every 30-60 minutes.</i></li> </ul>		

<b>Injury due to work-related violence</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adequate training and information is given to staff.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Where it is not possible to significantly reduce the risk of violence, then new/expectant and breastfeeding mothers must be found alternative work.</i></li> </ul>		
<b>Exposure to ionising radiation</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><sup>2</sup>Arrangements are in place to prevent new and expectant mothers from being exposed to ionising radiation .</li> </ul>			
<b>Exposure to lead or lead derivatives and mercury and mercury derivatives</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><sup>3</sup>New and expectant mothers will not be permitted to carry out any work that would expose them significantly to lead or mercury.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Consider alternative working conditions/work.</i></li> <li><i>Refer to CLEAPPS Factsheet PS13 'Pregnant, new and breastfeeding mothers and school science'</i></li> </ul>		
<b>Exposure due to handling contaminated materials including chemical spillages</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New and expectant mothers will not be required to clean any chemical spills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Ensure safety data sheets are available for all chemicals.</i></li> </ul>		
<b>Exposure to biological agents involving animals</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New and expectant mothers will not clean out animal cages.</li> <li>On farm activity visits they will be reminded to pay close attention to hygiene.</li> </ul>			

<sup>2</sup> Ionising Radiation Regulations 2017 require that the conditions of exposure to ionising radiation for pregnant employees must, after the employer has been notified of the pregnancy, be such that the foetus is unlikely to be exposed to an equivalent dose of more than 1mSv during the remainder of the pregnancy

<sup>3</sup> The Control of Lead at Work Regulations 2002 prohibit women (regardless of whether they are new and expectant mothers) from being involved in certain lead processes

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>They will not be permitted to go on a farm visit during lambing time.</li> </ul>			
		•	•		
		•	•		
<b>Assessment conclusion</b>		Providing the stated control measures are implemented and adhered to, the risk can reduce to a manageable level in normal circumstances. Compliance with this risk assessment should be monitored and reviewed to ensure control measures remain effective.			

<b>To be completed by the individual undertaking the risk assessment:</b>			
<b>Name:</b>		<b>Job title:</b>	
<b>Signature:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
I consider this risk assessment to be suitable and sufficient to control the risks to the health and safety of both employees undertaking the tasks involved and any other person who may be affected by the activities.			
<b>Name:</b>		<b>Job title:</b>	
<b>Signature:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	

CLEAPPS Fact sheets as follows are available from the CLEAPSS website: <http://www.cleapss.org.uk/>

HC061 Mercury and Cadmium

HC062 Mercury and Cadmium compounds

PX056 Lead and lead compounds

HC056 Lead, metal, carbonate oxides and sulfide

HSE guidance: [INDG373 New and expectant mothers who work: A brief guide to your health and safety \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)

## Appendix 2 – HSE flowchart for risk assessment

