



# Health and Safety Policy

**Policy Number:**

019-2014

**Academic Year:**

2024/2025 Onwards

**Target Audience:**

SERC's Governing Body, all staff and students

**Summary of Contents**

This policy sets out the College's legal responsibility and commitment to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of its staff, students and others (contractors and visitors).

**Enquiries**

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Last Reviewed: June 2024

Next Review: June 2026

**Approval By:**

Approval is for new Policies and substantive changes to existing policies during a review

CMT: 5 June 2024

Governing Body: June 2020

**Related Documents:**

- Risk Assessment Policy and Procedure
- Emergency Evacuation SOP
- Accident/Incident Reporting SOP
- COSHH Policy
- Control of Contractors Policy
- General H&S SOP

**Superseded Documents (if applicable):**

Health and Safety Policy:

08-2010

08-2013

**Date of Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations Screening (Section 75):**

N/A

**Date of Last Accessibility Screening:**

July 2023



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**Approved by**

**Date May 2022**

*Ken Webb*

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**Signature of Principal and Chief Executive**

**Ken Webb**

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**Name of Principal and Chief Executive**

**South Eastern Regional College**

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**Name of College**

## 1.0 Change History

Changes to this SOP are documented in Appendix 1 of this document. When reading electronic copies of this document, [you can click here to view the change history](#).

## 2.0 Purpose

- 2.1 South Eastern Regional College (SERC) is committed to ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of its staff, students and others (contractors; visitors; members of the public; DEL; and ETI) in accordance with best practice including all relevant statutory requirements, associated Codes of Practice and Guidance.
- 2.2 SERC's Governing Body has ultimate responsibility for the Health and Safety Policy and for monitoring the effectiveness of supporting systems to ensure that it continues to represent best practice. The Governing Body recognises and accepts its responsibilities for Health and Safety as an employer and in particular the duties laid down in Article 4 (Employer's Duties) of the Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978. It also recognises and accepts its duties laid down in Articles 5 and 6 of that Order to persons other than their employees.
- 2.3 The Principal and Chief Executive has executive responsibility for ensuring the implementation and monitoring of the Health and Safety Policy, including the provision of adequate resources and for ensuring that the College complies with all relevant statutory requirements and associated codes of practice.
- 2.4 Health and safety is an integral part of the management of the College's undertakings and all reasonably practicable steps will be taken to ensure, through the organisational structures, that:
  - the risks to health and safety throughout its undertaking are properly assessed;
  - there are safe systems of work in place;
  - there is a safe environment in which to work;
  - staff, students and others are given adequate supervision, information, instruction and training in order to carry out their work and studies safely.
- 2.5 The Head of Health and Safety will provide all necessary professional support and advice to Management.
- 2.6 Staff and students have a duty to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions. Staff and student cooperation and commitment is essential to ensure successful implementation of the health and safety policy. Staff members and students have a duty to immediately report anything that has the potential to cause injury or harm to both themselves or others.

## 3.0 Scope

This policy applies to the SERC Governing Body; all staff; students; visitors and authorised contractors.

The practical implementation of this policy will be detailed in separate procedures, including risk assessment, emergency evacuation, accident/incident reporting, educational trips and visits, COSHH and control of contractors etc.

Failure to comply or to co-operate with any health and safety measure required by the College may lead to disciplinary action being taken.

## **4.0 Statement of Intent**

In particular, it is SERC's policy to:

- 4.1 Provide so far as is reasonably practicable:
  - A working environment that is safe, without risks to health and with facilities and arrangements that are adequate for the welfare of those persons using the premises.
  - Safe plant, equipment and systems of work.
  - Information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure compliance with the College's Health and Safety Policy by staff, students, contractors and visitors.
  - Arrangements for the safe use, handling, storage and transport of articles, materials and substances. Ensure that hazards and risks associated with activities and tasks are identified, assessed and controlled.
- 4.2 Ensure that health and safety responsibilities are identified and understood at all levels.
- 4.3 Ensure that staff and students have sufficient knowledge, skills and capability to safely carry out their duties and studies.
- 4.4 Provide adequate resources to ensure that the policy can be implemented effectively.
- 4.5 Set health and safety objectives and ensure that goals are met.
- 4.6 Appoint competent Health and Safety personnel to assist management in implementing the Safety Policy.
- 4.7 Monitor and audit compliance with the Health and Safety Policy.
- 4.8 Involve, as appropriate, College staff in health and safety management, the development of policy, the drafting of procedures, the review of performance and in the recommendations for improvement.
- 4.9 Establish and maintain a Health and Safety Committee structure and to actively encourage consultation between Management, Trades Union Safety Representatives, other employees and student representatives to assist in the implementation of the Health and Safety Policy.
- 4.10 Carry out appropriate investigations and inspections to determine the primary cause of accidents or incidents that may on occasion result in injury to staff, students or visitors to the College including those students on placement with potential employers. When required to do so, SERC will take appropriate measures/action to redirect resulting claims to those individuals or groups deemed responsible and/or guilty of neglecting the SERC Health and Safety Policy.
- 4.11 Review the Health and Safety Policy on a regular basis and bring any changes deemed necessary to the attention of Staff and Students.

## **5.0 Responsibilities and Commitment**

Ensuring the Health and Safety of staff and students is an integral part of all activities within the College and all staff and students have a personal responsibility to help ensure that high

standards of health and safety are achieved and maintained. Specific responsibilities are set out below.

## **5.1 Governing Body**

The Governing Body recognises and accepts its responsibilities for Health and Safety as an employer and in particular the duties laid down in Article 4 (Employer's Duties) of the Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978. It also recognises and accepts its duties laid down in Articles 5 and 6 of that Order to persons other than their employees.

The Governing Body retains the primary responsibility for ensuring health and safety at work for staff, students and visitors. Members of the Governing Body are individually and collectively responsible for establishing and approving management arrangements for health and safety ensuring that appropriate measures have been identified and put in place to manage the risks to staff, students and to others arising from the undertakings of the College.

The Governing Body has a statutory responsibility under the Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978 for ensuring that the College's Health and Safety Policy is both understood and implemented.

The Governing Body will follow the [Guide for Governors of FE Colleges 2015](#) for Health and Safety, namely that:

- 5.1.1** The College has a Health and Safety statement of policy.
- 5.1.2** Management responsibility for health and safety issues is designated clearly.
- 5.1.3** Those with such designated responsibility in the college are aware of, and have access to, relevant regulations, advice and training.
- 5.1.4** Estates' personnel are aware of current legislation.
- 5.1.5** The College plans the implementation of its policy and sets health and safety standards which it expects to be achieved.
- 5.1.6** The governing body has mechanisms in place to monitor performance, especially with regard to agreed standards.
- 5.1.7** That all academic staff appointed by them holds appropriate qualifications both to teach the subjects required of them and to use necessary equipment and machinery.
- 5.1.8** That both academic and corporate staff are provided with regular training that will assist them to work safely.
- 5.1.9** The implementation of procedures for the safety of both academic and corporate staff that come under their control.
- 5.1.10** The implementation of procedures for the safety of all persons using the premises under their control.
- 5.1.11** That adequate finance is available to enable the policy to be fully implemented in the College.
- 5.1.12** The prompt and efficient maintenance of buildings and equipment.

- 5.1.13** That contractors carrying out the work on behalf of the College carry out their undertakings in a safe manner to ensure the health and safety of all personnel on the premises and have been suitably inducted by the appropriate Department/School and have provided the relevant documentation/safe systems of work.
- 5.1.14** That all equipment and materials either purchased or acquired by them are of the required standard, suitable and safe for their intended use.
- 5.1.15** That all staff have access to a copy of the Health and Safety Policy.

## **5.2 Principal and Chief Executive**

- 5.2.1** The Principal and Chief Executive is directly accountable to the Governing Body and has ultimate executive responsibility for the health and safety at work of all staff, students and visitors, establishing a formal structure of delegated management responsibility and accountability. In discharge of these responsibilities, the Principal and Chief Executive shall:
- 5.2.2** Require the College Management Team (CMT) to initiate and control appropriate safety procedures within their areas of responsibility in order to implement the Health and Safety Policy.
- 5.2.3** Review the effectiveness of the Health and Safety Policy with the CMT, taking into account reports of safety performance and, where necessary, require them to make amendments or improvements to the Policy.
- 5.2.4** Cultivate a positive health and safety culture and cascade this philosophy down throughout the organisation.
- 5.2.5** Require the CMT, when making recommendations to the Governing Body, to take account of the safety implications associated with the activities, plans and deployment of resources with special regard for the safety needs of employees and the general public.

## **5.3 Head of Facilities, Estates/Health and Safety**

The Head of Facilities, Estates/Health and Safety is specifically responsible for advising the Principal and Chief Executive on all aspects of health and safety and for the implementation and monitoring of the Health and Safety Policy within the College.

## **5.4 Directors / Campus Management**

- 5.4.1** Directors are responsible for the day to day application of the Health and Safety Policy for all staff within their area of line management. Where Directors have a Campus Management Role, they will also have accountability for the application of the Health & Safety for the Campus. In discharging this responsibility, the Director shall:
- 5.4.2** Ensure that all staff are provided with regular training that will assist them to work safely.
- 5.4.3** Ensure the provision, maintenance and enforcement of procedures for the safety of all campus users and visitors.
- 5.4.4** Prepare appropriate safety reports for the Principal and Chief Executive.
- 5.4.5** Report to CMT all defects and hazards within their responsibility.
- 5.4.6** Ensure that there are appropriate systems for monitoring health and safety.
- 5.4.7** Convene the Health and Safety Committee.

- 5.4.8** Chair regular Health and Safety Committee meetings (4 x per academic year) ensuring adequate attendance and representation from cross-sectional staff, Trade Unions and student representatives.
- 5.4.9** Ensure that an effective and efficient monitoring and reviewing process of health and safety awareness is adhered to.

## **5.5 Heads of Schools / Departments / Units**

It is the responsibility of the Head of School/Department/Unit to ensure that the health and safety management system within its remit adequately addresses the hazards within the School/Department/Unit and meets the needs of all staff, students and visitors. The Heads of Schools / Departments / Units are responsible for ensuring the content of the Health and Safety Policy is followed in practical terms in areas under their control. It is a fundamental requirement that all managers undergo appropriate training in the safety related aspects of their duties. In discharging their responsibility they shall:

- 5.5.1** Identify, develop, implement and monitor tailored standard operating procedures (SOPS) in relation to health and safety. These SOPs should be published and mechanisms put in place to ensure that all staff and all students are aware of their own responsibilities.
- 5.5.2** Ensure that all academic staff hold appropriate qualifications both to teach the subjects required of them and to use the necessary equipment and machinery.
- 5.5.3** Ensure that risk assessments are adequately and regularly carried out in all areas pertaining to their area of work and that their staff has the necessary training to carry out this function.
- 5.5.4** Monitor the risk assessments to ensure that they are being implemented and remain valid.
- 5.5.5** Ensure that all risk assessments within their School/Department/Unit are current, effective, signed and dated and regularly uploaded to the appropriate Health and Safety Team Site.
- 5.5.6** Ensure that their School/Department/Unit is adequately prepared for all Health and Safety Audits to be carried out by the Head of Health and Safety in conjunction with College Health and Safety Union representatives, referring to the approved Audit Academic Year Planner (AAYP).
- 5.5.7** Ensure that all accidents and incidents are reported (including those students on placement) using the appropriate online documentation and investigated (where required).
- 5.5.8** Ensure that staff in their particular areas are regularly trained, instructed and informed on health and safety matters and fully understand the legal implications of their action/inaction should they willingly or knowingly choose to ignore SERC policy.
- 5.5.9** Ensure that all safety reports pertaining to their School/Department/Unit are fully implemented.
- 5.5.10** Ensure that health and safety is included in the working instructions given to students and that student health and safety inductions are carried out, recorded, signed and dated by all individuals concerned.
- 5.5.11** Ensure that any equipment and machinery is safe and fully maintained at all times.
- 5.5.12** Ensure that all required personal protective clothing and equipment (PPE) is fit for purpose, and available prior to classes commencing and worn at all times.
- 5.5.13** Take the necessary action to ensure that their lecturers/tutors within their department have in place the necessary PEEP's (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans) so that emergency evacuation of the building is achieved.



## **5.6 Staff**

All staff are required to:

- 5.6.1** To take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their own acts or omissions and understand the legal implications to them of such inaction.
- 5.6.2** Co-operate with the College to achieve safe working practices and comply with SERC policies and procedures.
- 5.6.3** Ensure that all risk assessments/COSHH registers are current and uploaded to the Health and Safety Team site (by the responsible person) and that all work areas are effectively prepared for any Health and Safety Audit to take place.
- 5.6.4** Ensure that appropriate and suitable risk assessments are compiled if using a classroom, workshop, and conference room etc for any other use other than that stipulated and covered in the original risk assessment.
- 5.6.5** Ensure that all Health and Safety inductions for students have been carried out and that all necessary documentation and records have been signed, dated by the student and are available (if requested) for any future Health and Safety Audit.
- 5.6.6** Ensure that they take reasonable care during their work activities to avoid accident or injury to themselves or anyone who may be affected by what they are doing.
- 5.6.7** Observe all safety rules, instructions, guidance and advice issued by the College.
- 5.6.8** Observe all safety rules relating to specific machinery or processes and report any defects or maintenance issues to the appropriate department (Estates).
- 5.6.9** Ensure that all required personal protective clothing and equipment (PPE) is both available prior to commencement of the class, fit for purpose and used by both themselves and students.
- 5.6.10** Lecturing staff should not leave their class unattended at any time unless they have adequate cover in place to ensure the safety and well-being of the students within the workshop/classroom.
- 5.6.11** Report all accidents to their line manager and ensure that the accident report forms are completed online immediately.
- 5.6.12** It is crucial that staff immediately report and record online any defects or shortcomings which may affect the health and safety of themselves or others, not just in the workshops and classrooms but also within their own particular work space.
- 5.6.13** Be knowledgeable with risk assessments which are appropriate to their area of work and comply with the control measures which are in place for their health and safety.
- 5.6.14** Assist and co-operate fully in the investigation of accidents and incidents.
- 5.6.15** Co-operate fully with their line managers and CMT on all matters pertaining to health and safety including working from home (if required).

## **5.7 Students/Trainees**

All students/trainees are required by the College:

- 5.7.1** To take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their own acts or omissions.

- 5.7.2 To familiarise themselves and comply with any relevant policies/procedures.
- 5.7.3 To co-operate with the College and its officers to enable the College to comply with its statutory obligations.
- 5.7.4 To have fully completed a Health and Safety induction training programme and signed and dated all necessary paperwork on completion.
- 5.7.5 To wear appropriate protective clothing when issued and observe proper standards of behaviour.
- 5.7.6 To make themselves aware of the College's first aid and evacuation procedures.
- 5.7.7 To use equipment, machinery, plant and substances in accordance with the instructions and training that they have received.
- 5.7.8 To immediately inform their tutor or supervisor of any dangers or shortcomings in the health and safety arrangements or of any equipment, facilities or machinery which may constitute a hazard, even if it appears there is no risk of immediate danger.
- 5.7.9 Not to intentionally and recklessly misuse or interfere with anything provided in the interest of health, safety and welfare.

## **5.8 Members of the Public and Visitors**

SERC must take such care as is reasonable in the circumstances to ensure the health and safety of members of the public and visitors (including contractors; visitors; members of the public; DEL; and ETI) to the College. In order to meet these responsibilities, the College must take such steps as is reasonable to:

- Provide safe access/egress.
- Control work processes such that visitors are safeguarded against hazards presented to them by the College's activities.
- Control hazardous areas by means of excluding or restricting access.
- Ensure risk assessments are conducted for all major events (including those managed by outside bodies).

## **5.9 Health and Safety Committee**

This statutory committee provides the opportunity for staff and student representatives to participate in the development of strategic health and safety policies for the College. Its purpose is to provide a forum for the formal consultation and communication with employee and student representatives on health, safety and welfare matters at work.

The Committee is made up of a Chairperson, employee representatives (both Union appointed and others) from all areas of the College's working environment and student representatives (Students' Union). The Chief Human Resources Officer (in conjunction with the Head of Health and Safety) are responsible for taking executive action on the Committee's decisions and recommendations and shall act between meetings.

The terms of reference for the Health and Safety Committee are:

- 5.9.1 To consider conditions under which staff and students work in all buildings and other places used by the College and to make recommendations to the Principal and Chief Executive with regard to its obligations to provide a safe and healthy work place and working environment for staff and students.

- 5.9.2** To promote in all staff and students a positive attitude to a health and safety culture so that they both demand and accept safe procedures for working and studying within the College and at home if deemed necessary.
- 5.9.3** To consider reports made to the Principal and Chief Executive by any enforcing authority, eg HSE Inspectors, Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service, Insurance assessors etc.
- 5.9.4** To consider at each meeting, all accidents/incidents which have been reported and any consequential remedial action taken since the last meeting.
- 5.9.5** To ensure that a programme of suitable health and safety training is in place e.g. Risk Assessment/first aid training and to help identify health and safety training requirements.
- 5.9.6** To upload to the SERC Intranet site meeting minutes and records of its proceedings and reports presented to the Principal and Chief Executive and to the College Management Team.
- 5.9.7** To consider any alterations to the structure and grounds of the College having regard to the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978.
- 5.9.8** To draw up and monitor safety procedures where appropriate.
- 5.9.9** To consider any other matters arising which may have an effect on health, safety and welfare within the College.

## **5.10 Facilities, Estates/Health and Safety Department**

The function of the officers of the Facilities, Estates/Health and Safety department is to provide technical support services such as guidance and support on Fire Safety, Electrical Safety, Construction Safety, etc. The officers of the Estates department (or appropriate HOS/Department) are also responsible for ensuring that all safety matters pertaining to external contractors on site are fully addressed.

## **6.0 Responsible Owner**

It is the responsibility of Head of Facilities, Estates/Health and Safety to ensure that this policy is implemented, adhered to and reviewed.

## **7.0 Communication Plan**

- 7.1 This Policy will be uploaded to the College intranet and referred to in staff induction and training.

## **8.0 Review**

- 8.1 This Policy will be reviewed biennially, or when the need for change has been identified.

## Appendix 1: Document Change History

Version	Date	Change Detail
1.0	June 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updates Made: Update at Para 4.10 to clarify health and safety investigations include incidents occurring whilst students on placement.</li> <li>• Update at Para 5.1.13 to clarify that budget holders engaging contractors have responsibility for providing appropriate induction and guidance on safe systems of work.</li> <li>• Update at Para 5.5.7 clarifying the requirement to report all accidents or incidents includes students who are on placement.</li> <li>• Update at Paras 5.6.15, 5.9.2 to include specific reference to working from home.</li> </ul>
1.1	May 2022	<p>Updates Made:</p> <p>Additions to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Para 2.6: Staff members and students have a duty to immediately report anything that has the potential to cause injury or harm to both themselves or others.</li> <li>• Para 5.5.5 – “signed and dated”</li> <li>• Para 5.5.12 – “is fit for purpose”</li> <li>• Para 5.6.12 – “It is crucial that”. “and record online”. “not just in the workshops and classrooms but also within their own particular work space”</li> <li>• Para 5.7.8 – “immediately” “it appears”</li> </ul>
1.2	July 2023	Transferred to new accessibility template
1.3	June 2024	Updated reference to Head of Health and Safety to ‘Head of Estates, Facilities and H&S’ to reflect restructuring changes.