



## Health and Safety Policy

### LOCAL POLICY

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3.0	Peter Kane	Changes to job titles following restructure	04/10/2016
4.0	Peter Kane	<p>Changes to reflect transfer of responsibility from Corporate Development to Estate &amp; FM for compliance monitoring, communication of health and safety information and development and roll out of health and safety processes and plans to ensure the aims of this policy can be achieved.</p> <p>Peter Kane / Lisa McCartney: Changes to job titles e.g., Director of Transition replaced by Director of People, Policy and Planning; Chief Operating Officer replaced by Director of Corporate Service; and Director of Curriculum replaced by Director of Curriculum and Learner Success; Director of Finance and Corporate Services changes to Director of Corporate Services; Human Resources Department changes to the Department of Human Resources; and the removal of a sentence in 4.16 as a result of GDPR (passing of risk assessments to parents and guardians).</p>	26/02/2019
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6.0	Estates & FM	<p>Changes to roles to reflect restructuring at Executive Leadership Team level.</p> <p>Changes to paragraph 3.3, 3.4, 3.9, 3.10, 3.14, 3.15 and 3.16 to include references to health and well-being.</p> <p>Page 25, Paragraph 4.24- New paragraph inserted on Travel arrangements.</p> <p>Page 26, Paragraph 4.25 New paragraph inserted on Covid management arrangements.</p> <p>Page 26, Paragraph 4.26- New paragraph inserted on Mental Health and Well-being</p>	16/08/2021
7.0	Estates & FM	<p>Changes to the policy as a result of internal restructuring including the renaming of the People, Policy and Planning Directorate to People and Place and reallocation of responsibilities</p>	November 2021
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		<p>4.5 Change of membership of Advisory Health &amp; Safety and Well-being committee to include CAM / Manager from each curriculum and support department.</p> <p>4.7 Electrical equipment Addition that staff must not bring in their own personal electrical equipment without prior approval from the Estate &amp; FM Department</p> <p>4.26 Reference to Student Safeguarding, Care &amp; Welfare policy</p> <p>4.27 Addition of campus security arrangements</p>	
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11	Head of Estates & FM	<p>Minor updates: to Policy aim section at p.9 and P28, to include reference to Martyn's Law; Update to title of Director of Curriculum at section 3.5</p>	5 <sup>th</sup> June 2026

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# 1 Policy Aim, Objectives and Scope

## Policy Aim

To comply with the statutory duty requirements under the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 and all subsequent and subordinate legislation to manage the health, safety and welfare of all employees, learners and visitors.

In addition, Belfast Metropolitan College recognises its responsibilities under the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act (Martyn's Law) and is committed to taking proportionate steps to reduce the risk of harm to staff, learners, visitors and members of the public arising from terrorist acts. This includes the implementation of appropriate preparedness, protective and response arrangements across all campuses. Staff and learners should follow site lockdown or evacuation instructions, where issued.

## Objectives

- To establish structures to effectively manage health and safety on all campuses and to comply with health and safety legislation.
- To develop a positive health and safety culture and promote good practice with regard to approved codes of practice and guidance.
- To ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all employees, learners, visitors and contractors; and
- To establish a system to review all aspects of Health and Safety by appropriate training, communication, inspection, monitoring and auditing.

## Scope

This policy applies to all staff (including agency/workers), Board of Governors, service users (including learners), visitors and contractors. Roles and responsibilities of all are clearly stated within the policy and are supported by robust procedures.

## 2 Statement of Intent

Belfast Met as an employer and service provider, recognises and accepts its responsibilities to comply with the statutory duty requirements under the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 and subsequent regulations, to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable the health, safety and welfare of all employees, learners and visitors.

The Governing Body is committed to developing a positive health and safety culture and promoting good practice with regard to approved codes of practice and guidance. It will seek to provide and maintain so far as is reasonably practicable:

- A safe working environment with adequate facilities and arrangements for the welfare of employees and learners.
- Safe plant and systems of work, without risk to health.
- Arrangements for handling, storage, using and transporting of articles and substances without risk to health.
- Information, instruction, training and supervision of work safety; and
- A safe place to work with safe access and egress.

All employees of Belfast Metropolitan College (Belfast Met) have a duty to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their own acts or omissions.

Belfast Met also recognises its duty to people who are not in its employment, learners, visitors, contractors and the general public, who may be affected by its activities.

Belfast Met will supply them with suitable and sufficient information to ensure they are not exposed to risk to their health and safety.

The actions of visitors and contractors will be controlled in such a way so as not to cause harm to other users of the College.

Belfast Met in consultation with recognised trade unions and with individuals will:

- Establish structures, allocate responsibilities and implement arrangements to effectively manage and deliver the health and safety functions on all campuses; and
- Review all aspects of the Health and Safety related policies and procedures by appropriate inspection, monitoring and auditing.

This policy will be reviewed every year or when there are any significant changes in the organisation.



Signed

Date: 5/6/2026

Damian Duffy

Principal and Chief Executive

## 3 RESPONSIBILITIES AND ORGANISATION

### 3.1 Board of Governors

The overall responsibility for Health and Safety within the Belfast Met rests with the Board of Governors.

- The Board of Governors will ensure that sufficient resources, both financial and physical are available so that this policy and its arrangements can be implemented effectively.
- To ensure that this policy is implemented and maintained the Board of Governors will delegate duties to Belfast Met employees as required.
- These employees may also delegate duties to other staff so as to enable the requirements of the policy to be carried out with due diligence; and
- Delegation of the individual duties and responsibilities to employees does not in any way detract or remove the ultimate responsibility and duty of care placed on the Board of Governors by the Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978.

### 3.2 Principal and Chief Executive

The Principal and Chief Executive on behalf of the Governing Body has executive responsibility for ensuring the Health and Safety at work of all staff, learners and visitors.

The Principal and Chief Executive will also ensure that those he/she has delegated authority to, have identified, put in place and applied appropriate measures to manage the risks to staff, learners and to others arising from the undertakings of the Belfast Met. The Principal and Chief Executive will act as Chairperson of the College Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee.

### 3.3 Executive Leadership Team

The Executive Leadership Team, chaired by the Principal and Chief Executive will, as part of its role, oversee the Belfast Met Health, Safety and Wellbeing functions and will be responsible for:

- Receiving reports, minutes, recommendation from external bodies and committees; and
- Receiving monitoring reports from the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committees relating to the Health and Safety Policy and Procedures and actioning requirements when advised to do so.

### 3.4 Chief Operating Officer

The Chief Operating Officer (COO) has overall college responsibility for ensuring that:

- Overall assurance is provided to the Executive Leadership Team of compliance with estate related health and safety matters.
- Appropriate mechanisms are in place to effectively communicate health and safety information.
- Safe working practices are applied in services provided by all staff across the Corporate Directorate.
- Systems are in place to identify hazards and assess risks in each Department of the Directorate.
- Introduction of measures to control risks.
- All equipment belonging to this department is serviced and maintained as per manufacturer's instruction, and adequate records maintained.
- Ensure that all IT equipment meets all relevant health and safety standards.

- Ensure staff receive adequate training to undertake tasks safely.
- Ensure staff receive adequate training to undertake job/ studies safely.
- Processes and plans are in place to ensure the aims of this policy can be achieved.
- Compliance against these policies and procedures is effectively monitored.
- Adequate funding is made available for health and safety to ensure legislative requirements are met.
- Register of current legislation is maintained and regularly reviewed to ensure policies/procedures are up to date; and
- Sufficient resources are made available for health and safety and well-being in line with budget requests made by relevant budget holder.

In addition to this, the Chief Operating Officer is responsible for ensuring application of safe working practices in services provided by all staff in the Estate & Sustainability Department. This includes ensuring:

- Safe working practices are applied in services provided by each department.
- Systems are in place to identify hazards and assess risks in each department.
- Introduction of measures to control risks.
- Statutory compliance for all College buildings, including buildings, integral services, heat and lighting, hazardous materials e.g. asbestos.
- A register is maintained for all Estate & Sustainability statutory checks. This includes curriculum equipment with emissions, pressure vessels and lifting equipment.
- The accident and incident reporting process is managed.
- Safety testing of electrical equipment.
- Fire safety management; and
- Management of asbestos and Legionella.

### 3.5 Director of Curriculum

The Director of Curriculum is responsible for ensuring that:

- Safe working practices are applied in services provided by all staff in the Directorate.
- Systems are in place to identify hazards and assess risks in each Department of the Directorate.
- Introduction of measures to control risks.
- All equipment belonging to this department is serviced and maintained as per manufacturer's instruction and adequate records maintained.
- A comprehensive training programme is in place with regard to health, safety and well-being in the College, ensuring that health, safety and well-being training is provided on policy, procedures and in response to risk assessments.
- An outline training programme is developed on key areas of college activity in relation to health and safety for delivery by the Human Resources team.
- Ensure staff and learners receive adequate training to undertake job/ studies safely.
- Adequate and appropriate procedures are in place to enable all learning/ training takes place in a safe environment (including placements).
- Risk assessments are undertaken on all activities organised by each Department in the Directorate; and
- Risk assessments are undertaken on all placement workplaces.

### 3.6 Director of People and Culture

The Director of People and Culture,

- Ensure staff receive adequate training to undertake job/ studies safely; and
- In conjunction with the Health and Safety Manager, will develop a comprehensive training strategy to ensure that all staff receive appropriate health, safety and well-being training, whatever their position in the organisation. This will be informed by training requests, derived from risk assessments made by the relevant departments.
- Appropriate mechanisms are in place to effectively communicate staff wellbeing information.
- Managing sickness absence, specifically work-related stress.
- Safe working practices are applied in services provided by all staff in the Department of Human Resources

### 3.7 Director of Development and Partnerships

As part of its role, the Development and Partnership department will be responsible for ensuring, for those students / trainees/ apprentices under their remit, that:

- Procedures are in place to ensure the Belfast Met's 'Duty of Care' extends to trainee and apprentice activities both in college, on employers' premises and during host placements.
- Procedures are in place to enable all learning to take place in a safe and healthy environment. Systems are in place to identify hazards and assess risks in each Department of the Directorate.
- The placement workplace is monitored to ensure that safe conditions are maintained. Where hazards are identified, they must ensure the risks are controlled, so far as is reasonably practicable; and
- All tenants are made aware of their responsibilities under **The Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978** and that they must cooperate, as required, with Belfast Met's duty to ensure compliance with any relevant Health and Safety legislation, policies and procedures.

### 3.8 Heads of Department

Heads of Department will be responsible for ensuring:

- Safe working practices are maintained effectively, and that Health, Safety and well-being measures are implemented within their department.
- Procedures are in place to enable all work and learning to take place in a safe and healthy environment.
- That all equipment under their respective management is serviced and maintained as per manufacturers' instructions, with all records maintained to demonstrate maintenance.
- They cooperate fully with Estate & FM Department to facilitate the statutory testing/inspection of Belfast Met's plant and equipment as appropriate.
- The provision of safe access and egress of the Belfast Met buildings within their areas is maintained.
- A system is in place for identifying hazards and assessing risks in their area of responsibility, and that prompt and effective action is taken to eliminate or control identified risks or hazards.

- They facilitate the completion of any investigation, as required, for all accidents and incidents that are not of a minor nature and fall within their department's remit.
- Their own, their staff's and their learners' responsibilities under the College Health and Safety Policy and all other health and safety related policies (e.g. Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) Policy, Fire Safety Policy etc) are clearly communicated and acted upon.
- Adequate measures are taken to control the work carried out by their staff and learners to prevent the creation of risk.
- That all staff and learners receive sufficient training to enable them to carry out their duties/studies, so far as is reasonably practicable, without risk to health and safety.
- They action as appropriate any reports of any Health and Safety defect.
- Procedures are in place to ensure the Belfast Met's 'Duty of Care' extends to trainee and apprentice activities under their remit, both in college, on employers' premises and during host placements; and
- The placement workplace is monitored to ensure safe conditions are maintained; where hazards are identified, they must ensure the risks are controlled, so far as is reasonably practicable.

### 3.9 Head of Finance

The Head of Finance will be responsible for ensuring:

- Adequate funding is identified for health, safety and well-being purposes to ensure all legislative requirements are met in line with budget requests made; and
- Sufficient resources are made available for health, safety and well-being in line with budget requests made by relevant budget holders.

### 3.10 Department of Estate and Sustainability Management

The Department of Estate and Sustainability Management is responsible for ensuring all processes and plans are in place to ensure the aims of this policy can be achieved, for the maintenance of retained Estate buildings, plant, facilities, energy generating and distribution networks and ensuring statutory compliance in all areas related to the building infrastructure and operation are met.

The Head of Estate and Sustainability Management will be responsible for ensuring:

- Health and Safety compliance monitoring of all departments.
- Processes and plans are in place to ensure aims of this policy can be achieved.
- Compliance with all statutory requirements relating to the College buildings.
- College buildings and integral services do not endanger the health and safety of the persons using them.
- The provision of lighting, heating, ventilation and supply of drinking water is adequately maintained, in accordance with legislation and relevant approved Codes of Practice relating to health and safety.
- All means of access to and egress from college buildings are adequately maintained, particularly with regard to the needs of persons with a disability.
- Ensuring that all health and safety aspects are considered with regard to:
  - (i) The design or acquisition of new buildings and plant.
  - (ii) The alteration of existing buildings and plant.

- Where any major work is carried out, a risk assessment shall be undertaken.
- All building and maintenance work is carried out by trained and competent personnel.
- Any safe systems of work necessary to protect staff, learners, visitors or members of the public will be undertaken.
- Hazardous tasks and associated risks are identified, and appropriate working procedures are developed, communicated and rigorously applied, including but not limited to:
  - (i) Work above ground level.
  - (ii) Work on energised systems.
  - (iii) Asbestos removal.
  - (iii) Hot work (including use of naked flame); and
- A register of Estate & Sustainability plant requiring statutory checks and inspections is maintained.

### **3.11 Health, Safety and Environmental Manager**

The Health, Safety and Environmental Manager will be responsible for:

- The review, development, implementation and monitoring of the College's Health and Safety management systems, to ensure the safety of staff, students, visitors and contractors, in line with current Health and Safety and associated legislation.
- Assisting in the implementation and monitoring of all aspects of Estate Statutory compliance and health and safety; and
- Assisting with the monitoring of the College's PFI/PPP providers' execution of their duties as per the Project Agreements to ensure full contract compliance with respect to statutory compliance and risk management.

### **3.12 Health, Safety and Well-being Committees**

There is an Advisory Health, Safety and Well-being Committee which reports to the College Health, Safety and Well-being Committee.

The Advisory committee will meet twice each academic year, with the College Health and Safety Committee meeting each term.

The main function of these committees is to review the measures taken to ensure the health, safety and well-being of employees, learners and visitors to the college, and they will be responsible for:

- Policy and procedures development.
- Safety culture and organisation.
- Information dissemination.
- Health and safety staff development; and
- Risk assessment coordination.

### **3.13 Trade Union Health and Safety Representatives**

As part of their role, they will carry out statutory duties on behalf of employees as covered by the Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978; Safety Representatives and Safety Committee Regulations (NI) 1979 and The Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations (NI) 1996, which will include:

- Consultation with Belfast Met on health and safety and well-being matters.
- Representation to Belfast Met concerning hazards, dangerous occurrences and accidents; and
- Attendance at meetings of the Advisory Health, Safety and Well-being Committee within their capacity as safety representative or representative of employee safety.

### 3.14 Line Managers

Line Managers will be responsible for ensuring:

- Safe working practices are maintained effectively, and that health and safety and well-being measures are implemented within their Department.
- Employees are instructed in the relevant health and safety rules and procedures in place to enable all work and learning to take place in a safe and healthy environment.
- That work equipment used by staff is suitable for the purpose and in good working order.
- That equipment is used in accordance with the manufacturers or suppliers' instructions and that, where necessary, their staff will receive sufficient instruction and training in the safe use of equipment.
- When deciding what equipment to purchase, line managers should seek to ensure that the equipment is fit for purpose and, where applicable, conforms to relevant British or EU standards / legislation.
- When purchasing major items or products / supplies with a significant health and safety aspect, managers should seek advice from the Estate & FM regarding need for access, floor loading, power and water supplies, alterations, maintenance etc. and complete relevant health and safety pre checklist.
- Ensure all personal protective equipment (PPE) is issued and maintained as appropriate; and
- The principles and behaviours of good health and safety management are actively promoted within their area of responsibility.

### 3.15 Employees

All employees are required by Belfast Met to:

- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions.
- Familiarise themselves with any relevant College health and safety policies/procedures.
- Cooperate with the College to enable it to discharge its statutory duty and comply with any statutory requirement imposed upon it.
- Use equipment, machinery, plant and substances in accordance with the instructions and training that they have received.
- Inform their line manager of any dangers or shortcomings in the health and safety arrangements, even if there is no risk of immediate danger.
- Not to intentionally and recklessly misuse or interfere with anything provided in the interest of health, safety, and well-being; and
- Report all accidents and health and safety hazards to their line manager.

### 3.16 Learners

All learners of Belfast Met have the following responsibilities under Common Law duty of care:

- Comply with the Belfast Met Health and Safety Policy.
- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others affected by their acts and omissions.
- Cooperate with the College to enable it to discharge its statutory duty and comply with any statutory requirement imposed upon it.
- Observe safety rules and procedures and employ proper standards of behaviour.
- Make proper use of safety equipment; and
- Report all accidents and any health and safety hazards to their lecturer.

### 3.17 Members of the Public and Visitors

Belfast Met will take such care as is reasonable to ensure the health and safety of members of the public and visitors to the College. In order to meet these responsibilities, the College will:

- 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; and
- Ensure risk assessments are conducted for all major events (including those managed by outside bodies).

## 4 Arrangements

The following arrangements ensure Belfast Met meets its objectives to provide a safe and healthy working and/or learning environment.

These arrangements cover common occupational health and safety issues. Belfast Met will review, amend and add to these arrangements on an annual basis or sooner if required. Departments whose activities may give rise to specific risks will produce additional arrangements to ensure adequate controls are maintained.

### 4.1 Accident and Incident Reporting

All accidents, incidents, near misses and dangerous occurrences must be recorded on an Accident Report or an Incident Report Form (near misses are reported on incident forms or MS Forms). Accidents, incidents, near misses and dangerous occurrences include:

- Accidents to staff which resulted in even a minor injury.
- Accidents involving third parties, i.e. non-employees, learners, visitors, contractors and members of the public.
- Incidents such as theft, break-in, water damage (flooding) and vandalism.
- Near misses - incidents where no one is injured but there was a potential for injury.
- Physical assaults or verbal abuse.
- Dangerous occurrences such as fires, gas leaks or explosions, chemical spillages, damage to asbestos materials resulting in any person being exposed to asbestos fibres, failure or collapse of lifting equipment such as hoists, etc; and
- Work-related ill-health such as dermatitis from use of chemicals, occupational asthma, and musculoskeletal pain as a result of using computers or manual handling etc.

The procedure for reporting an accident, incident, near miss or dangerous occurrence including the appropriate form can be obtained on the staff Intranet.

### 4.2 Communicating Health and Safety Information

#### *Health and Safety Information for Employees Regulations (N.I.) 1991*

These regulations require information relating to health, safety and welfare to be provided for employees by means of posters or leaflets in the 'approved form' and published for the purposes of the regulations by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

The regulations require the name and address of the Enforcing Authority to be written in the appropriate spaces on the poster and, when the leaflet is provided, it should specify the information in a written notice. Estate & FM will be responsible for ensuring that the 'Health and Safety Law' – 'What You Should Know' poster is displayed in a prominent position at all campuses, where it can be read by all employees, learners and visitors.

Belfast Met considers itself a responsible employer, and it will ensure that all employees read this policy and that any areas that are not understood are explained to them in detail.

Regular health and safety information will be posted by the relevant department on the Belfast Met Intranet and notice boards located throughout the College.

### 4.3 Health and Safety Signage

All health and safety signage, whether on Belfast Met campuses or elsewhere, issued in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Order (N.I.) 1978 and its associated legislation must be adhered to.

All employees, visitors, and contractors must take the necessary action to ensure that they are familiar with the meaning of any warning and advisory signs and comply with them.

Any suggestions on how notices may improve health and safety within Belfast Met should be communicated to the relevant line manager for assessment and feasibility.

### 4.4 Consultation with Employees

Belfast Met recognises its duties under **The Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations (N.I.) 1979** and in particular to consult, and provide facilities and assistance, with any recognised Trade Union Health and Safety representative.

To ensure compliance with this duty of consultation with employees the Health and Safety and Wellbeing Committees will convene three times each academic year.

Belfast Met also recognises its duty under The Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations (N.I.) 1996 to consult with its employees who do not have representation under The Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations (N.I.) 1979 on matters that affect their Health and Safety. In particular:

- The introduction of any measures in the workplace, which may substantially affect the health and safety of the employees.
- The guidance for appointing or nominating an employee's representative to carry out their responsibilities will be provided with the necessary resources that may be required to allow them to carry out their duty.
- Any health and safety information that the employer is required to provide under relevant statutory provisions.
- The planning and organisation of any health and safety training requirements; and
- The health and safety consequences of the introduction of new technologies into the workplace.

## 4.5 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committees

There are two Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committees at Belfast Met: The College Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee and the Advisory Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee. The Advisory committee will convene twice each academic year, with the College Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee meeting on a quarterly basis.

The College Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee will operate at a strategic level and the Advisory Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee will conduct their business at an operational level. The Advisory Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee will report directly to the College Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee.

### **The College Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee will consist of:**

- Executive Leadership team
- Strategic Leadership team

### **The Advisory Health and Safety Committee will consist of:**

- Head of Department Estate & Sustainability (Chair).
- Health and Safety and Environment Manager (Vice Chair)
- Capital & Projects Manager, Contracts & Energy Manager and Operations Manager.
- Estate Compliance Officer.
- Nominated HoD/CAM for each curriculum department.
- Nominated Manager from each Support department.
- Union representatives: UCU; NASUWT; NIPSA; T&G Unite
- Student Union representative
- PPP/ PFI representatives (if applicable)
- Other members of staff as required

## 4.6 Contractors / Suppliers

Before appointment of a contractor who will be engaging in any invasive works to the fabric of any Belfast Met building, any person seeking to appoint that contractor must consult the Estate and Facilities Management team.

The person appointing the Contractor is responsible for ensuring that the Contractor is competent and will not put any staff, learners or visitors at risk. They must obtain method statements and risk assessments from the Contractor in order to assess their ability to undertake work safely.

Contractors and/or Suppliers must be provided with information on any matter that may affect their health and safety while working in the College, including emergency evacuation procedures, locations of any asbestos-containing materials etc.

The person appointing the Contractor/Supplier must also ensure that there are adequate arrangements for monitoring the safety performance of contractors/suppliers while the work is in progress. There should be arrangements in place for taking action where the contractors fail to perform to agreed standards.

#### **4.7 Electrical Safety**

Staff must not undertake any work on electrical equipment or installations, including resetting trip fuses, without receiving appropriate training and approval from the Estate & FM Department. Staff must not bring in their own personal electrical equipment without prior approval from the Estate & FM Department

The Department of Estate & FM will arrange for fixed electrical installations and all portable electrical items to be safety tested at regular intervals. All electrical installations will conform to the requirements of the latest edition of the Institution of Electrical Engineers' Regulations for Electrical Installations, and all work must be carried out in accordance with the Electricity at Work Regulations.

Electrical socket outlets must not be overloaded, and where it is necessary to use extension leads, these should be the fused and switched type to prevent overloading.

Before using any piece of electrical equipment, staff must undertake a visual inspection to ensure that the plug tops, leads and outer castings are free from defects.

The electrical equipment must be suitable for the environment in which it is to be used. Only portable or low voltage equipment should be used in outside areas.

#### **4.8 Fire Safety**

##### ***Fire Policy***

A Fire Safety Policy is in place in the College to comply with the statutory duty requirements under The Fire Safety Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010 and the Health & Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 and all subsequent and subordinate legislation.

The policy will be reviewed every year or when there are any significant changes in the organisation including changes to college premises, new equipment/material, new procedures and a significant change in staff numbers.

##### ***Fire Risk Assessments***

The Department of Estate & FM will arrange for fire risk assessments to be undertaken for Belfast Met campuses on an annual basis. Information on the findings of the fire risk assessment will be made available to the relevant personnel.

## 4.9 Emergency Evacuations

During induction, all staff, learners and contractors will receive appropriate information and instruction regarding the action to be taken in the event of an emergency e.g. fire.

Heads of Department will ensure that they adhere to the Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan Policy (PEEP Policy) and ensure adequate PEEP plans will be written for their staff and learners who cannot safely exit a campus building without assistance.

[The Belfast Met Emergency Evacuation Procedures for all campuses can be accessed via the College Intranet site](#)

## 4.10 First Aid

Belfast Met has a duty as an employer to assess its requirements for first aid and ensure that there is adequate provision to meet those requirements. A list of current first aiders can be obtained on the College Intranet. Defibrillators are located at the entrance to all campuses. Estate & FM will assess first aid provision and ensure refresher training is arranged.

## 4.11 Health and Safety Training

The Head of Human Resources, in conjunction with the Health and Safety Manager will develop a comprehensive training strategy to ensure that all staff receive appropriate health and safety training, whatever their position in the organisation. Line managers must ensure that all reasonable efforts are made to release staff to attend health and safety training.

### Induction Training

All new staff will attend induction sessions to ensure that they receive adequate information on the College's arrangements for health and safety, including emergency evacuation procedures. This will be provided by the Department of Human Resources within the first week of employment or as soon as practically possible.

A local induction must be held by individual departments to provide departmental arrangements for health and safety.

### Other Health and Safety Training

Other training on specific topics such as display screen equipment (DSE), manual handling, control of substances hazardous to health (COSHH) etc will be provided as required. Risk assessments and analysis of accidents will be used to identify training needs and target resources. Where appropriate, job and task analysis will be used to identify the training needs for individual work activities.

#### **4.12 Staff Training Records**

Department of Human Resources will maintain a database of all training provided to staff.

#### **4.13 Lone Working**

Line managers must ensure that there are arrangements in place to address any health and safety issue arising from employees undertaking 'lone working'. In this context, 'lone working' means someone working on their own without access to immediate support from colleagues and includes staff working from home or teaching at external locations. Line managers should identify which members of their staff are required to work on their own for the whole or part of their working time.

As part of the risk assessment of any given work activity, line managers must consider whether 'lone working' increases or creates additional risks. Arrangements for lone working should include, where applicable, means of monitoring and communicating with the lone-working employee, both routinely and in emergencies.

#### **4.14 Managing Asbestos**

The Department of Estate & FM is responsible for ensuring procedures are in place to manage asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) in order to prevent its staff, learners, contractors and other visitors from being exposed to asbestos fibres while in a Belfast Met campus.

Departments must not undertake any work that involves drilling into, removing or disturbing the building fabric, e.g. surface coatings, panels etc, without consulting the Department of Estate & FM. This includes minor work such as drilling walls to erect shelving or running cabling. The Department of Estate & FM maintains an asbestos register that records the location of all ACMs in the Belfast Met campuses.

#### **4.15 Manual Handling**

Line Managers will arrange for risk assessments to be undertaken for activities that involve significant manual handling. In this context, manual handling includes lifting, carrying, pushing, pulling and holding.

The risk assessment will identify factors that could result in injury, such as heavy or unstable loads, the need to lift from the floor or above shoulder height, or the need to twist, stretch or stoop while manual handling. Action will be taken to eliminate factors that could cause injury. Where possible, manual handling activities will be avoided or reduced by providing mechanical aids such as trolleys, and re-designing work operations.

Staff nominated to undertake manual handling risk assessments will receive sufficient training. Staff undertaking manual handling tasks will also receive training in safe handling techniques.

#### **4.16 Risk Assessments**

Belfast Met has a duty under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations and other legislation to undertake assessments of its work activities in order to identify significant risks, and determine what measures are required to manage these risks.

Heads of Department or designated person(s) will ensure that risk assessments are undertaken in the areas for which they are responsible. Appropriate risk assessments tools and templates will be provided by the Health and Safety Manager. Some of these risk assessments, such as asbestos, fire, Legionella etc, will be undertaken on a college-wide basis and will be coordinated by the Department of Estate & FM.

Risk assessments should be reviewed on an annual basis, or when circumstances change that may cause the original assessment to be no longer valid, such as changes in personnel, work patterns, or work equipment.

##### **Special Consideration**

When assessing who can be harmed by a particular work activity, special consideration must be given to individuals that fall into the following categories:

- a. Pregnant or nursing mothers
- b. Young persons under the age of 18

##### **Pregnant or Nursing Mothers**

Where an employee notifies the Department of Human Resources that she is pregnant, the relevant line manager will conduct a risk assessment relating to work or tasks undertaken by the employee to ensure that the employee or foetus is not placed at risk.

##### **Assessing the Risks to Young Persons**

Where a person under the age of 18 is employed or undertaking work experience, a risk assessment needs to be undertaken by the relevant line manager in order to identify any risks to their health or safety that may arise as a consequence of their immaturity, lack of experience or absence of awareness of risks.

#### **4.17 Safety Inspections**

The Estate & FM team will carry out regular safety inspections in order to identify hazards and unsafe situations and take the appropriate remedial action. The frequency of inspections will depend on the activity being undertaken and hazards present.

Hazardous workplaces such as kitchens or workshops will be inspected at a greater frequency than lower risk environments such as offices.

#### **4.18 Storage and Good Housekeeping**

Inappropriate storage of items or supplies can create tripping hazards or obstructions and increase the risk of fire. Articles must not be stored where they will block or restrict access to fire escape routes or corridors. Cabinets, shelving and racks used for storage should be stable and, where possible, secured to the wall to prevent toppling. Items should not be kept on top of cabinets, or in other places where they can become dislodged and fall. Where articles are kept on shelving at above shoulder height, a suitable platform stepladder should be provided to allow safe access.

#### **4.19 Use of Chemicals and other Substances Hazardous to Health**

Belfast Met is required under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations to have in place arrangements to assess the exposure of its employees and other persons to hazardous substances and take adequate steps to avoid or control the exposure.

This requirement covers not only substances such as cleaning chemicals, but also exposure to dusts emitted by work processes, and biological hazards such as Legionella.

Guidance from the manufacturers' material safety data sheets must be followed at all times when deciding safe working procedures while using chemicals. Training will be provided by the College for nominated staff to complete COSHH Risk Assessments.

The COSHH Risk Assessment will be used as the basis for developing safe working procedures that should describe how the substances will be used and stored, and how exposure will be controlled. Procedures should also detail actions to be taken in the event of spillage or accidental exposures due to inhalation, digestion or splashes on the skin or eyes. The procedures should identify any personal protective equipment that may be required when using the substance, together with how the personal protective equipment will be inspected and stored.

The procedures should also identify how unwanted, or waste chemicals or substances can be safely disposed of in accordance with the requirements of the Control of Pollution Act and related legislation.

## 4.20 Use of Computers

Belfast Met has a duty to undertake risk assessments of the workstations of staff that habitually use a computer for a significant part of their normal work. It is important that computer users adopt good posture while seated at the screen to avoid aches and pains as well as more permanently disabling musculoskeletal conditions.

### Eyesight Tests for Computer Users

Belfast Met has a duty to provide an eyesight test, or costs towards an eye test, for employees who use display screen equipment as a significant part of their normal working hours. Relevant forms can be obtained from the Intranet or by contacting the Department of Human Resources.

## 4.21 Work Equipment

Belfast Met has a duty to ensure arrangements are in place to comply with the **Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) and Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment regulations (LOLER)**. Periodic examinations will be carried out by external engineers on behalf of Belfast Met's insurance company on specific equipment on most campuses. Line managers will ensure that work equipment used by staff is suitable for the purpose and in good working order. Line Managers will ensure that equipment is used in accordance with the manufacturer's or supplier's instructions and, where necessary, their staff will receive sufficient instruction and training in the safe use of equipment.

When deciding what equipment to purchase, line managers should seek to ensure that the equipment is fit for purpose and, where applicable, conforms to relevant British or EU standards/legislation.

When purchasing major items or products / supplies with a significant health and safety aspect, managers should seek advice from the Estate & FM regarding need for access, floor loading, power and water supplies, alterations, maintenance etc, and complete the relevant health and safety pre checklist.

In respect of Curriculum Equipment, all equipment should be maintained, and records kept in accordance with Curriculum Equipment Maintenance H&S Blueprint Document.

## 4.22 Work-related Stress

Work-related stress is defined by the Health and Safety Executive as:

*'the adverse reaction a person has to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them.'*

There is an important distinction between 'reasonable pressure', which stimulates and motivates, and stress, where an individual feels they are unable to cope with excessive pressures or demands placed upon them. Belfast Met will assess the risks to their employees' mental well-being as well as their physical well-being by identifying and taking action on organisational factors and work-related issues that could be potential 'stressors'.

Information on assessing and managing work-related stress can be found by contacting the Department of Human Resources.

#### **4.23 Health Surveillance**

Health surveillance is a system of ongoing health checks. These health checks may be required by law for employees who are exposed to noise or vibration, ionising radiation, solvents, fumes, dusts, biological agents and other substances hazardous to health, or work in compressed air.

Estate & FM will identify those staff / roles that require health surveillance to be carried out. The Head of Human Resources will ensure these surveillance checks are carried out through use of the College's Occupational Health service.

#### **4.24 Travel arrangements**

College staff or students may have the opportunity to travel either at home or abroad during their course of work or study. These journeys are often away from the College's direct control and its immediate support in case of an emergency. If not planned and appropriately controlled, travel can be quite hazardous. However, just because there may be some risk does not mean travel should not take place. Risk-Benefit management is a fundamental part of life and is a skill needed for everyone's safety and well-being.

Those responsible for managing the trip must consider risks and controls at the planning stage so that suitable arrangements are in place to ensure that the trip takes place safely.

Guidance has been developed to help all staff and students manage the health, safety and welfare issues that may be faced when travelling at either home or abroad while representing the College. The guidance document can be accessed via the College H&S Intranet site.

#### **4.25 COVID management**

Covid-19 is an illness that can affect your lungs and airways. It is caused by a virus called the Coronavirus. Symptoms can be mild, moderate, severe, or fatal. It is a respiratory illness and of the same family as the common cold. The incubation period is reported as ranging between 1-14 days, but most commonly thought to be around 5 days. A generic Risk Assessment has been developed for managing the hazards associated with the current Covid-19 situation in the College. It is not likely to cover all scenarios, and each Head of Department has developed departmental risk assessments that consider their own unique circumstances.

These risk assessments are fluid and will be updated as legislation / guidance changes or further information is made available.

#### 4.26 Mental Health and Well-being

Belfast Met recognises that it has a duty of care towards its staff and students, but they also have a duty of self-care to keep themselves healthy and mentally well.

##### *Staff*

We recognise that work pressures can result in poor mental health and wish to promote a supportive workplace and learning culture. We are currently developing a Mental Health and Well-being Policy so that those who choose to disclose information can then be aware of what sort of response to expect. Our Mental Health and Well-being Policy will describe how we will look after our staff mental health and well-being.

##### *Students*

Our Safeguarding, Care & Welfare policy aims to provide protection for student's well-being by encouraging clarity of procedures when a person discloses a mental health issue, and to give reassurance to staff to be confident in their response to difficult situations.

This policy will define the roles and responsibilities of staff and students in such situations, and the fellow staff and students who are receiving support benefit from a consistent and informed response.

#### 4.27 Campus Security

The Department of Estate & Sustainability is responsible for ensuring procedures are in place to manage campus security. The Department is committed to ensuring a safe and secure environment for all persons working, studying, and visiting the college campus. The team directly monitors the CCTV, intruder alarm, and fire alarm systems, as well as managing the access control system and enforcing the car parking regulations at our Castlereagh and Springvale campuses.

Similar arrangements are in place for our PFI/PPP campuses at Millfield and Titanic Quarter campuses. The campus Estate Managers will monitor directly with the respective FM providers to ensure all aspects of the security service requirements are in place. All employees, visitors, and contractors must adhere to all security arrangements made by the college to ensure the safety of everyone while in campus grounds.

##### *Martyn's Law*

In addition, Belfast Metropolitan College recognises its responsibilities under the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act (Martyn's Law) and is committed to taking proportionate steps to reduce the risk of harm to staff, learners, visitors and members of the public arising from terrorist acts. This includes the implementation of appropriate preparedness, protective and response arrangements across all campuses including lockdown and evacuation guidance and procedures.

## 5. Monitoring

The following Key Performance Indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Health and Safety Policy:

- RIDDOR - Number reported to HSENI
- Accidents / incidents / near misses
  - Accidents reported
  - Incidents reported
  - Near misses reported
- Fire Alerts
  - Number of alerts attended by NIFRS
  - Number of false alarms
- Health & Safety training
  - Numbers trained: % staff completed
- Sickness Absence
  - Long term absence
  - Short term absence
  - Working days loss
- Number of audits completed
  - No of NC 1 raised /closed
  - No of NC 2 raised/ closed

## 6. Review

This policy will be reviewed every year or when there are any significant changes in the organisation or legislation.