Control of Legionella Policy

2022

ORCHARD ACADEMY TRUST

Control of Legionella Policy

This policy sets out the control of legionella in hot and cold water systems in school, including responsibilities, training testing and records.

1. POLICY STATEMENT

The school's will undertake to ensure compliance with the relevant legislation with regard to the Control of Legionella in hot and cold water systems for all pupils and employees and to ensure best practice by extending the arrangements as far as is reasonably practicable to others who may also be affected by our activities.

2. THE LAW

a. As legislation is often amended and Regulations introduced, the references made in this Policy may be to legislation that has been superseded. For an up to date list of legislation applying to schools, please refer to the Department for Education website at www.education.gov.uk/schools and the Health and Safety Executive website www.hse.gov.uk.

i. Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
ii. Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
iii. Care Standards Act 2000

3. DEFINITIONS

a. Legionella is a generic term for a type of bacteria which is common in natural and artificial water systems. Legionella is the name given to a group of pneumonia-like illnesses caused by Legionella.

4. MANAGEMENT

The Headteacher will ensure that:

i. relevant risk assessments are carried out and that control measures are implemented;
ii. appropriate training is provided;
iii. ensure that flushing and testing of water outlets is carried out in accordance with Appendix 1;
iv. any problems with water or the water system will be reported to the Headteacher;
v. monitor disinfection procedures where necessary – see Appendix 2;
vi. records are kept for each water outlet of flushing and testing and disinfection procedures.

5. GENERAL INFORMATION

a. Legionella is a generic term for a type of bacteria (legionellae) which is common in natural and artificial water supplies. The bacteria thrive at temperatures between 20ºc and 45ºc but can be killed by elevated temperatures or chemical treatment.

b. The School's stores and distributes hot water above 50ºc. Users are protected from scalding by controlling the delivery temperature of hot water from a tap to 43ºc by the use of thermostatic mixing values. Checks are required to ensure that the valves are working correctly.

c. All illnesses due to the legionella species are known collectively as "legionellaoses" but the most well-known is "Legionnaires' disease" which can be serious for elderly people and others with respiratory problems or immune-deficiency.

d. Infection is only a risk when there is inhalation of very fine water droplets that are contaminated with high concentrations of legionella bacteria. Healthy people are unlikely to contract an infection and outbreaks are rare though well publicised.

e. Control is normally achieved by suitable design and maintenance of the water system and its associated plant. Additional control is achieved by appropriate storage of water and delivery of water at temperatures which do not allow the bacteria to proliferate.

6. RISK ASSESSMENT

a. Assessment of risk is mostly confined to
   i. Monitoring whether control measures are being instigated fully.
   ii. Correct water temperatures are being maintained.
   iii. Engineering measures, such as temperature control values, are working properly.
b. Any failures must be reported immediately to the Headteacher.

7. CONTROL MEASURES

a. To achieve ongoing control of legionella, thorough flushing of the water system is required alongside any engineering controls.
b. Effective control measures will require the school to:
   i. Monitor any water outlets that are not in regular use.
   ii. Record the flushing of all water outlets
   iii. Record the temperature of hot and cold water outlets.
c. Full details of flushing and testing regimes that need to be carried out can be found in Appendix 1

8. TESTING ARRANGEMENTS

a. Under certain circumstances, for examples when there have been alterations or maintenance work to the water system, testing is to be carried out in accordance with Appendix 1.

a. Disinfection of the system will be necessary when testing indicates there is a sufficient level of legionella present in the water system to require treatment – see Appendix 2.

9. INFORMATION, INSTRUCTION TRAINING

a. The Headteacher's will ensure that suitable and sufficient training and information is given to the Site Manager/Caretaker, and any other member of staff, who has responsibilities for flushing, record keeping and taking temperature readings as required by the appendices.
b. Any new measures that are introduced to control legionella will need appropriate training provision.
c. The Site Manager will ensure that a record of all instruction and training given to members of staff is recorded in the Legionella Log.

FLUSHING AND TEMPERATURE TESTING PROCEDURES

1. FLUSHING

a. All water outlets (hot & cold) will be flushed through weekly (but see para c below) and a record will be kept in writing on the water outlet flushing checklist by the person carrying out the flushing.

b. Flushing will last for at least two minutes at a reasonable flow rate.

c. Where water outlets are routinely used, then this acts as the flushing routine and additional flushing is not required. However, flushing will always be required for all water outlets during periods of none use which exceed four days. Flushing is only required at the end of the period of non-use.

2. TEMPERATURE TESTING

a. A single cold and hot tap on the main hot and cold water systems, which are not connected via a thermostatic mixing valve, are to be run for one minute (in the case of a hot tap) and two minutes (in the case of a cold tap) every month so that a temperature can be taken using a thermometer and recorded on the Water Temperature Check List.

b. The cold water outlet temperature should be below 20ºC after two minutes running.

c. The hot water outlet temperature should be above 50ºC after one minute running,

d. If these temperatures cannot be achieved then the Headteacher is to be informed.

e. Scientific tests may be required when there appears to be a problem with the water supply, e.g. discolouring, temperature problems, etc. These should be reported to the Headteacher.

f. If a positive Legionella test is reported there will be a re-test every 3 or 6 months, dependent upon the test results, until two consecutive clear readings are established.

1. PROCEDURE FOR DISINFECTION

a. If the school produces a sufficiently high result after testing, and a risk assessment recommends action, it will be disinfected by an approved contractor.

b. The Headteacher or an elected representative will arrange the time and date of disinfection with the selected contractor.

c. Affected areas will be withdrawn from use until disinfection has been completed. Flushing of outlets in these areas will cease until disinfection has been completed.

d. A supply of clean water for the kitchen area will be drawn off from an uncontaminated source and stored in containers on the morning of a disinfection visit.

e. Once disinfection commences, the water system will not be usable (except in WC's) until the contractors declare it safe. (Note: Drinking water must only be drawn from the bottled supply).

f. Alternative hand cleaning methods will be instigated to supplement the wearing of protective gloves for personal care. (eg. Hibiscrub & antiseptic wipes).

g. Staff and pupils will be protected from accidental use or drinking of disinfected water by securing the outlets or denying them access.

h. Disinfected areas will be re-instated immediately after completion of the disinfection process and the flushing regime will recommence.

PROCEDURE FOR FLUSHING SHOWERHEADS (INCLUDING THE KITCHEN POT WASH)

a. Showers should be flushed on a weekly basis and the results recorded in the Legionella Log.
b. Every quarter showers heads should be dismantled, de-scaled and disinfected.

For showers which are infrequently used we may consider storing the clean shower head in a plastic bag until required and then cleaning and storing again after use.

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