

Health and Safety at Work Policy

Statement of Intent

Kirkby Stephen Dental Practice is committed to a health and safety policy in accordance with the requirements of the *Health and Safety at Work Act 1974* and subsequent legislation and to provide and maintain a healthy and safe working environment. The Practice recognises its obligations to protect the health and safety of all employees, contractors and members of the practice who may be affected by its work. This policy applies to all employees of the practice, dental associates, dental hygienists and other contractors providing services to the dental practice, such as anaesthetists, collectively referred to throughout the policy as “staff”.

Kirkby Stephen Dental Practice will endeavour to comply with health and safety legislation at all times by adopting the following principles.

- Creation of a safe and healthy workplace by ensuring that all equipment is installed and maintained in accordance with the manufacturers' recommendations.
- Provision of a comprehensive range of written policies and procedures with regard to safe working arrangements.
- Assessment of the risks to health and safety of all equipment and substances used within the practice and the implementation of the necessary steps to secure and maintain the health and safety of staff and patients.
- Maintenance of clearly defined and unobstructed entrances and exits within the practice, with particular reference to fire hazards.
- Commitment to the continuing training of staff to enable them to contribute to the safety of themselves and others.
- In addition, all staff have a responsibility to work with the practice in maintaining a safe and healthy environment at all times.

Responsibilities

The practice

Kirkby Stephen Dental Practice will do all that is in its power to provide a safe place of work to ensure the health and safety of all staff. All equipment will be regularly checked and serviced according to the manufacturers' recommendations and, where appropriate, staff will be instructed in its use. Regular assessments of the practice will be carried out and those working at the practice will be kept informed of the risks found and the control measures that should be used. However, it is the responsibility of each individual associated with the practice to take reasonable care of their own and other people's welfare.

Kirkby Stephen Dental Practice has taken out insurance against liability for death or personal injury suffered by any staff as a result of negligence and/or breach of the

practice's statutory duty. A copy of the certificate of insurance is displayed in the practice.

The staff

All members of staff have a responsibility to take care of the health and safety of themselves and others, to follow the practice safety policy and to co-operate with the Practice Manager to implement its provisions. No member of staff should interfere with or misuse any equipment, appliance or substance which may result in risk to themselves or to others. All staff will be provided with the training necessary to carry out their work tasks safely. If a member of staff is unsure of how to perform a certain task or feels it would be dangerous to carry out a specific job then he/she must report this to the Practice Manager. Similarly, any member of staff aware of a situation that could pose a threat to the well being of another person must report it to the Practice Manager. An effective health and safety programme requires good communication between all members of the practice.

All injuries, suspected work-related ill health and "near miss" incidents must be reported to the Practice Manager and entered in the accident book. Accident recording is crucial to the effective monitoring and revision of the policy - it must therefore be accurate and comprehensive.

Failure by any employee to comply with their health and safety obligations may result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee including, in serious cases, dismissal. Failure by any other member of staff to comply with their health and safety obligations may entitle the practice to regard such failure as a breach of contract.

Consultation, Communication and Co-operation

Kirkby Stephen Dental Practice regards communication between staff at the practice as an essential part of health and safety management. Consultation will be facilitated by means of practice meetings as often as is deemed necessary.

The Practice Manager will endeavour to communicate to staff at the practice her commitment to health and safety and to ensure that all members of staff are familiar with the health and safety policy of the practice.

Safety Training

Safety training is an integral part of an effective health and safety programme. It is essential that every member of staff in the practice be trained to perform his or her job effectively and safely. At this practice we believe that if a job is not done safely then it is not done effectively.

All staff will be trained in safe working practices and procedures prior to being allocated any new role within the practice. Training will include advice on the use and maintenance of personal protective equipment appropriate to the task concerned and emergency contingency plans.

Training sessions will be held as often as deemed necessary and will provide another

opportunity for staff to express any fears or concerns they might have about their safety issues related to their jobs. The training sessions will be organised by the Practice Manager.

Grievances and Concerns

The Practice Manager is responsible for health and safety in the practice and all accidents and spillages must be immediately reported to him/her.

The Practice Manager should be informed of any concerns or grievances relating to any health and safety matters. Staff should not feel hesitant about making representations; all concerns will be taken seriously.

The Practice Manager is responsible for staff training in all health and safety matters, and you should ask her for help if you are in any doubt about using materials or equipment.

Risk Areas

The following list of areas where risks could arise, or where improvements might be possible, is to help staff in the identification of any risks:

Premises: access, steps, stairs, floor coverings, passages, lighting, furniture, fittings, heating, ventilation, fires, fire precautions;

Surgery: handling and storage of materials, instruments and equipment (e.g. radiographs, autoclaves, compressors), disposal of waste;

General: protective clothing, electrical safety, maintenance of equipment, storage of materials, first aid.

Further guidance is provided throughout this Policy.

Accidents and dangerous occurrences

All accidents and incidents such as spillages of hazardous substances (including mercury) must be reported immediately to the Practice Manager who will record all such incidents in the Accident Report Book.

A first-aid box is kept in the practice and a list of telephone numbers of doctors and hospitals available to the practice is kept on Reception. First aid advice can be obtained from the dentist.

It is the policy of the practice to comply with the *Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR '95)*. Accident investigation is regarded as a valuable tool in the prevention of future incidents.

In the event of an injury or occurrence which requires action under *RIDDOR '95*, a report must be compiled by the Practice Manager using form F2508 (injury or dangerous occurrence) or form F2508A (disease).

All eyewitness accounts will be collected as near to the time of the accident as is reasonably practicable. Any person required to give an official statement has the right to have a lawyer present at the practice owner's expense.

The completed report will then be sent to the local office of the Health and Safety Executive.

Air Receiver (Compressor)

The compressor for the practice is located in the basement. The compressor is serviced in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. It will also be inspected to comply with the requirements of the *Pressure Systems and Transportable Gas Containers Regulations 1989* as recommended in the written scheme of examination.

Any incidents involving the compressor should be reported to the Practice Manager.

Autoclaves

No member of staff should use an autoclave without first receiving instruction on how it operates and what precautions should be taken.

Autoclaves in the practice are serviced regularly in accordance with the manufacturers' recommendations. They are also inspected to comply with the requirements of the *Pressure Systems and Transportable Gas Containers Regulations 1989* as recommended in the written scheme of examination. Staff should also monitor autoclaves to ensure that the right conditions for sterilisation are being achieved, and complete the log sheet. Any concerns about the operation of the autoclaves should be reported to the Practice Manager.

Display Screen equipment

There is no evidence that the use of Display Screen Equipment poses a risk to health under normal working conditions within the practice. To ensure that staff need have no unnecessary concerns with regard to the use of Display Screen Equipment, regular reviews are carried out by the Practice Manager.

The Display Screen Equipment Policy will be found in the Practice Manual.

Electrical Equipment

It is the policy of this practice to comply with the requirements of the *Electricity at Work Regulations 1989* to prevent death or personal injury in connection with work at the practice. Regular inspection of equipment is an essential part of a preventative maintenance programme and the Practice Manager will conduct regular visual inspections on all portable electrical equipment at the practice. Records of these inspections will be maintained and kept with the practice records.

The practice will also arrange for the fixed supply and all portable equipment to have a combined inspection and test by a competent person at least every five years, in line with the recommendations made by the Health and Safety Executive. Records of such inspections and tests will be maintained and kept with the practice records.

Fire Safety

The fire safety policy and procedures of the practice take account of special fire hazards within the practice and, where appropriate, have been compiled with the assistance of the local fire service.

All staff have a duty to conduct themselves in such a way as to minimise the risk of fire. This involves keeping combustible materials separate from sources of ignition and avoiding unnecessary accumulation of combustible materials. Concerns about fire precautions should be raised with the Practice Manager.

If you discover a fire you will be expected to follow the Fire Procedure. You should make yourself familiar with this procedure.

First Aid

Any dentist in the practice may be called upon to provide First Aid advice and assistance if necessary.

All items used from the first-aid box should be reported to the Practice Manager so that the items can be replaced.

Any accidents or injuries should be reported to the Practice Manager and recorded in the accident book.

The practice will provide training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) on an annual basis. All staff are required to attend these training sessions.

General Behaviour

It is everyone's responsibility to follow the Code of Safe Practice which is in the Practice Manual.

Hazards

All substances used in the practice should be handled carefully and care taken to avoid skin contact, inhalation or ingestion. Certain substances have been identified as being of particular concern and recommendations concerning the use of these substances should be carefully studied.

Details of the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Policy will be found in the Practice Manual.

Assessments of the materials and substances used in the practice have been made under the *Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1994* in accordance with the procedures laid down in the Practice Manual. Records of these assessments are located in the Practice Manual. All new materials and substances should be brought to the attention of the Practice Manager so that an assessment can be carried out.

Infection Control and Personal Protection Policy

All staff must read a copy of the infection control policy for the practice. Any incidents or concerns about infection control within the practice should be raised with the Practice Manager. A synopsis of the Practice's policy is given below.

Hygiene: Maintain vigorous personal hygiene. Surgery staff should put on disposable gloves provided before handling any instruments or materials to be used in the mouth. All substances that have been in contact with the mouth must be assumed to be contaminated and either sterilised or disposed of as instructed. Contaminated needles and sharps are to be disposed of in designated containers and every precaution taken to avoid injury.

Hepatitis B: All clinical staff must be vaccinated against hepatitis B and have blood tests to assess their anti-HBs level. For those who do not seroconvert medical advice and counselling may be required. This also applies to those who cannot be immunised because they are immunosuppressed, for example those taking steroids for asthma. In these cases it may be necessary to restrict clinical activities. The Practice Manager will ensure that arrangements are made for all employees involved with clinical procedures to receive the vaccine and boosters as appropriate. Records of staff immunisation and antibody response will be maintained by the Practice Manager. The practice reserves the right to ask any self-employed contractor for evidence of their immunity to Hepatitis B.

Staff involved with clinical procedures should also be vaccinated against diphtheria, pertussis, poliomyelitis, rubella, TB and tetanus.

Inoculation injuries must be dealt with promptly. In the event of a skin puncture by a contaminated instrument the wound should be encouraged to bleed and washed thoroughly with running water. The incident should be reported in the accident book and the Practice Manager informed. If there is concern about the possibility of transmission of infection, the need for further medical advice should be arranged with the Practice Manager.

Protective clothing must be worn by all staff during all operative procedures. The practice will provide all its employees with the necessary protective clothing. If possible, clothing worn in the surgery should not be worn outside the practice premises.

Hand protection: jewellery and watches should not be worn during clinical sessions. The practice will supply non-sterile medical gloves which should be worn by clinical staff for all clinical procedures. A new pair of gloves should be used for each patient. Perforated or damaged gloves should be disposed of and not used.

Eye protection and face masks should be worn by all clinical staff during operative procedures. Patients should also be provided with protective eyewear and adequate clothing protection.

Failure by any employee to wear the protective clothing and equipment provided may result in disciplinary action. Failure by any member of staff may be regarded as a breach of contract.

Decontamination procedures: all dental healthcare workers must follow the infection control procedures for:

- instrument decontamination sterilisation and storage;

- surface decontamination and disinfection;
- decontamination and disinfection of impressions and other items to be sent to laboratories.

Manual Handling

It is the policy of the practice to comply with the requirements of the *Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992*. Where there is a significant risk of injury, manual handling operations will be avoided. Where it is not possible to avoid manual handling, the practice procedure should be followed.

Details of the Practice's Manual Handling Procedures will be found in the Practice Manual.

Mercury Hygiene

Mercury vaporises at room temperature and can be absorbed into the body through inhalation or contact with the skin. The surgery must be well ventilated and protective gloves worn to reduce skin contact. Mercury should be used in accordance with the procedures laid down by the practice.

Any mercury spillages must be cleaned up immediately, again in accordance with the procedures laid down.

Waste amalgam and waste mercury should be stored in the containers provided for the purpose. Arrangements for the collection of waste amalgam are made by Alco. Waste amalgam must never be sent through the post.

If necessary, all staff involved in clinical dentistry will be monitored to determine their biological levels of mercury. The Practice Manager will be responsible for making arrangements for this to be done.

Patients and Visitors

The practice has a responsibility to ensure that patients and visitors to its premises do not encounter any hazards and that they comply with this Health and Safety Policy. The arrangements for patients and visitors to the practice will be found in the Practice Manual.

Any problems encountered with patients or visitors, or staff with regard to patients or visitors, should be reported to the Practice Manager so that corrective action can be taken.

Personal Protective Equipment

It is the policy of the practice to comply with the requirements of the *Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992*. All employees who may be exposed to a risk to their health and safety will be provided with suitable, properly fitting and effective personal protective equipment which, where appropriate, will be maintained in good working order.

All employees provided with personal protective equipment will receive comprehensive training and information on its use, maintenance and purpose.

The practice will endeavour to ensure that all personal protective equipment provided is used properly by staff. The Practice Manager is responsible for ensuring employees within the practice comply with this requirement.

Radiation and Radiographs

The Health and Safety Executive has been informed of all the radiation equipment used at the practice. DBG carry out a radiation survey on all radiation equipment every three years. DBG also carry out servicing according to the manufacturer's recommendations and should also be advised of any faults which develop. The Practice Manager will be responsible for making arrangements for this to be done.

Local rules for each machine are displayed next to the appropriate machine. The Radiation Protection Supervisor (Phil Borman) is responsible for ensuring the local rules are followed. Members of staff should be aware of the extent of the controlled zone and where to locate the control switch outside the controlled zone. Any incident involving overexposure must be reported immediately to the Radiation Protection Supervisor.

Where individual workloads exceed 150 intra-oral or 50 panoramic films per week, monitoring badges will be provided. Monitoring may also take place in addition to this if deemed to be advisable. Responsibility for monitoring lies with the Radiation Protection Supervisor.

Only staff who have received the appropriate training and possess the core of knowledge should take radiographs. The practice will arrange for employees to be trained where appropriate and copies of the relevant certificates of training will be provided.

Smoking

The Practice policy on smoking at work will be found in the Practice Manual.

Waste

All waste should be segregated into non-clinical, clinical and special waste.

Non-clinical waste should be segregated into business and general waste. Business waste is collected in white sacks and stored in the basement to await collection by TFE. General waste is collected in black sacks and stored in the basement to await collection by the local council.

Any waste contaminated with blood, saliva or other body fluids should be regarded as clinical waste. Clinical waste should be collected in yellow sacks and stored in the basement to await collection by Alco for disposal. The yellow sacks should be no more than three-quarters full when stored for disposal.

Special waste is segregated and stored in containers in the prep room and the basement. The Practice Manager will arrange for Alco to collect as required.

Any concerns or incidents involving waste disposal should be raised with the Practice Manager.

Work Equipment

It is the policy of the practice to comply with the requirements of the *Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1992* to ensure that all equipment used in the practice is safe and suitable for the purpose for which it is used. All staff will be provided with adequate information and training to enable them to use equipment safely. All work equipment will be maintained in good working order and repair. Where appropriate, equipment will be clearly marked with health and safety warnings and staff provided with adequate protection.

Workplace Inspections

It is the policy of the practice to comply with the *Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992*. The Practice Manager will conduct regular inspections of the workplace. Such inspections will provide an opportunity to review the continuing effectiveness of the policy and to identify areas where revision of the policy may be necessary.

Review of Policy

The policy will be kept up to date, particularly as the practice introduces new materials and equipment. To ensure this, the policy and the way in which it has operated will be reviewed every year, and practice meetings held regularly to discuss interim problems.