

PROCEDURE FOR PREVENTING FALLS

1. Preamble

Protection from falls of greater than 2 metres is an issue that affects staff, students, volunteers and contractors in the school setting. MPWPS contains many buildings; each having a unique character with different roofs having different heights, pitches, surfaces and points of access. Accessing each different type of roof at *Moonee Ponds West PS* presents particular problems and risks. Working where there is a risk of falling more than 2 metres is also involved in other tasks within the school eg building inspection and maintenance, stage productions, electrical maintenance and cabling, removing equipment from the roof, erecting some displays and accessing some storage areas.

Although most risks of falls greater than 2 metres at this school are related to work at heights, the school will also consider falls risks in relation to any excavations or landscaping such as retaining walls.

The following plan identifies risks, sets out guidelines for working safely where there is a fall hazard, especially over 2 metres, and nominates design features to be included into the school.

The overriding basis of this plan is as follows:

- *To prevent falls in the workplace, especially where the fall potential is greater than 2 metres.*
- *To implement procedures which will comply with the OHS (Prevention of Falls) Regulations 2003.*

2. Eliminating the need to work where there is a fall hazard

Primary consideration will be given to trying to eliminate or reduce the need to work where there is a fall hazard (whether more than or less than 2 metres) by

- **Eliminating the need to carry out the task.** For example:
 - Designing new buildings or modifications in such a way that equipment is not placed on roofs
 - Eliminating loft/mezzanine storage areas
 - Introducing “No Ball” recreation zones around buildings so that balls do not go on roofs
 - Reducing the heights of display boards and storage shelves
- **Working from ground level. For example using**
 - Broom or rope or retrieving device to remove balls
 - Extension poles for displaying artwork, paint rollers, pruning, opening and closing windows
 - Pulley systems for raising high displays
 - Remote controls or remote switches for air conditioners, VCRs etc.
- **Altering the building structure to eliminate or reduce fall hazards. For example**
 - Placing mesh immediately under: any skylight installed before June 1996, all translucent roofing material and all acrylic dome skylights to prevent people falling through these structures
- **Reducing the number of times the task needs to be done. For example**

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- Installing gutter guards to allow balls to roll off and reduce the frequency of access for gutter cleaning
- Adopt School Council policy that balls (including those owned by students) will only be removed at a stated time (eg Friday afternoon)

Where the risk of a fall by individuals cannot be completely eliminated, the following procedures will be documented and implemented.

3. Procedure where there is a risk of a fall of LESS than 2 metres

(Note: this is outside the scope of the Prevention of Falls Regulations but there is a general duty of care under the OHS Act 1985)

Where people need to access heights up to 2 metres, a sturdy suitable 2 or 3 stepladder will be provided and must be used. These stepladders will be made available and stored at convenient points around the school. These will be stored in the following positions:

Administration Wing	On Wall opposite Ladies Toilet
Hall Building	On wall outside Room 6
Library Building	In library office
Upper Portables	In Room 21 office
Courtyard Portable	In Wet area

At no time should staff use furniture (chairs or tables) to access heights. Tasks that may require use of these stepladders include putting up displays or accessing storage shelves.

4. Procedure where there is a risk of a fall of MORE than 2 metres

The specific recommendations for prevention of falls will depend of the nature of the particular task and the construction and condition of the roof - if roof work is required.

4.1 Situations that have a fall potential of 2 metres or more at MPWPS

- Changing lights or checking/installing equipment at ceiling level
- Retrieving balls from roofs (Various single storey buildings)
- Cleaning Administration Building gutters (single storey)
- Servicing air conditioning units on all buildings (single storey)
- Putting up displays in some classrooms (potential to fall more than 2 metres)

4.2 General guidelines where there is a risk of a fall of MORE than 2 metres

- **Only authorised people are allowed to work where there is a risk of a fall of MORE than 2 metres. Other people are strictly forbidden** from carrying out such tasks **at all times.**
- Authorised people are school maintenance staff, contractors, nominated volunteers and other persons identified by the Principal.
- Prior to authorisation, personnel (school staff and volunteers) will be given appropriate instruction, training and information. Authorised people (school staff and volunteers) will be given written procedures which they will be expected to follow for the use of equipment (eg

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- ladder safe work practice, applicable risk assessment) where there is a fall risk of greater than 2 metres. School contractors will, as a minimum, comply with school safe work practices.
- Authorised people will be provided with a copy of this procedure covering prevention of falls of greater than 2 metres at MPWPS.

4.2 General guidelines where there is a risk of a fall of MORE than 2 metres (cont.)

- Should a staff member identify that there may be a risk of falling more than 2 metres they must inform the Principal. A full risk assessment (*refer DET/NAA Prevention of Falls Compliance Guidelines Attachments PF-4 and PF-5*) of the task must be conducted. **Where the same task is done repetitively (eg tasks listed in Section 4.1) a generic risk assessment of the task will be done.** The generic risk assessment must cover ALL potential risks. If the task is to be done in a different way, a new risk assessment must be completed. Risk control solutions will be based on the **hierarchy of control** below:

Risk control solutions will be based on the hierarchy of control below:

1. Eliminate the task if possible.
2. Work on the ground.
3. Work from a "solid construction" (defined as surface strong enough to support workers and equipment + edge protection (eg handrail) + non slippery surface (smooth surface maximum gradient 7°; cleated or grated surface max gradient 23°) + access and egress via stairway or tied off ladder).
4. A platform stepladder may also be used.
5. Use a passive fall prevention device* (eg scaffold, cherry picker, scissor lift, roof safety mesh guard railing)
6. Use a work positioning system* (eg travel restraint system)
7. Use a fall injury prevention system* (eg catch platform, safety harness)
8. Use an approved ladder
9. Use administrative controls

** Specialised contractors only will use this equipment.*

No staff member or volunteer will be expected to work at heights if they feel uncomfortable doing so.

- Staff members or volunteers may **only** use a ladder, platform step ladder or a pre-fabricated mobile scaffold and **must be authorised by the Principal and have appropriate information, instruction and training for the equipment.** The Principal shall ensure that authorised users understand ladder safety requirements. Records will be kept of people who are authorised and the date that they received safe work practices. If equipment is used in contravention of the safe work practice, authorisation will be withdrawn.
- School staff and volunteers will **not** be authorised to use specialised equipment such as cherry pickers, scissor lifts, scaffolding (with the exception of pre-fabricated mobile scaffolding), harnesses, fall arrest devices and vertical rope access systems. Authorised and experienced contractors will undertake work of this nature. Slip resistant footwear will be used when accessing heights.

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- Ladders shall be used in accordance with MPWPS Ladder Safe Work Practice
- Ladders and other equipment for use above 2 metres will be stored and secured in such a way as to limit access of unauthorised staff to this equipment (eg placed in locked storage or padlocked to fixed point). Signage will be attached to the equipment, or the locked area in which it is stored, indicating that it is only to be used by authorised persons. This does not include the 2 and 3 stepladders intended for accessing less than 2 metres that will be available for all staff.
- Ladders and other equipment for use above 2 metres will be logged on the PRMS21 maintenance system for regular maintenance. Maintenance and inspections will occur as per manufacturer's recommendations or every 12 months, whichever is more stringent. Where applicable, Australian Standards maintenance guidelines will be followed (eg AS1892.5 for ladders).
- The school will discourage access to roofs. (eg placing "no unauthorised access" signs in appropriate locations and/or making various roof levels inaccessible other than by ladder.

4.3 Roof Access Points and Ground Marking for Extension Ladders

- The locations of school roof access points are marked by a yellow rectangle and are found in the following areas:
 - *Library Building – Outside Room 15*
 - *Walkway Roof - Outside General office door*
 - *Administration - Outside General office door*
 - *Hall Building – Between Rooms 3 & 4, and 6 & 7 (Air Conditioners service only)*
 - *Soundhouse/Garage – In front of garage roller door.*
 - *Portables 17/18/21 and Covered PE area - Breezeway Roof*
- NB: Access to the roof must occur only at these points.**
- The roof access points have been chosen using the following criteria:
 - *Closest to where most balls lodge, most of the time*
 - *Allows convenient access to equipment that requires maintenance such as air conditioners, antennae and satellite dishes. Contractors will be consulted as appropriate.*
 - *Solid and flat ground at ladder base.*
 - *For roof access points, extension ladder fixing devices will be installed just below the top ladder support point (eg eyelets in the walls with chains, proprietary ladder devices). Devices (eg a chain and hook on the wall) may also be installed to secure the foot of the extension ladder.*
 - *For tasks such as cleaning gutters where the ladder needs to move, the top of the ladder should be firmly and evenly supported (eg by use of a removable ladder fixing device).*
 - *In the case of nominated roof access points, to ensure correct placement of the extension ladder every time at a slope of no greater than 4:1, the ground will be marked with paint on concrete (Yellow Rectangle) or roofing nails in asphalt indicating where the base of the ladder should be placed.*

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4.4 Volunteers

- Volunteers must comply with all requirements of the Procedure for Preventing Falls of greater than 2 metres.
- The Principal or a person nominated by the Principal will be made responsible for coordinating tasks where there is a risk of volunteers falling more than 2 metres. Risk assessments shall be carried out for such tasks (refer section 4.2 of this procedure).

4.5 Contractors

- Contractors must comply with all requirements of the Procedure for Preventing Falls of greater than 2 metres.
- Any contractor carrying out work where there is a potential to fall more than 2 metres must first complete a risk assessment for the task and demonstrate to the Principal or nominated representative that the work is being done in accordance with the *OHS (Prevention of Falls) Regulations*. Refer Attachments PF-4 and PF-5 a-g of the Prevention of Falls Compliance Guidelines for examples of risk assessments.
- The contractor must have emergency procedures and must communicate these to the school as part of the risk assessment process.

4.6 Emergency procedures

- Emergency procedures will be developed to ensure that people working where there is the risk of a fall of greater than 2 metres can be rescued. For example if a contractor was using an individual fall arrest system they would need to prepare emergency procedures for the rescue of a person suspended over the side of a building as outlined in the Code of Practice for Prevention of Falls.
- Working alone or in an isolated location should be avoided. As a minimum, there must be an emergency procedure to ensure a person can receive assistance. This could consist of a sign in/out system plus a means of communication such as a mobile phone.

5. Review

If an incident occurs involving a fall of greater than 2 metres this procedure will be reviewed. As a minimum this procedure will be reviewed every 12 months.

MPWPS is committed to ensuring this procedure is publicised and implemented and will regularly monitor and review its effectiveness.