

Getting the most from CLEAPSS membership: It's not just Health and Safety!

Lightning Talk Short Paper

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Summary

Over 23,500 schools are members of CLEAPSS, membership is for the whole school but is aimed at Science and D&T and A+D in secondary schools, in primary it covers a wide range of practical activity.

Set up in 1963 to support practical science, the remit has broadened and aims to support exciting and safe practical work in schools – in D&T and A+D we also encourage innovation and engaging ideas, as well as offering a wealth of H&S advice.

Keywords: health, safety, practical, innovation, engagement.

1. GETTING THE MOST FROM CLEAPSS MEMBERSHIP

97% of schools across England, Wales and Northern Ireland are members of CLEAPSS.

The main point of being a member is to enable teachers, technicians and others in education to access professional Health and Safety advice – a legal requirement for employers.

In the past the Local Authority would arrange membership, but since the academy programme has taken hold, schools may now be members as individuals, MATs, or various other means.

There are different strands to our support:

- The website – there are three sites, the D&T site has 210 Model Risk Assessments, these cover every process, piece of equipment or type of material commonly found in school. There are also over 100 other resources ranging from videos, online courses, guidance documents, checklists and forms.
- The Helpline – this is a phone or email service, we get approximately 50 helpline calls a day, spread across the different subjects.
- Publications – there are three termly publications, Explore, a paper newsletter that is posted to every primary school member, the Bulletin, also paper based, which goes to every secondary member, usually to the science department, and Futureminds, which is an online magazine and sits outside the login and therefore accessible by anyone.
- Training and audits – we provide over 200 training days each year, and carry out around 20 audits of departments

We have recently moved from a generic login to a personal login, which means that individuals can manage their own profile on the web-based resources, it can track helpline calls, provide easier access to documents that are used regularly and track CPD.

Most direct interaction with schools comes from the face-to-face training, audits and the Helpline.

The Helpline is our USP – if you have a question about anything to do with the subject, we are here to help – we get asked all sorts of things, from how to use a piece of equipment, class sizes, what is the best 3D printer and how to improve the dust extraction. The Helpline often push us into developing new guidance, for example, we had some questions about noise levels which led to a new guide. But we are also influenced by what we see in schools, or in some cases do not see; for example, we rarely see metal being used in D&T, so we have been doing a lot of work on the use of metals in simple, but effective activities.

During the various COVID lockdowns we provided guidance on how to work and maintain a safe environment, one of the outcomes from this work was a short online training activity, free to members, this is still live and has been completed by over 250 D&T teachers and technicians. This has led to further online packages, including a training activity to explain how to carry out a safety audit, this has been completed by over 200 members.

Our termly magazine, Futureminds was originally published as a PDF, but last year we moved to using an online goolesite. Which has enabled us to incorporate video and animations, as well as text and images. There are three sections:

- (i) The introduction, which gives an overview of what we have been doing at CLEAPSS over the previous term.
- (ii) Articles from external contributors
- (iii) The Smallprint which is where we give any updates to our guidance or changes in regulation.

We have had some 'themed' editions, and are always looking for contributors, so please take a look and if you have something you think would be of interest to other readers, please get in touch.

We also work with a wide range of organisations, including the DfE, Awarding Organisations, subject groups; Design and Technology Association, NSEAD, British Standards, HSE, universities and others. We hold termly meetings with these and others where we try to bring together the various communities and see where we can support them in their work, or they can help each other to further the aim of providing exciting and safe practical work in schools.

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