

HEALTH & SAFETY

Sharps Policy

Hindle's School of Excellence Limited

Policy owner	Director	Approved by	Director
Version	2.0	Approval date	5 September 2026
Review cycle	Annually	Next review	September 2027
Applies to	Staff, volunteers, contractors, learners and visitors	Site	115 Rochdale Road, Bury, BL9 7BA
Immediate safety rule Learners and untrained adults must never pick up a discarded needle, syringe, blade or unidentified sharp. Keep people away, do not touch the item and inform the Director or responsible staff member immediately.			

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how Hindle's School of Excellence Limited selects, stores, issues, uses, retrieves and disposes of sharp items and responds to discarded sharps or sharps injuries. Its purpose is to prevent injury, infection, misuse and unauthorised access while enabling safe educational and operational activities.

2. Scope and definitions

This policy applies on Hindle's premises, during off-site activities and wherever equipment is used on behalf of the organisation. A "sharp" is any item capable of cutting, puncturing or penetrating skin. It includes:

- classroom and office items such as scissors, craft knives, guillotines, compasses, needles, pins, staples and pencil-sharpener blades;
- tools and maintenance items such as knives, blades, broken glass, saws and sharp metal;
- medical or personal-care sharps such as injection needles, lancets, auto-injector components and syringes; and
- discarded or unidentified needles, syringes, blades or drug-related paraphernalia found on or near the premises.

The controls required depend on the type of sharp, the activity, the learner group and whether contamination is possible. Ordinary classroom scissors are not managed in the same way as a discarded hypodermic needle, but both require proportionate risk controls.

3. Legal and organisational framework

Hindle's will have regard to applicable requirements and official guidance, including the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002, Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013, Environmental Protection Act 1990 and waste duty of care. The Health and Safety (Sharp Instruments in Healthcare) Regulations 2013 will be applied where the organisation undertakes work to which those regulations apply.

This policy should be read with the Health and Safety, First Aid, Medication, Behaviour, Safeguarding, Educational Visits, COSHH, Waste and Incident Reporting procedures.

4. Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Director	Ensure suitable risk assessments, storage, equipment, training, first-aid and waste arrangements; nominate competent persons; review incidents; and authorise any clinical-sharps procedure.
Responsible staff / site lead	Maintain inventories and secure storage; inspect equipment and designated areas; control issue/return; isolate hazards; arrange safe collection; and maintain records.
Staff and authorised volunteers	Follow risk assessments and instructions; supervise learners; count sharps out and in; report defects, losses, finds and injuries immediately; and never exceed their competence.
Learners	Use approved equipment only when instructed and supervised; keep items to the designated activity; return every item; and report any missing, damaged or found sharp without touching it.

5. Risk assessment and selection

Activities involving sharps will be assessed before use. The assessment will consider whether the sharp is necessary; a safer alternative; age, ability, SEND, behaviour and known risk; item type and quantity; level of supervision; workspace and seating; storage and transport; first-aid access; and response to loss or breakage.

Use safety scissors, guarded cutters, enclosed pencil sharpeners or other safer equipment where reasonably practicable. High-risk items such as craft knives, loose blades, scalpels, syringes and maintenance knives require specific authorisation and control and are not general-access learner equipment.

6. Storage, inventory and access

- Store sharps in a locked cupboard, drawer, cabinet or controlled tool area when not in use.
- Restrict keys or access codes to authorised adults and do not disclose them to learners.
- Keep medical/clinical sharps and contaminated sharps separate from classroom equipment.
- Maintain a proportionate inventory for higher-risk or easily concealed items, including quantity and location.
- Inspect storage and teaching areas at the end of the activity and before closure; record and escalate discrepancies.
- Transport sharps in a closed, secure container and never loose in pockets or bags.

7. Issue, use and return of classroom sharps

1. The supervising adult will check items for damage and suitability before issue.
2. Explain and model safe use, carrying, passing and return before the activity begins.
3. Issue only the minimum number needed and use a controlled count or named allocation for higher-risk items.
4. Maintain active supervision and an orderly workspace; sharps must not be left unattended.

5. Stop the activity immediately if equipment is misused, a learner becomes distressed/dysregulated or an item is missing.
6. Count all controlled sharps back, inspect for missing parts and return them directly to secure storage.
7. Manage deliberate misuse under safeguarding, behaviour and risk-management procedures, not simply as poor classroom behaviour.

8. Medical and personal-care sharps

Medical sharps may only be handled by the person themselves where agreed and safe, or by staff who are trained, authorised and working under the learner's healthcare/medication plan. Needles must never be recapped, bent, broken or removed by hand unless the approved device and procedure specifically require it. Dispose of them immediately at the point of use into a correctly assembled, labelled sharps container of the appropriate type.

Sharps containers must be kept upright, secure, below the fill line, away from learners and collected through an authorised clinical-waste arrangement. They must never be placed in general waste or recycling. Personal sharps brought to site must be declared and managed under the Medication Policy and individual plan.

9. Missing, damaged or misused sharps

If a controlled sharp is missing, damaged or deliberately misused, stop the activity, keep learners in a safe supervised area, check the issue record and search the immediate area without exposing anyone to further risk. Inform the Director and safeguarding lead promptly. Consider first aid, parent/carers contact, police advice, search procedures, revised risk assessment and recording according to the circumstances. Staff must not conduct an unsafe physical search or ask learners to search for a sharp.

10. Discarded or unidentified sharps on the premises

8. Do not touch, kick, move, cover or place hands near the item. Keep learners and others away and supervise the area.
9. Inform the Director/responsible staff member and record the exact location, description and relevant circumstances.
10. Only a trained, authorised adult may remove the item. Bring an approved sharps container to the item—never carry an exposed sharp to a distant container.
11. Use purpose-designed sharps tongs or a litter picker. Disposable gloves may protect against contamination but are not needle-puncture protection.
12. Keep the sharp pointed away from the body, do not hold it in the hand and place it directly into the container without recapping or manipulating it.
13. Close and secure the container in accordance with its instructions. Wash hands after glove removal and arrange authorised collection.
14. If safe removal cannot be achieved, isolate the area and contact Bury Council or an appropriate specialist contractor.

Bury Council reporting For needles or drug-related waste in a public place, call 0161 253 5353 between 8:45am and 5:00pm Monday to Friday, or 0161 253 6606 outside those hours. Bury Council advises people not to touch discarded needles or syringes.

11. Sharps found outside the premises

Keep learners away and do not touch the item. Report the exact location to Bury Council using the numbers above. If there is immediate danger, threatening behaviour, suspected active crime or concern for a person's safety, call 999. Other drug-related anti-social behaviour may be reported to Greater Manchester Police through the appropriate non-emergency route.

Inform the DSL where the circumstances create a safeguarding concern for a learner or another child. A routine discarded-sharps report does not automatically require a referral to children's social care; the DSL will assess the information and follow safeguarding procedures where the threshold is met.

12. First aid following a needlestick or contaminated-sharps injury

Treat any puncture, cut or splash involving a used or unidentified sharp as potentially contaminated. Act immediately:

15. Encourage the wound to bleed gently under running water. Do not suck or scrub the wound.
16. Wash with soap and running water, dry and cover with a waterproof dressing.
17. For a splash to eyes, mouth or broken skin, rinse immediately with plenty of clean water; do not swallow the rinsing water.
18. Tell the first aider and Director at once. Record what happened, the time, location and item without handling it unnecessarily.
19. Obtain urgent medical advice for risk assessment and time-sensitive treatment. Contact NHS 111, an urgent treatment service or emergency department as advised; call 999 for a serious injury or medical emergency.
20. Contact the learner's parent/carers promptly where the injured person is a child, unless doing so would create a safeguarding risk, in which case follow DSL advice.
21. Do not attempt to test a discarded needle or identify a previous user. Preserve relevant factual information for clinicians and incident review.

13. Other cuts and puncture injuries

For an injury from a known clean classroom sharp, provide first aid appropriate to the wound, seek medical help where required and inform parents/carers in line with the First Aid Policy. If there is any doubt about contamination, treat it as a potential needlestick/contaminated-sharps exposure and obtain urgent medical advice.

14. Incident reporting, safeguarding and RIDDOR

All sharps injuries, missing controlled sharps, discarded needles and significant misuse must be recorded through the accident/incident system and reviewed. Preserve confidentiality and record facts rather than assumptions. The Director will consider whether the risk assessment, supervision, storage, equipment, first-aid or training arrangements need to change.

The Director will assess whether an incident involving an employee is reportable to the Health and Safety Executive under RIDDOR, including where a reportable occupational disease is diagnosed following exposure. Safeguarding concerns, suspected weapons or drug-related concerns will be referred through the appropriate safeguarding or police procedure.

15. Waste and disposal

- Never place needles, syringes, lancets, contaminated blades or filled sharps containers in general waste or recycling.
- Use a container appropriate to the waste stream and follow the manufacturer's fill line and closure instructions.
- Store sealed containers securely pending collection and use an authorised waste carrier and receiving facility.
- Retain waste transfer or consignment documentation as required by the organisation's waste procedures.
- Clean, broken classroom sharps that are not clinical/hazardous waste must still be wrapped or contained so they cannot injure waste handlers and disposed of through the approved route.

16. Training and information

Staff will receive information proportionate to their duties. Those who supervise sharps activities will understand the relevant risk assessment, issue/return procedure and missing-item response. Persons authorised to remove discarded sharps or manage medical sharps will receive specific practical instruction, including use of tongs, containers, personal protective equipment, waste arrangements, exposure first aid and incident reporting. Learners will receive clear, age-appropriate safety instructions before use.

17. Monitoring and review

The Director will monitor inventories, checks, accidents, near misses, discarded-sharps reports, waste documentation and training. This policy will be reviewed annually and sooner following a sharps injury, significant near miss, change in law or official guidance, change in waste contractor, new activity or evidence that controls are ineffective.

18. Related documents

- Health and Safety Policy;
- First Aid Policy;
- Medication Policy and individual healthcare plans;
- Behaviour and Safeguarding Policies;
- COSHH arrangements;
- Educational Visits Policy;
- Waste, WEEE and Records/Incident Reporting procedures.

Approval

Approved by	Joanne C. Hindle, Director
Signature	_____
Approval date	5 September 2026
Next review	September 2027

Appendix A — Immediate response card

Situation	Immediate action
Learner finds a sharp	Do not touch. Move away, keep others away and tell staff immediately.
Discarded needle on site	Isolate area. Inform Director. Trained authorised adult uses tongs and approved container, or call specialist help.
Needlestick / contaminated injury	Gentle bleeding under running water; wash, cover; urgent medical advice; report and record.
Splash to eyes or mouth	Rinse immediately with plenty of clean water; urgent medical advice; report and record.
Missing classroom sharp	Stop activity; secure/supervise group; notify Director/DSL; controlled adult search and incident review.
Public-place needle	Do not touch. Bury Council: 0161 253 5353 office hours / 0161 253 6606 out of hours.