



Chemical Safety in School Policy

***This policy addresses issues in relation to:
Safe and Supportive Environment – Student Welfare 3.6.2***

(See also Policies on Duty of Care, Risk Assessment and Repairs and Maintenance)

WORKING WITH CHEMICALS

Overview

Many of the chemicals we work with can be harmful to our health if we are exposed to them and/or pose a risk of injury on incident if not handled properly. Chemicals are used in schools for both educational and administrative purposes. The “Chemical Safety in School Policy”, sets out procedures to ensure that chemicals are used in a safe manner and that the risks associated with the use of chemicals are controlled.

Scope

Al-Faisal College performance standards for working with chemicals are applicable to all staff who work with chemicals.

Performance Standards

- The procurement of chemicals:
 - Initial request by relevant department.
 - Review and approval by Head of Campus
 - Authority to procure by the Executive Principal.
- Up-to-date chemical register.
- Relevant safety data sheet (SDS) must be readily accessible to all staff working with chemicals.
- All chemical containers must be appropriately labelled.
- Risk assessments must be completed for all experiments involving chemicals, risk controls applied and relevant safe operating procedures established.
- Appropriate storage must be provided for chemicals.
- Access to chemicals must be restricted to teachers only.
- Chemical waste must be disposed of via Chemsal/ Tox Free/ Solveco (licensed to collect chemical waste).



Procurement of chemicals

Chemicals which are not available on site will be ordered by the Executive Principal following a formal request by the Head of Campus.

Approval to purchase a chemical should only be provided if:

- The relevant SDS has been reviewed.
- It has been determined that no safer alternative is available.
- The volume of the chemical is appropriate to the expected short-term demand for use.
- Adequate storage facilities are available.
- Appropriate facilities and competent staff are available to safely carryout (or supervise) the work involving the chemical.

Chemical Register

The chemical register is important for the management of the chemicals used and stored by the school and it ensures that the chemicals used are identified and controlled in a manner to minimise the risk of adverse health effects to staff and students. It includes a list of chemicals, their classification, storage locations and typical volumes. The register also provides links to the SDS and risk assessments. All science teachers must have access to the chemical register.

Safety data sheet (SDS)

SDS is a document prepared by the manufacturer and provided to us by the supplier. It will state whether the chemical is classified as hazardous and/or a dangerous good and provide details about the physical and chemical properties of the substance and precautions for safe use.

Manufacturers/suppliers are required to review and update SDS every 5 years.

Safety Data sheets must be readily available to all staff who may be exposed to that chemical. It is acceptable to keep printed SDS together with the chemical register or to store the SDS electronically.



Chemical risk assessment

Risk assessments must be completed for all tasks involving the use of chemicals. The risk assessment process includes the following steps:

- Reviewing the SDS for the substances involved to identify the nature and severity of potential health effects and/or the potential for dangerous reactions, fire, explosion etc.
- Considering the proposed work process including the work environment (e.g. space, ventilation), quantities of the substances used, the practical experience of the person carrying out the work and the number of people affected by the work.
- Identifying the possible routes of exposure; the likelihood of exposure; the likelihood of a dangerous reaction, fire, explosion occurring during the work process; and the associated risk factors.
- Where necessary, implement additional risk controls to reduce the risk of exposure or incident.

Common risk controls for working with chemicals

- Eliminate or outsource hazardous tasks if the risks outweigh the potential benefits.
- Substitute the chemical with a less hazardous chemical. If this is not possible, investigate the use of the chemical in a less hazardous form (e.g. pellets instead of powder or gel instead of liquid) or use a safer process (e.g. purifying solvents by filtration rather than distillation).
- Isolate the hazard by using a closed system or separating workers by distance.
- Establish safe work practices including restricted access, good housekeeping, preparation for emergencies and documented safe work procedures for frequently performed or high risk tasks.
- Provide appropriate training and supervision.
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment.

Access to chemicals

Only staff with a legitimate need should have access to chemicals. Unauthorised access and activities must be prevented. Basic security controls include:

- Ensuring that the perimeters to all areas where chemicals are used or stored are secured (by key/tag) whenever unattended by staff.
- Keep the entrance doors to laboratories closed, even when in use.
- Display the School standard “Authorised entry only” signage at the entrances to facilities where chemicals are used.
- Keep a regular inventory of all chemicals and equipment.



Personal protective equipment and clothing

The minimum equipment and clothing standards for work with chemicals are:

- Enclosed/covered shoes made of non-absorbent material with a non-slip sole.
- Disposable gloves which are chemically resistant.

Planning for emergencies

- Quickly shut-down equipment or processes so that they can be safely left unattended in the event of a building evacuation.
- Provide appropriate first aid treatment in response to chemical exposures. Refer to the SDS for guidance.
- Respond to chemical spills and other dangerous events including fire.

CHEMICAL SAFETY

1. Chemical register and SDS

- All chemicals present in the school are listed together with their classification.
- The chemical register is updated at least once each year.
- SDS documents are located in the School Administration Office.

2. Storage and classification

- All chemicals are stored in the appropriate cabinets which are labelled – corrosive, oxidizing agents and flammable substances.

3. Chemical Waste/Disposal

- Separate containers are provided for disposal of organic and inorganic waste. When full, these are collected by Chemsal/ Tox Free/ Solveco (licensed to collect chemical waste) or disposed of in accordance with local government and state regulations.

4. General Safety

- Fire extinguishers are located in designated areas around the school and are regularly checked by licensed contractors.
- A First-Aid kit is available in designated areas. These are maintained by the administration officer on a regular basis.
- If a student suffers from an adverse reaction to any chemicals, safety procedures as per SDS



must be followed and the student must be sent to the School Administration Office for medical treatment together with a description of the chemical used. An incident report form must be compiled.

Chemicals for cleaning purposes

The school's contract cleaners store chemicals for cleaning purposes in securely locked storerooms. These rooms are accessible only to office staff and the cleaning staff appointed by the school. These storerooms are not to be accessed by students at any time.

The canteen uses chemicals that are not flammable. They must be securely stored in a locked cupboard and used without exposing food, drinks or students to these chemicals.

Chemicals in the school's kitchen

Detergent is kept in the school's kitchen located in Buildings A for cleaning of eating utensils. The detergent is stored securely in the cupboards underneath the sink. These cupboards are not to be accessed by students at any time.

Pesticides

Pest control treatments on the school site will only be carried out by a licensed pest controller. These treatments will be performed outside the normal school hours.

Medications

All students' medications must be recorded at the school administration office in the medications "register" and accompanied with a medical certificate.

Revision History

Version	Policy Date	Review date of policy	Notes
1.0	January 2025	January 2027	<i>Amendments to this policy will be made based on updated legislative requirements or changes to school needs</i>