

Legislative Requirements

The intention of this essay will be to summarise the key aspects of current legislative requirements and codes of practice relevant to an art teacher in a secondary school.

The Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) places a responsibility on every employer in the United Kingdom to produce a written policy on health and safety in order to bring it to the attention of employees to train and provide a safe working environment. In the school context the Health and Safety Act is there to protect the safety of the learners, parents and the general public who may visit the school premises.

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) legislation dates from 1988 and the most recent amendment was made on the 20th December 2004. Therefore, areas of concern can arise for teaching art. This is due to the fact that in a secondary school a variety of artistic equipment could potentially be hazardous. Paints, cleaning products, solvents and permanent marker pens contain dangerous substances. It is a legal ramification that a written risk assessment should be prepared if any of the above substances would be used during the lesson. The codes and practices of the school should implement staff training to ensure that they keep up to date and are familiar with the current health and safety policies. It is the teachers' role and responsibility to teach pupils how to identify hazards, assess them, control the risk and teach them to behave safely within the classroom.

There are several acts that co exist with the Equal Opportunities Legislation. These include the Race Relations Act (2000), the Children's Act (1989) and the Special Education Needs and Disability Act (2001). I will briefly summarise the Equal Opportunities Legislation, as being an art teacher it is fundamental to ensure that the learning materials and resources do not include any prejudice, inappropriate imagery or offensive text.

This will particularly relate to generic art, from modern contemporary art to the 20th century and looking back at the 15th century period whilst teaching about the Italian Renaissance. There are likely to be images of nudity or a lack of female artists. This could be seen as extremely offensive to pupils, therefore, it is important to be aware how to oversee sensitive issues towards the opposite sex or pupils who have religious beliefs.

All schools within the United Kingdom are under The Data Protection Act (1998). It ensures that public and private schools that store any form of data on learners electronically or other written reports for more than two months will have to register as a data user. The Act confines institutes not to share data with third parties or other organisations. It is of paramount importance and good practice for teachers not to reveal personal information regarding staff members and pupils. There should also be technical methods for the I.T staff to protect software, hardware and the computer systems from illegal access and that stores achievement and assessment details and confidential information regarding current pupils and pupils that have left.

Written by Michael Butler

<http://www.michael-butler.com/>



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