



Dated: March 2023

Review date: March 2024

Risk Assessment Policy

Overview

This policy is designed to assist the school in fulfilling their legal duties in assessing risks. Risk management is the consideration of the risks that arise in the workplace and then putting in place sensible health and safety measures to control them.

In accordance with our duties under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 2000, the school is required to undertake regular risk assessments and take any necessary action arising from these according to provisions set out in the Health and Safety Policy and elsewhere.

The purpose of a risk assessment is to identify hazards and evaluate any associated risks.

This includes areas such as:

- Safeguarding
- Health and Safety
- Security
- Fire Safety
- Site Security
- School Trips
- Critical incidents

The principal is responsible for making sure that risk assessments are completed, logged and effectively monitored. Reviews are conducted when there is any change to equipment or resources, any change to the school's premises, or when particular needs of a child or other visitor necessitate this.

All staff are responsible for carrying out a risk assessment according to their roles and responsibilities.

The principal is further responsible for conducting any necessary reviews or making changes to the school's policies or procedures in the light of any potential risks that they or other members of staff discover.

A visual inspection of both the equipment and the entire premises – both indoor and outdoor – will be carried out daily. This will, ordinarily, be carried out by a designated member of staff (Building Manager) on arrival at the school and will be completed before any children arrive.

During the school day, staff will be vigilant and continuously aware of any potential risks to health and safety arising from:

- The school's environment, both indoors and outdoors;
- All surfaces, both indoors and outdoors;
- All equipment used by children or staff.

On discovering a hazard, staff will take all steps necessary to make themselves and any other people potentially affected safe. They will then notify the building manager and ensure that a record is made in the Incident Record Book.

The principal is then responsible for ensuring that any necessary action is taken. As already stated, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (NI) 2000 require that suitable and sufficient assessments of the risk arising out of work are carried out.

Put simply, a risk assessment is finding out what could cause harm to people and deciding if you have done enough or need to do more to protect them.

What Is a Risk Assessment?

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines a risk assessment as “a careful examination of what in your work could cause harm to people so that you can weigh up whether or not you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm”. The assessment will help you to identify the likelihood of harm and whether you can reduce the risk to a reasonable level, through the introduction of control measures.

Definition Of a Hazard and a Risk

Hazard: A hazard is anything that may cause harm such as chemicals, electricity, working from ladders, an open drawer, etc.

Risk: Risk is the chance, high or low, that somebody could be harmed by these and other hazards, together with an indication of how serious the harm could be.

Types Of Risk Assessments

There are three different types of risk assessments. These are generic, specific and dynamic.

Generic activities are those which although they are carried out at different times and at different locations, the hazards and risks are largely the same and do not change. For this type of activity generic risk assessments can be produced as a model for guidance only.

A specific risk assessment may be applicable where the hazards and risks are only applicable to a certain activity and also where there is a requirement in legislation to undertake a specific assessment for example COSHH, new and expectant mothers.

A dynamic risk assessment is a continuous process of identifying the hazards that occur in for example an emergency situation, assessing the risks and taking immediate action to eliminate or reduce these to an acceptable level.

The Process of Risk Assessment

What can be risk assessed?

A risk assessment can be undertaken on an object or substance, a process, a location, an activity, or a person. It is a five-step process:

Step 1: Identify the hazards

Divide your work into manageable categories considering:

- Location
- Activities
- Equipment
- People

Identify the hazards:

- Chemical – paint solvents/exhaust fumes
- Biological – bacteria
- Physical – noise/vibration
- Psychological – occupational stress

Step 2: Decide who might be harmed and how

For each hazard you need to be clear about who might be harmed, identify the groups of people – such as staff members, pupils, or members of the public. Identify how they might be harmed i.e., what type of injury or ill health might occur.

Step 3: Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions

Consider how likely it is that each hazard will occur and what control measures you already have in place. Have the control measures in place, get rid of the hazard altogether or reduce the risk so that harm is unlikely. If the task has not been adequately controlled, think about what further actions are required. If any further actions are required, the name of the person responsible for actioning the task should be recorded along with the projected completion date with the actual completion date recorded in the completed column.

Step 4: Record your findings and implement them

Putting the results of your risk assessment into practice will make a difference when looking after staff. Writing down the results of your risk assessment, and sharing them with the staff, encourages you to do this.

Step 5: Review your assessment and update if necessary

Risk assessments need to be reviewed and if necessary, updated every year. However, a review will be required sooner if an incident or accident occurs, or there are significant changes to the premises, staff or procedures.

Evaluating The Risk

Having spotted the hazards, you then have to decide what to do about them. The law requires you to do everything 'reasonably practicable' to protect people from harm. You can work this out for yourself, but the easiest way is to compare what you are doing with good practice. There are many sources of good practice, for example HSENI's website (www.hseni.gov.uk), CLEAPSS, etc.

So first, look at what you're already doing think about what controls you have in place and how the work is organised. Then compare this with the good practice and see if there's more you should be doing to bring yourself up to standard.

Can you get rid of the hazard altogether? If not, how can you control the risks so that harm is unlikely? When controlling risks, apply the principles below, if possible, in the following order:

- try a less risky option (e.g. switch to using a less hazardous chemical);
- prevent access to the hazard (e.g. by guarding);
- organise work to reduce exposure to the hazard (e.g. put barriers between pedestrians and traffic);
- issue personal protective equipment (e.g. clothing, footwear, goggles etc); and
- provide welfare facilities (e.g. first aid and washing facilities for removal of contamination).

Involve staff, so that you can be sure that what you propose to do will work in practice.

Responsibilities: Governors, the headteacher, and staff are responsible for: undertaking risk assessments, identifying, and implementing control measures, effectively communicating the outcomes to others as appropriate.

Record Keeping: Risk assessments and associated documents must be kept for a minimum period of three years from the date which they are superseded as they may be required in the event of a litigation claim for compensation (note that claims for compensation can, generally be made up to 3 years from the date of the incident occurring). It should be noted that risk assessments which relate to the use of substances may need to be kept for 40 years, in order to trace exposure to substances which are known to have ill health effects e.g. asbestos.

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