

Risk Assessment Guidelines

INTRODUCTION

This policy is designed to assist team members fulfil 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 team 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 hub leader 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.

During the activity, team members 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 making themselves and any other people potentially affected safe. They will then notify the group leader and ensure that a record is made in the Incident Record Book.

The group leader 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.

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

Step 2: Decide who might be harmed and how

Step 3: Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions

Step 4: Record your findings and implement them

Step 5: Review your assessment and update if necessary

What is a hazard?

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

What is risk?

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.

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 HSE's website (www.hse.gov.uk) CLEAPSS, etc.

So first, look at what you're already doing think about what **controls** you have in place. Then consider:

Can I get rid of the hazard altogether? If not, how can I 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 up)
- 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 the team, so that you can be sure that what you propose to do will work in practice.

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.

The five step process is as follows:

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 or members of the public/pupils. 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 got rid of the hazard altogether or reduced the risk so that harm is unlikely, if the task has not been adequately controlled 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.

Step 4: Record your findings and implement them

Putting the results of your risk assessment into practice will make a difference.

Step 5: Review your assessment and update if necessary

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