



Highfield Priory
Independent Day School
and Nursery

Risk Assessment Policy

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This policy should be read in conjunction with:

Educational Visits Policy
Emergency Plan
Fire Risk (Prevention) Policy
First Aid Policy
Health and Safety Policy
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Highfield Priory School “the School” recognises the legal requirements to have risk assessments in place that cover a wide area of operations within the school environment and that a failure to take reasonable safety precautions in relation to identified hazards would represent a serious risk to staff, visitors, general public and contractors and, in particular, pupils and the possibility of prosecution.

The aim of this policy is to set out the systematic approach for suitable and sufficient risk management throughout the School.

This policy has particular regard for ensuring the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted at all times and appropriate action is taken to reduce risks and potential risks that are identified.

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

This includes such areas as:

- Safeguarding and pupil supervision

- Health and Safety
- Security and visitors (all public access, including when school is in use and otherwise)
- Fire Safety
- Site Security and traffic movement
- School Trips and Educational Visits
- Critical incidents
- Hazardous substances and equipment
- Staff recruitment

What is a Risk Assessment?

A risk assessment is a tool for conducting a formal examination of the harm or hazard to people (or an organisation) that could result from a particular activity or situation.

- A hazard is something with the potential to cause harm (e.g. fire).
- A risk is an evaluation of the probability (or likelihood) of the hazard occurring (e.g. a chip pan will catch fire if left unattended).
- A risk assessment is the resulting assessment of the severity of the outcome (e.g. loss of life, destruction of property).
- Risk control measures are the measures and procedures that are put in place in order to minimise the consequences of unfettered risk (e.g. staff training, clear work procedures, heat detectors, fire alarms, fire practices, gas and electrical shut down points and insurance).

Risk assessments do not have to be complicated. The level of detail contained in them should be relevant to the level of the risks involved with the activity. In many cases a risk assessment will lead to clarification and documenting of protocols and procedures that are often already in place, following best practice and relevant industry standards where applicable.

Risk assessments can also assist in the identification of requirements for levels of instruction, information, training and supervision that may be required for the activity.

In addition, some topic specific risk assessments are required by legislation for example those concerning fire safety, pupil supervision, school trips, manual handling, display screen assessments, substances hazardous to health, provision and use of work equipment, asbestos, and security assessments. This list is in no way exhaustive.

Where relevant these risk assessments will be completed using industry standard assessment templates or guidelines.

Responsibilities

Role of the Health and Safety Committee and Governing body

- The Health and Safety Committee of the Governing Body is the main forum within the school for discussing and for monitoring risk assessments, induction and training programmes.
- Risk assessments are a regular agenda item at those meetings.
- The School Business Manager is responsible for monitoring compliance and for liaising with the local police, the fire service and insurance and security advisors in pursuit of risk reduction and for reporting back to the Governing Body and to the Senior Management Team.

Role of the SMT

- Allocating resources in response to risk assessments completed within departments and determining a course of action should it be identified that a risk cannot be suitably controlled so far as is reasonably practicable.
- Setting up frameworks for decision making and corporate strategies which incorporate risk assessment principles. This will ensure that decisions made take into account relevant risk factors.

- Ensuring that those who are tasked with completing risk assessments within departments are suitably trained to do so.
- Ensuring that a suitable mechanism exists to communicate the safe systems of work identified as part of the risk assessment procedures. Typically, these are likely to be in the form of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) or the guidelines adopted by the school such as those set out in policies, procedures, handbooks and codes of conduct.

Role of curriculum co-ordinators

- Undertaking risk assessments related to their topic area, identifying and implementing control measures, effectively communicating the outcomes to employees and others as appropriate.

Role of all employees

- Assisting with and participating in the process of risk assessment.

Definitions

For the purpose of this policy the following definitions apply:

- a) Hazard: Something with the potential to cause harm.
- b) Hazardous Outcome: A description of how someone could be hurt or damage could occur as a result of interacting with the hazard.
- c) Risk Rating: The overall judgement of the level of risk which may arise from the hazard, based upon the likelihood of the event occurring and the potential severity of the consequence
- d) Control Measures: Method used to reduce or control risks arising from identified hazards.

Legal aspects of Risk Assessment

There are clear duties for risk assessment under acts such as the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations. The following requirements are laid down in those regulations and can be applied to other areas of risk assessment:

- *The risk assessment shall be 'suitable and sufficient' and cover both employees and non-employees affected by the employers undertaking (e.g. contractors, members of the public, pupils, etc)*

The term 'suitable and sufficient' is important as it defines the limits to the risk assessment process. A suitable and sufficient risk assessment should:

- Identify the significant risks and ignore the trivial ones.
- Identify and prioritise the measures required to comply with any relevant statutory provisions.
- Remain appropriate to the nature of the work and valid over a reasonable period of time.
- Identify the risk arising from or in connection with the work. The detail should be proportionate to the risk.

The significant findings that should be recorded include a detailed statement of the hazards and risks; the preventative, protective or control measures in place; and any further measures to reduce the risks present.

Safeguarding and Child Protection

Our Safeguarding/ Child Protection policies and training for all staff form the core of our child protection risk management. Safer recruitment policies and procedures ensure that the school is not exposed to the risk of employing staff who are barred from working with children and are not allowed to work in the UK. By extending this regime to Governors, volunteers and the adult members of the households of staff who are accommodated on site, and by ensuring that everyone in our community receives regular child protection training, we manage this risk to an acceptable level.

In relation to the *Prevent strategy* and for further information regarding our handling of the risks involved in and the procedures and protocols in place to mitigate these in terms of radicalisation see the school's Radicalisation policy.

Risk Assessment

The school has a responsibility to ensure that the risk posed to staff, pupils, property, contractors and the public are reduced, so far as reasonably practicable.

Risk assessment is a subjective but logical process which can be broken down into 5 steps:

Step 1 Identify the hazard

Step 2 Decide who or what might be harmed and how

Step 3 Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions

Step 4 Record significant findings and implement them

Step 5 Review the assessment and update if necessary

When conducting a risk assessment, SMT should adopt a team approach to risk assessment whenever possible and involve staff members who have practical experience (as they often have the best awareness and understanding of the hazards involved with the activity and how the activity is actually carried out.)

Types of Risk Assessment

All significant risks shall be assessed. Although the principals of assessment remain the same their application can differ. There are 3 recognised methods of assessment.

- a) Formal – A written method of evaluating the risk of harm (as described above).
- b) Generic – An evaluation of risk that can be applied to common tasks.

In unusual circumstances, when an unforeseen risk presents itself (a previous Formal or Generic risk assessment not having been compiled and / or in use) an employee may be required to use a dynamic risk assessment.

- c) Dynamic – A mental assessment of risk for use when any delay would increase the risk from harm.

Trips and Educational Visits

A comprehensive risk assessment is carried out by the group leader before the proposed visit. It will assess the risks which might be encountered on the visit and will indicate measures to prevent or reduce them. The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations:

- What are the hazards?
- Who might be affected by them?
- What safety measures are needed to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- Can the group leader put the safety measures in place?
- What steps will be taken in an emergency?

Staff planning an off-site activity should make a preliminary visit to the venue, to carry out an on-site risk assessment. It is important to take into account the probable weather conditions at the time of year proposed for the trip, and the party leader should take careful account of the facilities available, with due regard to the proposed size of the group. S/he should also assess the site's suitability with regard to the age and any particular needs of the children. S/he will also consider the venue's own approach to security and to health and safety.

Venues providing instructor-led activities will have their own risk assessments for particular sessions, these and the venues overall risk assessment will be adopted alongside our own risk assessments.

An activity should normally have sufficient adults taking part to provide the following minimum ratios:

- 1 adult to 10 pupils in Years 4 to 6.
- 1 adult to 6 pupils in Years 1 to 3.
- 1 adult to 3 children in Reception/foundation classes

Any trip will require a minimum of two adults. However, these are minimum requirements, and may not provide adequate supervision in all cases.

A risk assessment must also cover transport to and from the venue. The coach company we use on a regular basis has provided us with a letter detailing all the health and safety measures it routinely takes, including:

- the provision and required use of seat belts.
- proper vetting of the driver by the police.
- proper insurance for the driver.
- details of first aid and emergency equipment.
- breakdown procedures.

Adventurous Activities

The DfES advises that adventurous activities should be categorised according to potential risks so that the school can identify activities for which special measures are required. Further advice on these special measures can be found in the booklet 'Health and Safety of pupils on Educational visits' and the three supplements 'Standards for LEAs in Overseeing Educational Visits', 'Standards for adventure' and 'A Handbook for Group Leaders' published by the DfES. Copies of these can be found at the back of the main file to be kept in the staffroom.

The DfES suggests the following categories:

Category A- Activities that presents no significant risks. Examples are walking in the park or non-remote paths. The school can follow the standard procedure for out of school visits.

Category B- Some higher- risk or higher profile activities. For example, walking in non-remote countryside. Safe supervision requires that the leader, as a minimum, should have undergone an additional familiarisation process or induction specific to the activity and/or location.

Category C- Includes all those activities that, if not school-led, would be in the scope of Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 1996. Those activities whose safe supervision requires that the leader should normally complete some prior test of his or her specific competence.

It is important to take into consideration environmental factors such as weather conditions and terrain when deciding which category an activity should be placed.

Although it should be relatively easy to check whether a particular centre is licensed it should not be assumed that the existence of the license negates the need to carry out checks to establish that a satisfactory standard of service is being provided. Details of current license holders can be obtained from the AALA website at <http://www.aala.org.uk>.

Sports Visits

The P.E. coordinator annually draws up a generic assessment for sporting fixtures. A copy of this is to be put in the Risk Assessment file to be kept in the staffroom. Detailed risk assessments for School Swimming are to be obtained and regularly updated from David Lloyd Leisure Centre and a copy is to be kept in the Risk Assessment file to be kept in the staffroom.

Early Years

As part of our curriculum the children are taken for local walks, visits etc. off the premises and permission will be sought for your child to be included in such outings.

For local outings (where children and staff walk to the destination), we ask that parents/carers give their consent for these trips by signing the relevant section on our childcare agreement form. Where possible, staff will let parents/carers know in advance that their child will be attending a local walk/trip.

A risk assessment will be carried out for each outing, and staff will follow the specific procedures outlined below:

- Operate a staff to children ratio of 1:3 and ensure at least two members of staff are present. Each adult will assume responsibility for the same three children throughout the trip.
- Provide a designated person in charge, normally a senior member of staff (manager, supervisor or senior practitioner) and a designated First Aider.
- In case of a child going missing the Lost/missing Child Procedure (Outings) will be followed.

Training

The school, as a responsible employer, will provide appropriate risk assessment training for staff as necessary, as identified by the SMT. Risk assessment will be included as part of staff induction to the school

Those who have a responsibility for the completion of risk assessments will initially be provided with basic internal risk assessment training.

This foundation training covers the processes and key stages of risk assessment including the rationale behind the risk assessment; application of suitable and sufficient control measures to mitigate risk; communication of the risk assessment; record keeping and incident management.

Specialised risk assessment training will be provided to staff as required ensuring appropriate expertise, monitoring and supervision.

Communication

Relevant information identified in the risk assessment regarding the hazards, their associated risks to the Trust and the appropriate control measures must be effectively communicated, and be readily accessible to, employees and others as appropriate.

Monitoring

H & S committee and the SMT shall monitor the effectiveness of control measures and ensure that physical control measures are used, installed correctly and suitably maintained where applicable. Likewise checks should be made to ensure that agreed control measures and safe systems of work are being followed correctly.

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.

Reviewing Risk Assessments

When a risk assessment is completed it will be signed by the headmaster. A copy printed on white paper will be kept in a file in the School Business office. The master copy printed on pink paper will be given to staff and should be placed in the appropriate locations associated with the risk assessment.

Few workplaces stay the same. At any point where new equipment, substances and procedures that could lead to new hazards are introduced to school we need to review what we are doing, look at our risk assessment again and ask ourselves:

- Have there been any significant changes?
- Are there improvements we still need to make?
- Have we spotted a problem?
- Have we learnt anything from accidents or near misses?

During the year staff members will annotate, in pen, any new control measures needed or make changes onto the master copy risk assessment. Changes include amendments to risk scores and adding any new potential hazards associated with the activity. At the end of the academic year the risk assessment sheets should be returned to the School Business office. The amendments, reviews and annotations will then be added to the electronic version and printed again for the start of the next academic year and the process will start again. Staff will not need to make any changes to the Word version of the current risk assessments and will only use the online forms of the risk assessment for evaluating the risk of a new activity. All new risk assessments should be signed by the headmaster and a copy should be file in the School Business Office.

To be circulated to all staff and parents (on request).

Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually or at an earlier date if changes are required due to risk assessment review or changes in legislation and/or guidance.

The Health and Safety Committee is responsible for this policy.

Date last reviewed: January 2022

Authority

The Full Board of Governors, by delegation to sub-committees, is responsible for formulating the policies and procedures that will ensure the school continue to achieve the aims of the overall school strategy. Hence, each sub-committee has Terms of Reference and assigned responsibility for policies within that scope. The sub-committees are: Finance and General Purposes, Health and Safety, Safeguarding, Education and Marketing.

Appendix 1

Risk assessments procedures:

Staff / pupils RA- to be completed by deputy head in conjunction with staff member or parent (to be signed by staff member or parent) and written copies kept in school office and on System.

Educational visits RA- Risk Assessment to be completed by group's leader/s and reviewed by headmaster. Written copies are to be kept by HM. All staff helping out on the visit must read and sign before the educational visit. At an appropriate level, the RA is to be shared with the children before the visit.

Rooms RA- Word document relating to each room on the system to be completed annually to be completed by appropriate coordinator with support from SMT, where required and reviewed by H & S committee. These are to be shared with all staff that uses the rooms.

Physical Education and external matches- Games/ PE coordinator with support from SMT is responsible for completing appropriate RAs

Legal requirement related to H & S- the school business manager is responsible for the carrying out and record keeping of relevant legal requirements.

Safeguarding and child protection procedures- our designated lead is responsible for the updating and communicating relevant information to all staff members.

A book to record any near misses is kept in the staffroom and regularly reviewed at H & S meetings.