

Welburn Hall School



Risk Assessment Policy

February 2017

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Introduction

1. This policy is based on the NYCC CYPS health and safety policy and guidance handbook November 2012 (referred to in this policy as “the Handbook”).
2. The process of risk assessment is central to an effective health & safety management system. This policy should be read along with the guidance on completing a risk assessment form found in the Risk Assessment Section of the Handbook. Following the policy will ensure compliance with inspection frameworks, such as the National Minimum Standards for Special Schools.

Reasons for Risk Assessment

3. Risk Assessment is a legal requirement under health & safety legislation and in terms of civil courts can be used to demonstrate that effective controls were in place or not, before an accident occurred. In addition to the legal necessity of completing risk assessments, there are many other important reasons for ensuring a comprehensive risk assessment programme is in place in every school and these include:

- to identify previously unrecognised hazards and introduce controls to reduce the likelihood and/or severity of an accident occurring
- as a communication tool to inform employees, visitors and other site users of risk and control measures in place that must be adhered to
- as a communication tool to inform managers, senior managers of risks that may need further control through additional resources, time and effort
- as a management tool to allocate resources efficiently and objectively to different risks based on risk level
- as reassurance to parents, visitors, other site users and enforcement bodies that risks have been effectively identified and controlled

4. Risk assessments should be:

- clear, concise and comprehensible
- suitable and sufficient
- practical
- completed by those persons with the necessary competence located as close as possible to where the hazards are generated
- open for discussion and promote ownership with input by all parties involved
- accessible where possible for all interested parties including staff, young people, parents, contractors, other site users and others
- implemented and complied with by all parties affected
- reviewed whenever there is a significant change in circumstances e.g. after an accident
- positively promoted by management at all levels as an essential tool to reduce accidents and loss and improve workforce health & morale

5. Risk assessments should not be:

- a tick box exercise to be completed as quickly as possible
- laborious and time consuming - although the process involves a systematic analysis of the hazards and risks
- carried out by someone who does not have the necessary skills, training and experience to complete the assessment (the training required may just need to be basic for most assessments)
- oversimplified or overcomplicated, i.e. using language or technical terminology which makes it inaccessible to those it affects.
- seen as a bureaucratic paper exercise imposed from above

6. Written risk assessments are a formal record of:

- the hazards that present a significant risk (ignore the trivial)
- people at risk
- an estimation of the risk level in terms of the likelihood and severity of harm
- evaluation of the risk based on the control measures that currently exist and any further required
- the steps required for effective implementation
- a periodic review of the assessment

Determining the level of risk

7. Fundamentally, risk assessment involves a systematic way of identifying hazards and making judgements about how the identified hazards should be controlled either by elimination or reducing the risk as far as is reasonably practicable. Risk assessment is not about eliminating risk per se or making everyone 100% safe - it is about eliminating **unnecessary risk**. Health & Safety law requires us to ensure the health & safety of all employees as far as is **reasonably practicable** which means balancing risk against cost, time and effort.
8. Therefore we need to know the level of risk - whether high, medium or low in order to make decisions about how much time, effort and resources is required to control any particular risk. The CYPs approach to measuring risk illustrated in the handbook is based on a 5 x 5 system of likelihood and severity of harm. The risk assessor makes a judgement on how likely harm will occur from the hazard ranging from (1) very unlikely to (5) very likely. The number chosen is based on a variety of factors including numbers of previous near misses, staff competence, etc and is multiplied by a level of severity of harm ranging from (1) damage to property only to (5) death or permanent disability. The assessor should generally not go down the route of looking for worst case scenario in this process, but rather determine what is a realistic outcome in terms of risk level. With training, practice and sharing the process of completing risk assessments with colleagues, the results are less subjective and a common standard will develop.

Generic, Model and Specific Risk Assessments

9. A generic risk assessment for a particular activity, eg working at height, will identify all the common hazards and suitable controls for that activity. However, in different venues the hazards and controls will vary and these should be recorded in site specific risk assessments. Further assessment will be required in order to meet the needs of specific people involved, time of year etc. This additional information will be identified in a specific risk assessment or by amending the generic/site specific assessments.
10. Care must be taken with all generic risk assessments, since they remain generic until they have been carefully applied and adapted as necessary to meet the needs of the people involved and the particular circumstances of the location. Model risk assessments included in the handbook are worked examples of risk assessment which can be used as a basis for adapting to local circumstances.

Producing a written risk assessment

11. All activities must be fully risk assessed and a record kept of significant hazards and associated control measures.
12. There is no single correct format for a written risk assessment. Whatever format is used must be completed to the legal standard of suitable and sufficient. It is a requirement under health & safety legislation to record all significant risks, indicate how they are to be controlled and who should know about them. The CYPs general risk assessment form is attached in Appendix 1.
13. In some cases individual risk assessments will need to be carried out for children or young people with special needs as well as for staff who are pregnant or who have specific medical conditions.
14. Risk Assessments must be current, signed and dated, and be made available to all staff affected by the assessment. This does not mean necessarily giving a copy to all staff. Current Risk Assessments at Welburn Hall School are stored on the Common computer drive and the signed hardcopy is kept in the Admin Office. Risk assessments are recorded by the Business Manager in a read-only log kept on Common. The Business Manager/Admin Team will remind Risk Assessment Assessors when planned actions are due for completion and assessments are due for review.
15. Risk Assessments will be stored under the following headings:
 - People:
 - Staff (eg return to work after injury, new and expectant mothers, etc)
 - Pupils (eg Individual Risk Assessments, High level challenging behaviour, etc)
 - Activities - Design Technology, horticulture, working at heights, PE, etc
 - Locations - Grounds, classrooms, boiler rooms, etc
 - Trips - Venues, transport, etc

H A Z	DEGREE OF RISK										RISK		RECOMMENDED FURTHER ACTION/S [IF ANY]	ACTION: by NAME and by DATE	NEW RISK RATE S x L =		
	SEVERITY					X	LIKELIHOOD					SCORE				RATE	
No	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5	SCORE	H M L	Short/ Medium/ Long-Term Actions			
1																=	
2																=	
3																=	
4																=	
5																=	
6																=	
7																=	
8																=	

ASSESSOR:	SIGNATURE:	DATE:	REVIEW DATE:
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SCORE: 1 – 8 = LOW RISK

9 – 15 = MEDIUM RISK

16 – 25 = HIGH RISK