

Elmfield Rudolf Steiner School

Risk Assessment Policy

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Introduction

Risk Assessments are necessary to meet the requirements of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. Under the Regulations we are required to make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to the health and safety of all pupils, staff, members of the Council of Management, contractors and visitors to the school who could be affected by our activities. Risk assessments of all areas of the school are carried out, as are assessments of 'off site' activities, i.e. class trips and visits.

The school must take a proactive approach to managing risk, and thereby reduce the likelihood that pupils and others will be harmed through negligence and lack of foresight or proper planning.

Overall responsibility for Health and Safety at Work (HSW) is vested in the members of the Council of Management as 'employers' under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. Final accountability for Health and Safety matters is held by the Chair of the Council of Management.

They are supported by a Trustee with specific oversight for Health and Safety, appointed to ensure policies, procedures and resources in place within the school adequately enable compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements.

The Bursar is operationally accountable for Health and Safety at Work, although all school staff are responsible for ensuring there is a safe environment.

The purpose of a risk assessment

Risk assessments focus on prevention, as opposed to reacting when things go wrong, it is therefore possible to prevent accidents and injuries. Once a risk assessment has been completed the significant risks must be communicated to staff and others to enable their co-operation and informed decisions.

The range of risk assessments used across the school will create a risk profile, covering the nature and level of the risks faced, the likelihood of adverse effects occurring, associated costs and effectiveness of current controls.

What is a Risk Assessment?

A risk assessment is a careful, formal examination of the harm or hazard to people that could result from a particular activity or situation.

A hazard is something with the potential to cause harm. A risk is the probability that someone could be harmed by the hazard and an indication of how serious the harm could be.

A risk assessment is the resulting assessment of the severity of the outcome and the risk control measures are the procedures that are put in place in order to minimize the consequences of the risk.

The Risk Assessment

The standard risk assessment form should be used for all risk assessments. The important thing is that the assessment is written and written in such a way that is clear and easy to understand and follows six basic steps:

- Identify the hazard
- Decide who might be harmed and how
- Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions
- Record the findings and implement them
- Regularly, review the assessment and update if necessary. “No change” is a review decision and should be recorded as such.
- Approved by the Bursar before an activity takes place or by the Health and Safety Administrator (in the absence of the Bursar).

Methods of Assessment

The methods adopted follow the basic guidelines set out in The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Approved Code of Practice. Risk Assessments are carried out by the member of staff accountable for the particular activity, room or event in question. Risk assessments must be approved by the Bursar or H & S Administrator (in the absence of the Bursar). A record of the assessments will be kept on file.

Sources of Information

The information used for Risk Assessments is obtained either from direct observation of the activities being undertaken or from the author’s knowledge of the relevant activity, room or event.

Further information can be obtained from accident reports, manufacturers' instructions, i.e. chemical data sheets, the HSE website, CLEAPSS.

Time Scales

General risk assessments are reviewed annually as a minimum. This may be more frequent where activities change, or where the findings of the risk assessment justify more regular review.

Risk assessments relating to specific activities must be submitted to the Bursar for approval at least 48 hours in advance of the activity being undertaken so that any amendments can be made, and the risk assessment signed and dated.

Class trip risk assessments should be submitted 7-10 days prior to the trip.

Communication of information

The school's Health and Safety Committee is the main forum within the school for discussing and reviewing risk assessments. Academic and support departments are represented on the committee and individuals are able to brief members on the status of the risk assessments in their own areas of responsibility.

Responsibilities of Staff

All staff receive information on the school's arrangements for risk assessments and specialist training is given where required.

It is the responsibility of the member of staff undertaking any activity which is not covered by a current risk assessment to ensure that one is completed and approved prior to the activity taking place. The owner of the risk assessment and any named people within it are responsible for ensuring that mitigating actions are effectively implemented.

Staff are responsible for their own safety and that of pupils, contractors and visitors and are further responsible for cooperating with the Bursar and other members of the Coordination Group in order to enable the Council of Management to comply with their health and safety duties.

Staff are also responsible for reporting any defect, accident or incident that is liable to affect health and safety.

Access by Pupils

Risk assessments of all areas of the school reinforce the policy of ensuring that our pupils do not have unsupervised access to potentially dangerous areas, i.e. science laboratories, cellars, craft workshop, estates workshop, etc. Doors to these areas are locked when not in use and pupils have access to these areas only when accompanied by a member of staff.

Events

Planning for events will involve risk assessments at different levels depending on the scale of the event.