



Barbara Speake Stage School

Barbara Speake Stage School Risk Assessment Policy

Risk Assessment

Controlling risk in the school community.

Managers, teachers, others with responsibility for health and safety and all members of the school community should feel involved in the management of risk.

Introduction

As part of managing health and safety we must control the risk in the school community. To do this we need to think about what might cause harm to staff or students and decide whether we are taking reasonable steps to prevent that harm.

Our goal in assessing risks is to allow for sensible measures to control the risks. We already take steps to protect staff and students. Our risk assessments help us to decide whether we have covered all we need to.

Our aim is to think about how accidents and ill health could happen and concentrate on real risks – those that are most likely and which will cause the most harm. For some risks, other regulations require particular control measures. Our assessments help us to identify where we need to look at certain risks and these particular control measures in more detail. These control measures do not have to be assessed separately but can be considered as part of, or an extension of, an overall risk assessment.

It is important that a number of terms used in the guidance are clearly defined and understood. They are set out and defined here.

Hazard

A hazard is anything that has the potential to cause harm.

For example:

- Mechanical contact hazards e.g. the blade of a circular saw
- Access hazards e.g. an extension lead across the floor of a corridor
- Manual handling hazards e.g. lifting a heavy sack of ingredient
- Corrosive substances hazard e.g. sodium hypochlorite – bleach
- Moving vehicle hazards e.g. a reversing vehicle

It is always important not to confuse hazards with outcomes, for example an uneven floor is a hazard whilst a trip or fall is the outcome of exposure to the hazard. Similarly, a trailing cable is a hazard, the outcome is that someone trips over it.

Significant Hazard

A hazard becomes 'significant' when the result of ignoring it or failing to deal with it will lead to injury or loss (physical or financial). In risk assessment, we have to determine which hazards are so significant as to require action.

Risk

Risk is the **probability, chance** or **likelihood** that harm will actually be caused.

Control Measure

Where a serious hazard has been identified, you are legally obliged to eliminate it if that is a reasonably practicable course of action. Where this is not possible **control measures** are required to reduce, and control the risk of harm being caused to an acceptable level; by providing for example:

- Safety devices
- Specific training for personnel
- Appropriate protective clothing
- Appropriate safety signs to warn of the risks.

Identifying the hazards

One of the most important aspects of our risk assessment procedures is accurately identifying the potential hazards.

Looking at the school building we have to decide what it is about the activities, processes or substances used that could injure our staff or students or harm their health.

Part of our regular risk assessment procedures is to walk around the building and assess whether we have considered all relevant risks.

These are the key areas to consider:

- Accident forms are filled in after every accident. Where necessary the accident is investigated and a report made which can then be followed up by bringing any relevant information to the office.
- Specific cleaning or maintenance tasks are planned during the school holidays to limit exposure to risks by the wider school community.
- Thinking about long term hazards to health is very important. An example is where our dance teachers may be exposed to high levels of noise in a tap class or where loud dance music is played. We provide advice about this in our staff handbook.
- Our goal is to identify hazards and to investigate how to control them.

General Hazards

Staff would not be expected to work at height without appropriate training. There are specific risk assessments in place to address the risk of using machinery.

Where necessary staff and students are issued personal protective equipment and this is reviewed annually.

When assessing the risk the priority is to consider who might be harmed.

This involves the whole school community from staff to students, to contractors or visitors.

It is very important to include the whole school community in thinking about risk. Any member of the school community may have a contribution to make about what might be a risk and how it might be controlled. The goal is to foster an environment where each member of the school community feels that their contribution is welcomed and valued.

Once we have identified the risk we can think about who might be harmed and how it can be controlled.

We take into consideration groups of individuals with a specific circumstance or task.

- New and young workers, new or expectant mothers, people with disabilities, temporary workers, contractors and lone workers.
- Visitors, contractors and maintenance workers.
- Members of the public.

Evaluating the risks

Once the hazard has been identified, the next step is to decide how likely it is that harm will occur, i.e. the level of risk and what to do about it.

Risk is a part of everyday life and we cannot expect to eliminate all risks.

Our aim is to identify the main risks and what we need to do to manage them responsibly.

We need to do everything 'reasonably practicable' to protect the school community from harm. This means balancing the level of risk against the measures needed to control the real risk in terms of money, time or trouble.

Risk assessments should only include what we could reasonably be expected to know.

We cannot be expected to anticipate unforeseeable risks. We already have a number of control measures in place.

In completing the risk assessment these are the main points to consider:

- Can I get rid of the hazard altogether?
- If not, how can I control the risk so that harm is unlikely?

These are the practical steps to consider when completing a risk assessment:

- Try a less risky option
- Prevent access to the hazards
- Organise the activity to reduce exposure to the hazard
- Issue protective equipment
- Provide welfare facilities such as first aid and washing facilities
- Involve and consult staff and students

Improving health and safety need not cost a lot. Failure to take simple precautions can cost you a lot more if an accident does happen. It's important to make sure that any plans to improve risk work in practice.

Certain risk assessments apply across the board, for example, 'Ensuring classrooms are safe places for staff and students to work at the start of academic lessons.'

If you control a number of similar workplaces containing similar activities, you can produce a model risk assessment reflecting the common hazards and risks associated with these activities.

It's important to record any significant findings.

Our risk assessments are reviewed annually. The key for each risk assessment is to recognise the hazard, how staff or students might be put at risk and what measures we have in place to mitigate the risk. The risk assessments are short and to the point, clear and easy to understand. Information and guidelines are passed to staff at staff meetings.

Our goal is to show that:

- A proper check was made
- We have considered who might be affected
- We have dealt with all the obvious significant hazards, taking into account the number of people who could be involved
- We have taken reasonable precautions and the remaining risk is low
- We have the wider school community in the process as well as health and safety managers and staff.

Where a risk identifies a number of hazards, the most serious risks are addressed first.

It is important to find long term solutions to any risks that have serious consequences and/or are most likely to cause accidents or ill health. Temporary improvements should be made until more reliable controls can be put in place. The greater the hazard the more robust and reliable the measures to control the risk of an injury occurring will need to be.

In reviewing our risk assessments, we will consider:

- Whether there have been any significant changes
- Whether there are still improvements to be made
- Whether staff or members of the wider school community have noticed a problem
- Whether there have been any accidents or near misses

This risk assessment has been written taking into account advice given in the Health and Safety Executive Guide to Controlling Risk. This leaflet is available at www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.htm

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Risk assessments are completed whenever a new risk identified. For example, teachers will complete a risk assessment when planning a school journey that has not been undertaken before or if necessary for any reason where a new risk has been identified. These risk assessments are approved by the head teacher or the principal, relevant sections are issued to all staff on the outing and records, for reference, are kept on site. The office will liaise with a new contractor for new works that have to be undertaken in the building. Members of the management team review health and safety, including risk. On a termly basis and this is documented in the health and safety monitoring book. Ongoing risk assessments are reviewed annually in line with our health and safety policy. All staff are informed of general risk assessment findings. These are highlighted or communicated to staff on induction days or when necessary. A record of staff training is kept.

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