



Policy on Risk Assessment (Including EYFS)

The Directors of Highfield and Brookham School are fully committed to promoting the safety and welfare of all in our community so that effective education can take place. Their highest priority lies in ensuring that all the operations within the school environment, both educational and support, are delivered in a safe manner that complies fully with not just with the law; but with best practice. Risks are inherent in everyday life. We need to identify them and to adopt systems for minimising them. Our pupils need to be educated into how to cope safely with risk.

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).

Accidents and injuries can ruin lives, damage reputations and cost money. Apart from being a legal requirement, risk assessments therefore make good sense, focusing on prevention, rather than reacting when things go wrong. Many cases simple measures are very effective and not costly.

Risk assessments need reviewing and updating regularly. At Highfield and Brookham School we are very aware that all staff and pupils need to receive training. A "library" of risk assessments is maintained by the Deputy Head, the Estate Manager and on the school intranet for staff to refer to and use for themselves. The Headmaster's PA is responsible for keeping records of staff training.

WHAT AREAS REQUIRE RISK ASSESSMENTS?

There are numerous activities carried out in Highfield and Brookham School, each of which requires a separate risk assessment. The most important of these cover:

- Fire safety, procedures and risk assessments

- Educational visits and trips.

But risk assessments are also needed for many other areas, including:

Educational

- EYFS Setting
- Science experiments
- Design and Technology
- Food Technology
- Each sport and PE activity
- Art (including the clay and print studios)
- Music (including minimising the risk of hearing loss to staff)
- Drama (including the theatre back stage, stage, props room and lighting box)
- Dance
- Events
- External use of the school facilities and grounds

At Highfield School and Brookham School we make use of model or generic risk assessments, for our educational activities and visits. All teaching staff and technicians receive regular induction and refresher training in risk assessments tailored to their specific areas.

Supervision

Inherent in all risk assessment is the importance of appropriate arrangements for the supervision of pupils. Details may be found in the school's Supervision of Pupils Policies.

Pastoral

The focus of our pastoral policy is to ensure that every pupil leaves as a confident, articulate young adult capable of keeping him/herself safe on the streets, in the home and in all situations. Our PSHE programmes and Assemblies are directed towards promoting an increasing understanding as the pupil develops, of the risks that exist in both the real and the electronic worlds, and on sensible precautions that should be taken. Our science lessons encourage students to conduct their own safety-related research into the potential hazards of chemicals, gas, electricity and flammable materials.

Medical and First Aid

The Medical area has risk assessments for first aid and all other treatments and procedures. The accident forms are maintained in the Medical Area and the School Nurse is responsible for ensuring that accident reports are passed to the Deputy Head and/or Estate Manager. The School's separate medical questionnaire policy explains the procedures that we would follow in the event of a medical emergency. The Deputy Head or Estate Manager is responsible for reporting any notifiable accident that occurs on school premises to a pupil, member of staff, parent, visitor or contractor to the HSE in accordance with the Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations (RIDDOR).

Unsupervised Access by Pupils

We ensure that pupils understand why they do not have unsupervised access to potentially dangerous areas, such as the swimming pool, the science laboratories, the design technology rooms, etc. Doors to these areas are kept locked at all times when not in use. All flammables are kept securely locked. Pupils do not have access to the Grounds, Maintenance and Catering areas of the school.

Child Protection

Our 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 Directors, 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.

Support Areas

- Catering and Cleaning: risk assessments and training is required for every item of catering and cleaning equipment, as well as for manual handling, slips and trips and the control of substances hazardous to health (COSHH). Induction and refresher training covers risk assessments, protective equipment and safety notices.
- Caretaking and Security: risk assessments cover every room, laboratory, stairs, corridor and emergency exit in the entire school, including boarding houses. Emphasis in training is given to minimising the risk of both fire and to security by adhering to good practice. Risk assessments also cover manual handling, working at heights, and asbestos. Induction and refresher training covers risk assessments, protective equipment and safety notices.
- Maintenance: risk assessments and training is required for every tool and item of equipment, as well as for manual handling, slips and trips, working at height, lone working, asbestos, control of contractors on site, electricity, gas, water, swimming pool maintenance and the control of substances hazardous to health (COSHH). Induction and refresher training covers risk assessments, safe working practices, communication and health and safety notices and protective equipment.
- Grounds: risk assessments and training is required for every tool and piece of machinery, as well as for manual handling, slips and trips, working at height, lone working, use of pesticides, storage of flammables and COSHH. Induction and refresher training covers risk assessments, protective equipment and safety notices.
- Office staff: risk assessments are required for the display screen equipment and cables used by those staff (primarily office-based) who spend the majority of their working day in front of a screen.

CONDUCTING A RISK ASSESSMENT

There are several possible techniques; but at Highfield and Brookham School we use the model recommended by the HSE in its publication “Five Steps to Risk Assessment”.

- Identify the hazards
- Decide who might be harmed and how
- Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions
- Record your significant findings
- Review your assessment and update if necessary

Our policy at Highfield and Brookham School is not to carry out any high-risk activity. Activities involving pupils are normally low risk.

We will always employ specialists to carry out high-risk tasks.

Support staff may only carry out medium rated activities if they have been properly trained and work in pairs.

All members of staff and pupils are expected to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) for tasks that have been assessed as requiring its usage.

When considering personnel, attention should be paid to supervision, including in the EYFS where supervision ratios must be adhered to as a minimum standard. (See Highfield and Brookham Pupil Supervision Policies)

Specialist Risk Assessments

The Estate Manager arranges for specialists to carry out the following risk assessments:

- Fire safety
- Asbestos
- Legionella
- Gas safety
- Electrical safety

Reviews

All risk assessments are reviewed (and recorded) regularly, when major structural work is planned, or in the event of an accident. The separate policy on the management of health and safety describes the arrangements for regular health and safety audits of the fabric of the school, its plant, machinery and equipment, together with its arrangements for catering and cleaning and for water sampling.

Responsibilities of all Staff

All members of staff are given a thorough induction into the school's arrangements for risk assessments and health and safety (which is recorded). Specialist training is given to those

whose work requires it. However, staff are responsible for taking reasonable care of their own safety, together with that of pupils and visitors. They are responsible for cooperating with the Head Teachers, the Estate Manager and other members of the SMT in order to enable the Directors to comply with their health and safety duties. Finally, all members of staff are responsible for reporting any risks or defects to the Estate Manager.

AUDIT COMPLIANCE STATEMENTS

An annual Company compliance risk assessment is presented jointly by the Head Teachers and the Finance Bursar to the Directors to approve as Company Directors at the same time that they review the audited accounts. This report analyses:

- The financial procedures and controls
- The major risks to the school, including:

- Strategic risk
- Loss of fee income
- Damage to reputation
- Failure to teach the correct syllabus
- Risk of a child protection issue
- Gaps in Director skills
- Conflicts of interest
- Employment disputes
- Major health and safety issues
- Possible data loss
- Risk of fire, flood and land slip
- Poor cash flow management
- Fraud
- Loss through inappropriate investments
- Areas of potential risk

- The measures taken to protect the school against such risks, including:

- Safer recruitment of staff, Directors and volunteers
- Measures to ensure the selection, training and appraisal of appropriately qualified staff and Directors
- Insurance
- Strong financial controls
- Use of professional advice from lawyers, accountants, architects, etc as needed

Directors are invited to approve the compliance risk assessment annually and to endorse the insertion of a statement along the following lines (or a more detailed version thereof) in the school's annual accounts:

"The Directors have assessed the major risks to which the company is exposed, in particular those related to the operations and finances of the Company and are satisfied that systems are in place to manage our exposure to the major risks".

SE Sept 2025

Review date Sept 2026