RISK ASSESSMENT POLICY & PROCEDURES

The Dales School	
Date adopted:	October 2026
Review date:	October 2027

General Statement

This Risk Assessment Policy ('the Policy') is applicable to all those in School ('the school') with responsibility for developing and implementing risk management strategy and undertaking risk assessments for activities which are under their control. When reading this policy, it may also be relevant to make reference to the Health & Safety Policy.

Objectives of the Risk Assessment Policy

- To ensure that major risks are identified and managed.
- To meet the requirement for a written risk assessment policy to be in place and to meet the requirement for leadership in and management of schools.
- To ensure that suitable and sufficient risk assessments are undertaken for activities where there is likely to be significant risk, including school trips.
- That identified control measures are implemented to control risk so far as reasonably practicable.
- That those affected by School activities have received suitable information on what to do.
- That the risk management strategy and risk assessments are recorded and reviewed when appropriate.

What is a Risk Assessment?

A risk assessment is nothing more than a careful examination of what, in your work, could cause harm to people and the environment, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm.

A risk assessment is an important step in protecting staff, pupils, visitors, contractors, the environment and the school as a whole.

It helps staff focus on the risks within their department and activities that they undertake. In many instances, straightforward measures can readily control risks; for example, ensuring staff have sufficient information when they are offsite, operating machinery or using chemicals, spillages are cleaned up promptly, so people do not slip, or good housekeeping is maintained to ensure people do not trip.

Definitions

A hazard is anything that may cause harm, such as chemicals, electricity, working from ladders, open drawer etc.

The risk is the chance, high or low, that somebody could be harmed by these and other hazards, together with an indication of how serious the harm could be.

When should a risk assessment be completed?

Risk assessments in schools are a requirement under The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and should be carried out in various situations to ensure the safety and well-being of students, staff, and visitors. Here are some key instances when a risk assessment should be conducted:

1. **New Activities or Events**: Before introducing new activities, events, or programs, such as school trips, sports events, or science experiments.
2. **Changes in the Environment**: When there are changes to the school environment, such as new equipment, renovations, or changes in the layout of classrooms or playgrounds
3. **Health and Safety Concerns**: In response to health and safety concerns, such as managing infections, outbreaks, or specific medical needs of students
4. **Accidents or Incidents**: After any accidents or incidents to understand what went wrong and how to prevent similar occurrences in the future
5. **Regular Reviews**: Periodically, to ensure that existing risk assessments are up-to-date and reflect any new risks or changes in circumstances.

Who is responsible for drawing up and checking risk assessments?

All staff have a responsibility for ensuring risks assessments are completed for their area of work, and the Headteacher, School Business Manager, Middle Leaders should check and monitor assessments.

This may be by one assessment, by a number of assessments linked together or by individual assessments for different tasks/activities, offsite visits, experiments, machinery or process within the department.

Staff compliance with Risk Assessments

Staff have several key responsibilities to ensure compliance with risk assessments;

- **Participating in Risk Assessments**: Staff should assist with and participate in the risk assessment process as required.
- **Familiarising Themselves with Risk Assessments**: It's important for staff to be aware of and understand the risk assessments relevant to their roles and activities.
- **Implementing Control Measures**: Staff must implement the control measures identified in the risk assessments to mitigate risks.
- **Reporting Hazards**: Any potential hazards or risks identified by staff should be reported promptly to the appropriate person, such as the headteacher or safety officer.
- **Ongoing Monitoring**: Staff should continuously monitor their environment and activities to ensure that risk controls remain effective and report any changes that might affect safety.
- **Training and Competence**: Staff should engage in any necessary training to stay competent in health and safety practices and risk management

How to carry out a risk assessment

The school follows the Health & Safety Executives guidance of 5 Steps to Risk Assessment.

Step 1 – What are the hazards?

Consider how someone may be harmed, this will help to identify the hazards, disregard the inconsequential or trivial.

- Walk around your classroom, office; think through your task or activity; ask the staff doing the task, consider the location, duration, purpose of your visit, is there long-term health hazards associated with the task?
- Consult the manufacturer's instructions, safety data sheets, trade associations, associated websites etc.?

Step 2 – Who may be harmed and how?

Consider each hazard and who may be harmed and how they may be harmed.

- Who may be? Pupils, teaching, office, cleaning, maintenance, and/or security staff, visitors etc. Identify groups, which are more vulnerable such as young persons, the disabled, lone working staff, contractors, members of the public, etc.

- How? May be from tripping on a bag left on the floor, accessing a box from a high shelf, putting up displays from a step ladder, sports activity, noise, machinery, offsite trip etc.

Step 3 – Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions
Having spotted the hazards consider what is already in place to control them. Compare your list to good practice, is there more that could be done?
When controlling risks, apply the following principles, if possible, in the following order: -

1. Can I remove the hazard altogether?
2. If not, how can I control the risks so that harm is unlikely?
3. Try a less risky option (e.g., switch to using a less hazardous chemical)
4. Prevent access to the hazard (e.g., by guarding)
5. Organise work to reduce exposure to the hazard (e.g., put barriers between pupils/staff and the works)
6. Issue personal protective equipment (e.g., clothing, footwear, goggles, etc.)
7. And provide welfare facilities (e.g., first aid, removal of contamination).

Have the risks been reduced as far as possible or is there a need for more?
For instance: -

- You may consider that staff require refresher training on the machinery/task/activity.
- You may feel that before the trip goes ahead the ratio of staff to pupils should be increased. Without the increase in staff, you could not go ahead with the trip.
- There may have been a change of legislation or best practice and therefore new equipment or additional equipment is required.

Step 4 – Record Significant Findings
Make a record of your significant findings - the hazards, how people might be harmed by them and what you have in place to control the risks. Any record produced should be simple and focused on controls.

The completed risk assessment must be shared with the appropriate staff and where necessary pupils.

You may have outstanding issues. If so prioritise; say what needs to be done, by when and by whom.

Remember the assessment demonstrates how the event, task, activity etc. is to be managed. For example, staff to carry out inspection before use, LEV used and regularly checked, information provided to staff and pupils via a briefing.

Step 5 – Review and revise as necessary
Few activities, classrooms etc. stay the same. Sooner or later a piece of new equipment, substance, procedure etc. is brought in; this can lead to new hazards and therefore the assessment will need to be reviewed.

Should no changes occur that you are aware of there will still be a need to review the assessment. Risk Assessments will be reviewed if there is reason to believe it is no longer relevant, there has been a significant change to the activity or workplace, after an accident or incident and at least annually.

Risk Registers

The school holds a range a risk assessment which are held within the following risk registers:

- Human resources
- External areas
- Internal areas
- Safeguarding
- Offsite and extra-curricular

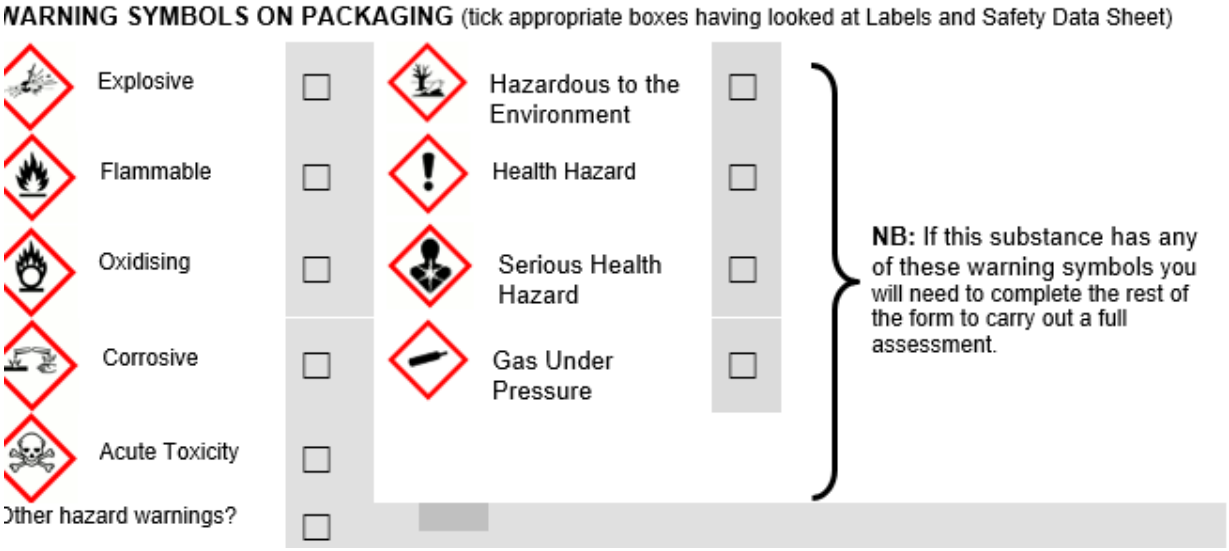
One off events/activities such as sports day or a vehicle visit, will have specific risk assessments written and shared with staff.

In addition, where necessary, pupils may have a personalised:

- Behaviour support plan
- Manual handling plans
- Feeding plans
- Health care plans
- Care support plans

COSHH (Control Of Substances Hazardous to Health) Risk assessment

Any item in school that display any of the symbols below, must have:

- A COSSH risk assessment completed, which must then be shared with anyone coming into contact with the product
- Entered onto the COSHH risk register
- Have a data sheet printed out for each item which should be stored in the office

Where practicable an item not containing these symbols should be used instead