



Risk Assessment Policy 2025

Introduction

The health & safety of everyone at Hope Tree School is of the utmost importance. The purpose of this policy is to enable the School to meet its duty of care to pupils and staff (and others) by creating a culture of undertaking risk assessments to reduce the risks of all School business operations, as far as is reasonably practical. The aim is to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of students, staff, visitors and others affected by our operations. This policy and associated procedures provides a framework for staff to follow in the completion of risk assessments. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 dictate that the School has an absolute duty to carry out risk assessments and record significant findings in writing. Risk assessments must be 'suitable and sufficient'. A School must ensure the welfare of pupils is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and that appropriate action is taken to reduce risks identified. The School must take a proactive approach to managing risk, and thereby reduce the likelihood that students and others will be harmed through negligence and lack of foresight or proper planning.

Legislation and statutory requirements

This policy is based on the following legislation and Department for Education (DfE) guidance:

- Paragraph 16 of part 3 of The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 which requires proprietors to have a written risk assessment policy which also applies to Free schools
- Regulations 3 and 16 of The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require employers to assess risks to the health and safety of their employees, including new and expectant mothers
- Regulation 4 of The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 requires that employers carry out an asbestos risk assessment
- Employers must assess the risk to workers from substances hazardous to health under regulation 6 of The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
- Under regulation 2 of The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992, employers must assess the health and safety risks that display screen equipment pose to staff
- Regulation 9 of The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 says that fire risks must be assessed
 - Regulation 4 of The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 requires employers to conduct a risk assessment for manual handling operations
 - The Work at Height Regulations 2005 say that employers must conduct a risk assessment to help them identify the measures needed to ensure that work at height is carried out safely

- DfE guidance on first aid in schools says schools must carry out a risk assessment to determine what first aid provision is needed
- DfE guidance on the prevent duty states that schools are expected to assess the risk of pupils being drawn into terrorism
- The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) say schools that manage their own pools must conduct a risk assessment

Definitions

Risk assessment - A tool for examining the hazards linked to a particular activity or situation, and establishing whether enough precautions have been taken in order to prevent harm from them based on their likelihood and their potential to cause harm.

Hazard - Something with the potential to cause harm to people, such as chemicals or working from height.

Risk - The chance (high or low) that people could be harmed by hazards, together with an indication of how serious the harm could be.

Control measure - Action taken to prevent people being harmed.

What is a risk assessment?

A risk assessment is a tool for conducting a formal examination of the hazards or potential harm to people, particularly in the School's case to staff and students that could result from a business activity or situation and to identify action needed to reduce the level of risk.

A hazard is anything with the potential to cause harm e.g. chemicals, electricity, working from ladders.

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.

A risk assessment is the resulting assessment of the severity of the outcome (e.g. loss of life, destruction of property) and what action needs to be taken to reduce the risks as low as is reasonably practicable.

Risk control measures are the measures, actions, and procedures that are put in place in order to minimise the consequences of unfettered risk (e.g. substituting harmful chemicals, staff training, appropriate supervision, clear work procedures, preliminary visits, warning signs and barriers).

Risk assessments are used to identify the potential hazards to people from the School's activities, which will include (e.g. safeguarding related, site security, slipping, falling, poor health, equipment, sports, boarding, recreation), property (fire), strategic (reputation, loss of pupils, impact on development), financial (falling pupil rolls), compliance (data protection) and environmental (hazardous waste) risks.

Roles and responsibilities

The Proprietors

The proprietors have ultimate responsibility for health and safety matters in the school, but will delegate day-to-day responsibility to the Head of Learning. The proprietors have a duty to:

- take reasonable steps to ensure that staff and pupils are not exposed to risks to their health and safety. This applies to activities on or off the school premises.
- assess the risks to staff and others affected by school activities in order to identify and introduce the health and safety measures necessary to manage the risks.
- inform employees about risks and the measures in place to manage them.

The Head of Learning

The Head of Learning, or in her absence the Head of Pastoral Care, is responsible for ensuring that all risk assessments are completed and reviewed.

The Head of Learning will ensure suitable and sufficient training is provided for staff required to complete risk assessments to ensure staff have the knowledge and understanding to fulfil this responsibility and undertake effective risk assessments.

School staff and volunteers

School staff are responsible for:

- Assisting with, and participating in, risk assessment processes, as required
- Familiarising themselves with risk assessments
- Implementing control measures identified in risk assessments
- Alerting the Head of Learning to any risks they find which need assessing

Students and parents

Students and parents are responsible for following the school's advice in relation to risks, on-site and off-site, and for reporting any hazards to a member of staff.

Contractors

Contractors are expected to provide evidence that they have adequately risk assessed all their planned work.

Class teachers

Class teachers should ensure that risks within their areas of responsibility or arising out of the work of their department are identified, assessed and, so far as is reasonably practicable, removed or adequately reduced and controlled.

Class teachers are responsible for completing risk assessments for risks within their classroom/department in consultation with the Head of Learning.

Risk assessment process

When assessing risks in the school, we will follow the process outlined below. We will also involve staff, where appropriate, to ensure that all possible hazards have been identified and to discuss control measures, following a risk assessment.

Step 1: identify hazards – we will consider activities, processes and substances within the school and establish what associated-hazards could injure or harm the health of staff, pupils and visitors.

Step 2: decide who may be harmed and how – for each hazard, we will establish who might be harmed, listing groups rather than individuals. We will bear in mind that some people will have special requirements, for instance students with special educational needs (SEN) and expectant mothers. We will then establish how these groups might be harmed.

Step 3: evaluate the risks and decide on control measures (reviewing existing ones as well) – we will establish the level of risk posed by each hazard and review existing control measures. We will balance the level of risk against the measures needed to control them and do everything that is reasonably practicable to protect people from harm.

Step 4: record significant findings – the findings from steps 1-3 will be written up and recorded in order to produce the risk assessment. A risk assessment template can be found in appendix A of this policy and within the Health & Safety folder, this must be used to enable a consistent judgement of risk and easy identification of the high priority risks.

Step 5: review the assessment and update, as needed – we will review our risk assessments, as needed, and the following questions will be asked when doing so:

- Have there been any significant changes?
- Are there improvements that still need to be made?
- Have staff or students spotted a problem?
- Have we learnt anything from accidents or near misses?

Step 6: retaining risk assessments

Risk assessments are retained for the 3 years after the length of time they apply. Risk assessments are securely disposed of.

Completed risk assessments should be made available on the shared drive.

Dynamic Risk Assessment

- Although many risk assessments have been completed, it is possible that some tasks still need assessing or reassessing, therefore, if any member of staff has a role which they think has uncontrolled risks, they must inform the Head of Learning.
- Levels of risk can change from day to day, and tasks that have been assessed and suitably controlled may have a higher level of risk on some occasions (e.g. due to weather conditions or poor housekeeping), and it is essential that every member

of staff takes a moment to assessment risk from every job before they start it. This is known as a 'dynamic risk assessment' and is simply taking a moment to think before acting. It's the same principle as looking both ways before crossing the road – you have to do it every time before you cross the road. Staff must still take the time to assess the risks before undertaking a task, even if there is an up to date risk assessment.

- Staff must never undertake a task where they have identified a risk that means they cannot do the task safely at that point in time, or that creates uncontrolled risk to others, especially students at the school.

Training

- All new members of staff are given an induction into the School's arrangements for risk assessments and health and safety. Specialist training is given to those whose work requires it.
- All staff responsible for completing risk assessments will be provided with training to provide them with the knowledge and understanding of the risk assessment process and the skills required to undertake a suitable and sufficient risk assessment.
- The Head of Learning is responsible for ensuring their staff are briefed on risks specific to their area of work and the control measures to be used to protect the health and safety of students and staff.
- Risk assessments should be used to identify further staff training needs to enable them to work safely.

Educational Areas

There are number of higher risk student focused activities which take place at Hope Tree School, each of which requires risk assessment:

- Safeguarding, child protection, and Prevent
- Forest School Activities
- Outdoor adventurous training and overnight trips
- Science experiments
- Design and technology equipment and tasks
- Each sport and PE activity
- Duke of Edinburgh award and Adventure Skills scheme activities
- Art activities and equipment
- Music activities (including minimising the risk of hearing loss to staff)
- Drama activities and sets (including the set build and break down, back stage, stage/performance, props room and lighting box)

Schemes of work and lesson plans for the above educational areas should include details of the hazards and risks associated with the activity, to ensure students are aware of the risks involved and general health and safety arrangements.

Those organising Forest School and Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme activities, and those leading trips, are responsible for the completion of detailed risk assessments, with support from the Head of Learning.

Classroom and Office Risks

In recognition of the limited risks involved in classroom teaching, the School will use a classroom activities RA for each class area. Teachers should complete the RA annually

and return it to the Head of Learning. All responses will be collated and an action plan created with risk levels and priorities identified, this plan will be given to the proprietors to implement the necessary remedial measures. Administrative staff will also be requested to complete a simple health and safety checklist, although these are low risk work environments it's important to ensure safe access/egress, suitable lighting and ventilation for example.

Educational Visits

Hope Tree School has a separate policy for educational trips involving students, this is overseen by the Head of Learning who will need to approve all trips. For full details please see the "Educational Visits Policy" which covers routine trips, major trips and arrangements for dealing with external organisations.

Access by students to risky areas

Risk assessments of all areas of the school reinforce the policy of ensuring that our students do not have unsupervised access to potentially hazardous areas, e.g. cleaning materials, resource cupboards and the boiler. Doors to these areas are kept locked when not in use. Students are only allowed access if risks are suitably controlled or accompanied by a member of staff. Students do not have access to any area of the school which is not appropriate for them.

A site wide risk assessment will capture any risks not otherwise captured through the day to day classroom activities. The purpose of this site wide risk assessment is to consider generic site related risks in order to protect the safety and health of all those using the Hope Tree School site.

Pupil Welfare and Supervision

When completing risk assessments, staff, particularly teaching staff should ensure safeguarding risks to students are considered and documented. One of the controls used to protect students will be adequate competent supervision. Staff ratios and availability play a key part of ensuring appropriate supervision of students for the various activities and times of the day.

Requirements for contractors engaged on behalf of Hope Tree School

Contractors are responsible for undertaking their own risk assessment, in order to protect the health and safety of their staff, Hope Tree School students, staff and others). The contractor "owns" the risk involved with their work activities. However, Hope Tree School has an obligation to ensure competent contractors are used, sufficient time for planning is allowed and risk assessment forms part of the planning and work processes. If a contractor is employed to undertake work on behalf of Hope Tree School, the person engaging the contractor must ensure suitable and sufficient risk assessments are in place to cover the work, prior to work starting. The proprietors will need to review and discuss the contractor's risk assessments and provide supervision of the contractor to ensure risk assessments are being adhered to.

Events at Hope Tree School:

Planning for events at the school will also involve risk assessments at different levels depending on the scale of the event. The event organiser should use a basic risk assessment for smaller events and a more detailed risk assessment and dedicated support from the Head of Learning for large scale events.

First Aid risk assessment

The Proprietors have undertaken a risk assessment to establish the level of first aid provision required. This risk assessment concludes that 2 qualified first aiders were required. Staff responsible for organising first aid provision for sports activities should ensure there is an appropriate risk assessment in place to establish the levels of provision required and the types of first aid kits required.

Display Screen Assessments

The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 require the School to protect employees from any risks associated with Display Screen Equipment (DSE) (i.e. computers and laptops). These Regulations only apply to employees who regularly use DSE as a significant part of their normal work (daily, for continuous periods of 2 hours or more). The Regulations do not apply to workers who use DSE infrequently or for short periods of time.

The above requirements will be achieved by requiring all DSE users to complete an online training and assessment programme. The assessment will identify any additional controls needed e.g. document holders or a foot rest, with the results being shared with the Head of Learning.

Once the assessment has been completed and the individual confirmed as a DSE user; Hope Tree School will refund the cost for an eye test (inline with HSE guidance) and contribute £65 towards the cost of spectacles required for use with the DSE. The costs should be reclaimed by the individual via an expenses claim form, with a copy of receipts attached and submitted to the Head of Learning for approval.

Medical conditions and allergies

Where staff or students have a medical condition or allergy, appropriate risk assessments will be carried out by the Head of Learning. In the case of staff, all staff complete an occupational health questionnaire and where required may be referred to an external occupational health advisor who will contribute advice which will form part of the staff members risk assessment. In the case of students, relevant health care professionals and parent carers will contribute to and agree the risk assessment.

Young Workers

When employing a young person under the age of 18, whether for work or work experience, under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, Hope Tree School has the same responsibilities for their health, safety and welfare as they do for other employees. While there is no requirement for a separate risk assessment specifically for a young person, if the school has not previously employed a young person they should review their risk assessment and take into account the specific factors for young people, before a young person starts with them. It is important to take into account a young person's lack of maturity, lack of risk awareness, insufficient attention to safety and lack of experience or training. A young person should not be asked to do work which involves a risk to health from extreme cold or heat; noise; or vibration. There are also specific restrictions within the Approved Code of Practice, relating to young people using lifting machinery, power presses, woodworking machinery, and fork lift trucks.

New and Expectant Mothers

New or expectant mother, means an employee who is pregnant; who has given birth within the previous six months; or who is breastfeeding. Hope Tree School will take account of women of child-bearing age when carrying out all risk assessments and identify the preventive and protective measures that are required. The Head of Learning will ensure that risk assessments adequately cover risks to new and expectant mothers. If this has not been covered or is felt to be insufficient a specific risk assessment will be completed by the Head of Learning using an appropriate template. Where the risk assessment identifies risks to new and expectant mothers and these risks cannot be avoided by the preventive and protective measures taken, Hope Tree School will undertake the following:

- Alter her working conditions or hours of work if it is reasonable to do so and would avoid the risks or, if these conditions cannot be met.
- Identify and offer her suitable alternative work that is available
- Suspend her from work. The Employment Rights Act 1996 (which is the responsibility of the Department of Trade and Industry) requires that this suspension should be on full pay. Employment rights are enforced through the employment tribunals.

Monitoring and Review of Risk Assessments

All risk assessments should be regularly reviewed:

- If there is significant change in the circumstances, e.g. new equipment/ways of working
- After an accident or incident
- If the original assessment is no longer valid, e.g. change in legislation or changes in technology/science.
- In all other cases regularly (annually)
 - Risk assessments should also be reviewed and recorded, when major structural work is planned, if work practices change or in the event of an accident.

As members of staff (teaching and support) review and develop their risk assessments a "library" of risk assessments will be available on the school's shared drive for staff to refer to and adapt for their own use.

The Head of Learning will carry out a health and safety review of all activities with a focus on risk assessments, to ensure they are kept up to date, reviewed at least annually and of a quality to be deemed 'suitable and sufficient'. Such reviews will take place annually but may be more frequent if there are significant improvements required. The proprietors will periodically provide an overview of school wide risk assessments, focussing on high level risks, so action is taken where necessary through planned improvements to reduce risk.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gandy".

Head of Learning

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Liam D'Arcy".

Head of Pastoral Care

Date: October 2025

Review Date: October 2026

