



Devonshire House Preparatory School

Risk Assessment Policy

This policy is for the whole school including EYFS

Written by: Mr Henry Keighley Elstub	September 2022
This Policy is the responsibility of the Head and is annually reviewed.	
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Next review:	July 2024

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.
- A risk is an evaluation of the probability (or likelihood) of the hazard occurring.
- 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, preliminary visits, warning signs, barriers and insurance).

Risk assessments can be used to identify the potential hazards to people (slipping, falling) property (fire), strategic (reputation, loss of pupils, impact on development), financial (falling pupil rolls), compliance (child protection issues, safeguarding) and environmental (asbestos, Legionella).

Risk management is a five step process:

- identify and assess the risks
- determine appropriate actions
- implement the actions
- monitor the results
- provide feedback

Why have risk assessments?

Risk assessments are a legal requirement. In addition to focusing on prevention- as opposed to reacting when things go wrong- it is possible to prevent accidents and injuries that could ruin lives, damage reputations and cost money.

Preventative measures can often be surprisingly simple and cost-effective, such as the application of hazard warning tape to a trip hazard, or ensuring that chemicals are properly stored in locked containers.

What areas require risk assessments?

There are numerous activities carried out at Devonshire House School each of which requires its own separate risk assessment. The most important of these cover:

- Fire safety procedures and risk assessments
- Educational visits and trips
- Safer recruitment and employment
- Supervision of pupils in classrooms and outside

Separate model policies cover each of these areas.

Actions to minimise risk

Having identified the risks to property and to people using their premises, the Head and SMT assess the potential frequency and severity of each risk. This may be based on previous experience or may be subject to the school's judgement of the situation. Risks that are identified as high-frequency and /or high severity are given priority to determine and implement appropriate actions so that they can be minimised. There are four possible actions in practical risk management:

- removal of the risk, e.g. by replacing equipment
- limiting the impact of the risk e.g. by contingency planning
- transferring the risk e.g. by insurance
- accepting the risk e.g. when the impact is minimal, the cost of risk management is high as the probability is low.

Contingency planning

The most comprehensive risk management program will not be able to eliminate all risks and we must be prepared for catastrophes or incidents that affect the continuity of Devonshire House School. All schools should have a contingency plan which can be applied in the event of a significant loss at the school. The school has a rehearsed major incident plan and both 'locked down' and 'fire evacuations' are practised and assessed each term.

Insurance

Insurance is a means of transferring risk which the school has decided not to retain or which cannot be maintained. It is never a substitute for the proper

management of risk, though it has a part to play in a comprehensive risk strategy which insurers acknowledge. A school which has good risk management finds itself paying lower premiums than one that manages risk poorly. The school is subject to regular assessments by the school insurance companies to assess its management of risk and any issues raised are addressed.

The risk management process is reviewed on an annual basis and staff are trained in risk assessment at the beginning of each academic year

Risks to property

The physical property assets of schools include all buildings, educational equipment, general contents, plant equipment and buildings under construction.

Information, for example pupil records, are also valuable assets.

Major risks to school buildings and property come from causes such as fire and water damage, which may be accidental or malicious, subsidence, explosion and theft. The risks of major damage occurring are generally termed low frequency/high severity risks, which means they are relatively unlikely to happen but likely to result in serious damage and or substantial financial loss if they do occur.

The school undertakes regular assessments by outside specialists to assess the condition of premises and property. All concerns or recommendations are addressed within any required timescale.

The majority of property losses experienced in school results from small thefts and low-key vandalism or accidental damage to buildings. These risks are described as high risk/low severity. Whilst these events are uncommon the school undertakes a full review each time to assess whether measures can be put in place to prevent further incidents.

Risks to people

Just as real are the risks faced by pupils, staff and others who use or access the school premises. Threats to physical safety can be obvious and direct, such as from failings in the structure, or less directly obvious for example slipping on a wet floor or falling over equipment. Such accidents not only cause pain and suffering to those experiencing them but also expose schools to liability risks.

At Devonshire House risk assessments are made of all public areas (format A from appendix taken HSE as a checklist for classrooms) at the beginning of the academic year and updated at the beginning of the two subsequent terms. All staff are trained in how to complete risk assessments as part of the September inset programme every two years.

The facilities team undertake an annual full assessment for premises and the facilities manager conducts a weekly walk around. Notes are taken of any issues and these are prioritised by the facilities manager and then addressed by maintenance staff.

Staff are all trained in basic Health and safety and all guidelines with regard to signage of spillages and clearing away of equipment are followed.

Educational risks

- science experiments
- design technology
- each sport and PE activity
- art
- music

At Devonshire House School a risk assessment is written for all extra-curricular trips and visits. We subscribe to the CLEAPPS advisory service that provides model risk assessments for our lessons in science and design and technology. We provide professional training courses where appropriate for both teachers and technicians who work in science and D and T. All teaching staff and classroom assistants receive regular induction and refresher training in risk assessments tailored to their specific areas.

For new venues and for all residential trips a risk assessment visit is made beforehand and risk assessments are obtained from each venue.

Pastoral

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

Medical and first aid

The school nurse maintains the risk assessments for first aid and all other treatments and procedures. Accident forms are maintained in the medical room and staff rooms and the school nurse is responsible for ensuring that accident reports are passed to the head. The school's separate first aid policy explains the procedures that we would follow in the event of a medical emergency. All accident reports are reviewed by the head and school nurse and any patterns emerging are discussed at the health and safety meetings.

Safeguarding

As safeguarding 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. This regime is extended to everyone in our community enabling us to minimise the level of risk.

Support areas

Catering and cleaning: our contractors are aware that risk assessments and training are 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.

School keeping and security: risk assessments cover every room, the laboratory, stairs, corridor and emergency exit in the school. Particular emphasis is 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, asbestos, control of contractors on site, electricity, gas, water, 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.

Outside area: risk assessments and training is required for key tools and machinery, as well as for manual handling, slips and trips, working at height, use of pesticides, storage of flammable is and COSHH. Induction and refresher training covers risk assessments, protective equipment and safety notices.

Office staff: risk assessments are required for the date 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.

Access by students

Risk assessments for all areas of the school reinforce the policy of ensuring that our students do not have supervised access to potentially dangerous areas such as science laboratory, design technology workshop and ICT rooms. Where practicable, doors to these areas are kept locked when not in use. Students are only allowed access when accompanied by a member of staff. Students do not have access to the facilities and catering working areas of the school.

Conducting a risk assessment

At Devonshire House School we use three different formats of risk assessment.

Format A

Is used for all areas of the school and is completed at the beginning of the academic year and returned to the health and safety officer. He then, in discussion with facilities manager, ensures that any risks highlighted are addressed. Staff are asked to review these in terms two and three to report whether any further changes are needed.

Format B

Is used for all trips and visits and school events such as prize day, school fete etc. They are completed before any trip/event is agreed to and are submitted to the Head at least a week in advance.

Format C

Is used for subject risk assessments as in Science, PE, DT and extra trips. These are completed at the beginning of each academic year for all three terms and reviewed by the Head.

Medium risk activities

We undertake a few medium risk activities such as skiing and Outward Bound activity holidays but only using specialist/qualified instructors. Some of the scientific experiments carried out also have a higher rating. Students are always given a safety preaching briefing before participating in these activities, and are expected to wear protective equipment and to follow instructions.

Specialist risk assessments and high risk activities

We always employ specialists to carry out high risk tasks at the school. The facilities manager arranges for specialists to carry out the following risk assessments:

- fire safety
- asbestos
- Legionella
- gas safety
- electrical safety of buildings
- work at high levels
- work with lead
- safety of long Hall seating
- Long Hall stage lighting
- lift
- adventure playground/playground equipment

Review of risk assessments

All risk assessments are reviewed annually. Risk assessments will also be reviewed and recorded, when major structural work is planned, or in the event of an accident. The facilities manager arranges for regular health and safety audits of the fabric of the school, its plant, machinery, equipment and for water sampling. The catering and cleaning contractors arrange for auditing the catering and cleaning functions.

Responsibilities of all staff

All members of staff are made aware of the school's arrangements for risk assessments and health and safety. 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 students and visitors. They are responsible for cooperating with the head and the other members of the SMT the facilities manager in order to enable governance to comply with their health and safety responsibilities. Finally, all members of staff are responsible for reporting any risks or defects to the facilities manager or to the head. Health and safety is included as a discrete item on the agenda of all staff meetings, SMT meetings the school governance.

Accident reporting the school nurse is responsible for reporting and recording any notifiable accident that occurs on school premises to a pupil, member of staff, parent, visitor or contractor to the head and to the HSE in accordance with the reporting of injuries, diseases and dangerous occurring parents regulations (RIDDOR). All notifiable accidents and near misses are reviewed by the school's health and safety committee with a view to assessing whether any measures need to be taken to prevent recurrence.