



Risk Assessment Policy

The shared vision for our trust is to "create schools that 'stand out' at the heart of their communities." Our trust has four core beliefs; Family, Integrity, Teamwork and Success that are integral to everything we do.

The purpose is to enable everyone to be able to 'Love Learning, Love Life.'

Our policies are underpinned by our vision, beliefs and purpose.

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Risk Assessment

What is risk assessment?

A risk assessment is a careful examination of anything at work that could cause people harm. It will help you decide if you have taken adequate precautions or need to do more. **The aim is to make sure no one gets hurt or becomes ill.** Accidents and ill health can ruin lives and affect your establishment/team if staff time is lost, machinery is damaged, insurance costs increase or you have to go to court.

Why must risk assessments be carried out?

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations place a legal obligation on employers to ensure **significant** risks created by work activities are assessed and reduced to the lowest possible level. These assessments and the control measures must be recorded. **Failure to comply with this requirement can lead to criminal prosecutions for both the employer and individuals with management responsibilities within the organisation.**

Why must you ensure risk assessments are carried out?

Embark Federation is committed to ensuring risk assessment is an integral part of managing health and safety in its establishments and within staff teams. As a headteacher, or member of SLT you are the trust's senior manager at your establishment or within your team and therefore responsible for its day to day running and control. In order to meet its own statutory obligations, the trust has delegated the function of ensuring risk assessments are carried out to you. **You have both a statutory and contractual obligation to co-operate with your employer to ensure that its health and safety obligations are met.**

General Principles of Risk Assessment

Risk assessment involves five steps:

- Step 1 Look for the hazards;
- Step 2 Decide who might be harmed and how;
- Step 3 Evaluate the risks and decide whether existing precautions are adequate or whether more should be done;
- Step 4 Record your findings;
- Step 5 Review your assessment and revise it if necessary.

Definition of 'Hazard' and 'Risk'

Hazard means anything that can cause harm e.g. electricity, working from ladders.

Risk is the likelihood, that someone will be harmed by the hazard.

Who Should Carry Out The Risk Assessments?

Whoever carries out the risk assessments must be **competent** to do so.

A competent person can be defined as:-

- Someone with the knowledge, skill and experience required to complete the task.

The Trust advises that the lead person involved in the completion of risk assessments should have undergone suitable training on the subject.

In practice, risk assessments are usually carried out by a trained risk assessor, with assistance from anyone who has knowledge and experience of the issue being assessed.

It is good practice to ensure those affected by the risk are involved in the assessment as they will have detailed knowledge of the work.

However, risk assessments should not be delayed because someone has not had training. If you and your staff feel competent to assess the risk due to your specialist knowledge of your work then you should ensure the assessment is completed as ensuring suitable and sufficient risk assessments are in place is a legal requirement. If you have any doubt you should contact the Health, Safety and Wellbeing team.

If it is felt that a person has the relevant experience and knowledge of a particular area or subject, then that person may be trained to do the risk assessments, e.g. the head of department in a secondary school could be trained to carry out risk assessments for their department.

All risk assessments should be signed off as suitable and sufficient by the relevant manager.

Risk Assessment Approach

Risk assessments can normally be carried out in two ways.

- Assess the work area, e.g. office, classroom, workshop etc.
- Assess the activity, e.g. the use of a piece of equipment, a working procedure.

In some cases you may have to assess both the area and an activity that takes place in that area. For instance, a primary school often has a hall which is used for assemblies, as a dining room and for PE lessons.

The school/establishment should do a risk assessment on the hall, looking at the size, space, exits, floor, lighting, etc. This initial assessment may suffice for when the hall is used for assemblies.

An assessment should then be carried out for when the hall is used as a dining room. This assessment may focus on the layout of tables, numbers of pupils per sitting (if necessary), where the queues will be, trailing cables for the cash register, supervision, what to do with food spillages etc.

For the times when the hall is used for PE, other risk assessments are likely to be required which focus on the type of activities that can take place. Such as, is it safe to play ball games or running games, the movement and storage of equipment, and so on.

Deciding What Needs Risk Assessing

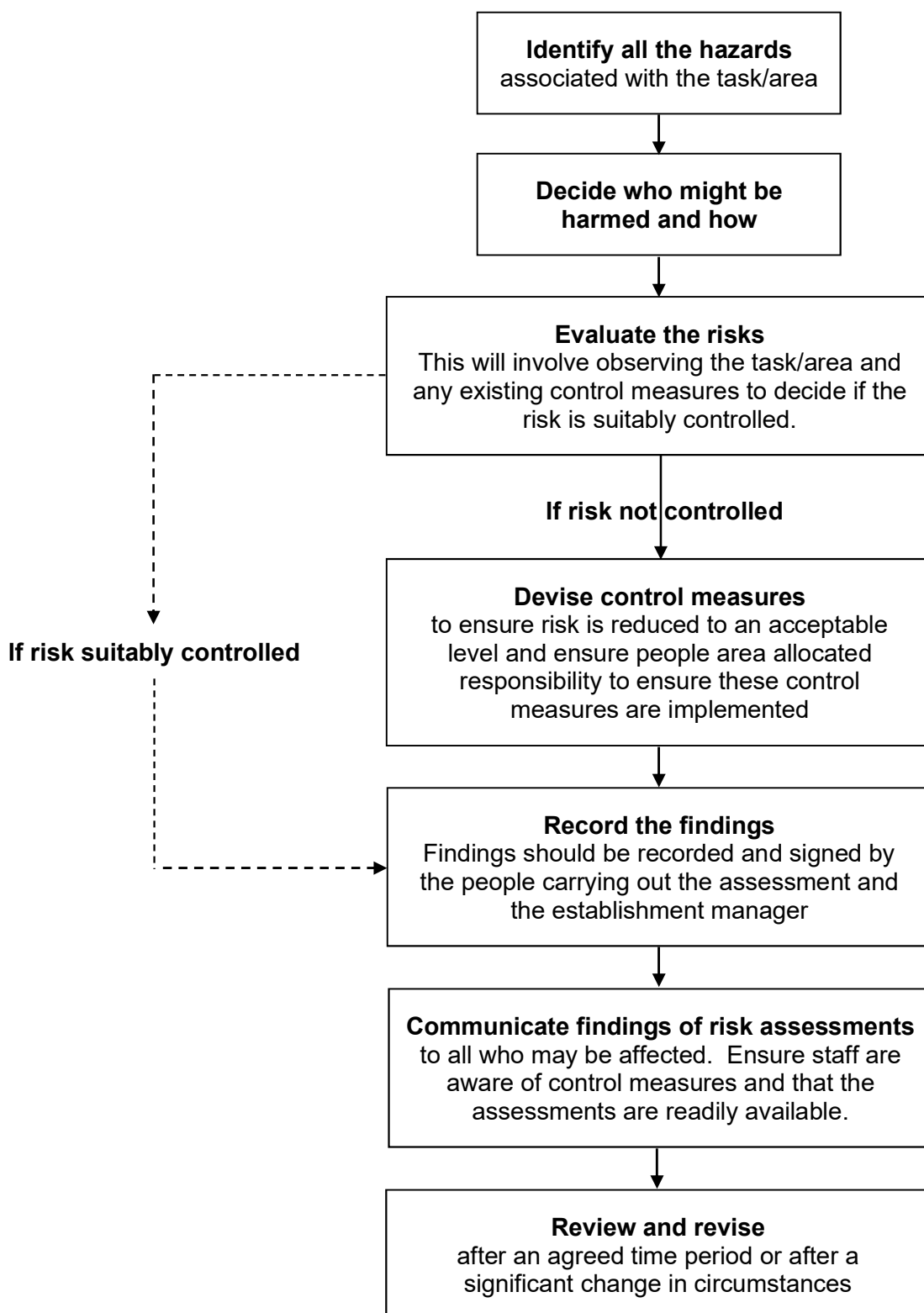
It is important to understand that only activities that present 'significant risk' need to be assessed. Assessments of very minor issues can cause a large amount of work for very little benefit.

Risk Assessment Strategy

The strategy for carrying out risk assessments is outlined below on the flowchart on page 5 and the accompanying guidance on pages 6-10

Risk Assessment Process

NB each stage should be recorded



Step 1 - Look for the hazards

Walk around the establishment and/or examine the work activities your team undertake and look afresh at what could reasonably be expected to cause harm. You should involve employees and their representatives in this process. **If you decide that the risk from a particular hazard is so low as to be trivial then this should be recorded and no further action is required for that hazard.**

For the other hazards identified where the risk is deemed more than trivial you should move into step 2

Step 2 - Decide who might be harmed and how.

Identifying for each hazard who might be harmed will help you make sensible decisions on the most appropriate measures required to manage the risks. When identifying who might be harmed you don't need to list individuals but rather groups of people.

Don't forget: those who may be particularly at risk or who may not be in your workplace all the time, such as:-

- pupils, young workers, trainees, new and expectant mothers, people with disabilities or those whose first language may not be English who may be particularly at risk.
- cleaners, contractors, etc. who may not be in the establishment all the time or who may be there out of normal working times
- members of the public or people you share your workplace with, if there is a chance that they could be hurt by your activities.
- staff who work away from the base

Step 3 - Evaluate the risks and decide whether existing precautions are adequate or more should be done.

Consider how likely it is that each hazard could cause harm. This will determine whether or not you need to do more to reduce the risk. Even after all precautions have been taken, some risk usually remains. What you need to decide for each significant hazard is whether the remaining level of risk is acceptable or not. If you decide that with your existing precautions the level of any remaining risk is so low as to be acceptable then these precautions (control measures) and the fact that the risk is controlled should be recorded (see step 4). If you conclude that the risk is not adequately controlled and more needs to be done to reduce it to an acceptable level then you will need to introduce additional control measures. Your real aim is to reduce risks as far as is reasonably practicable to protect people from harm.

In taking action, ask yourself:

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

When controlling risks, apply the principals below, if possible in the following order

- Try a less risky option (e.g. switch to using a less hazardous chemical);
- Prevent access to the hazard (e.g. by guarding);
- Organise work to reduce exposure to the hazard(e.g. put barriers between pedestrians and traffic);
- Issue personal protective equipment(e.g. clothing, footwear, goggles etc): and
- Provide welfare facilities (e.g. first aid and washing facilities for removal of contamination).

Improving health and safety need not cost a lot. For instance, placing a mirror on a dangerous blind corner to help prevent vehicle accidents is a low-cost precaution considering the risks. Failure to take simple precautions can cost a lot more if an accident does happen.

What if I have already assessed some of the risks?

If, for example, you use hazardous chemicals and you have already assessed the risks to health and the precautions you need to take under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH), you can consider them 'checked' and move on. Alternatively, this process will help to identify such areas where controls are required.

Step 4 - Record your findings and Implement Controls

You need to record the significant findings of your assessment. This means writing down the significant hazards and conclusions you have come to as to how the risk is to be controlled. You must tell those affected about your findings (see below) – keep the language simple and understandable.

Suitable and sufficient – not perfect!

Risk assessments must be suitable and sufficient. You need to be able to show that:

- a proper check was made
- you asked who might be affected
- you dealt with all the obvious significant hazards, taking into account the number of people who could be involved
- the precautions are reasonable, and the residual risk is acceptable.
- You involved staff or their representatives in the process

If you find that there are quite a lot of improvements that you could make, big and small, don't try to do everything at once. Make a plan of action to deal with the most important things first. The action plan is key to demonstrating your commitment to reducing risks to an acceptable level and a good plan of action often includes a mixture of different things such as:

- A few cheap or easy improvements that can be done quickly, perhaps as a temporary solution until more reliable controls are in place;
- Long-term solutions to those risks most likely to cause accidents or ill health;
- Long-term solutions to those risks with the worst potential consequences;
- Arrangements for training employees on the main risk that remain and how they are able to be controlled;
- Regular checks to make sure that the control measures stay in place; and
- Clear responsibilities – who will lead on what action and by when.

Remember, prioritise and tackle the most important things first. As you complete each action, tick it off your plan. A few "quick wins" in terms of implementing control measures which are easy or low cost will demonstrate to staff your commitment to reducing risks but the key must be to implement long term permanent solutions to deal with the highest risks.

The records of your findings and control measures may refer to assessments carried out under other legislation, as mentioned above. They could also refer to guidance that will be followed e.g. guidance from the LA.

The records should be:-

- Easy to create
- Simple to use
- Updateable
- Auditable
- Kept close to where the risks are

NB All those affected by any hazards must have ready access to and copies of any risk assessments carried out.

Communication

Staff, and where appropriate others who are affected by the activity, must receive information, instruction and training on:-

- The hazards and risks to which they are exposed.
- The control measures required to reduce the risks to an appropriate level.

This means it is not adequate just to tell people how to control the risks. We must tell them why. For example, if we have a member of staff working in an area where ear protection is required, we need to ensure that they understand not only that they have to wear it, but **why** they have to wear it, so they will need to know the level of noise they are exposed to and what the effects may be if they don't comply e.g. how it will damage their hearing and the likely extent of that damage.

Staff may also need training to operate safely and efficiently, any equipment they may be provided with to control those risks, e.g. safe use of stepladders.

The giving of this information/instruction/training should be recorded in much the same way as any other instruction/training is recorded. What needs to be ensured is that when the information has been given, each individual **understands** what is required of them. One way to help achieve this would be to involve them in the risk assessment process.

An example of a form that you might want to adopt is attached. You can use your own form if you prefer e.g. lesson plans can be expanded to include references to hazards and control measures.

Once it has been decided that a full risk assessment is required, move on to carrying out the assessment. The assessment must be suitable and sufficient.

Monitoring the Effectiveness of the Assessments

It is not sufficient simply to carry out risk assessments, file them away and forget about them. It is important that we monitor how effective they are at reducing the risks to staff and others so that, where necessary, changes can be made.

There are two basic methods of monitoring. These are:-

- Active monitoring
- Re- active monitoring

A) Active monitoring is the work carried out to prevent any accident or incident occurring and would focus on:-

- Are staff complying with the requirements of the risk assessment and if not, why not? It may be that they have a perfectly good reason for not complying. This situation could easily occur if there has been insufficient consultation when carrying out the assessment.
- If staff are complying with the risk assessment, has it reduced the risks as much as it was thought it would do?

The tools for active monitoring are:-

- Preventative maintenance inspections of equipment and premises.
- Statutory inspections, test and examination of equipment.

- Safety tours and inspections.
- Occupational health surveys/measurements (for hazardous processes and procedures).
- Safety audits (checking the paperwork and system for managing the risk assessments).
- Visual monitoring of activities (to check what is being done against what is supposed to be done).

B) Re-active monitoring, as the name suggests, takes place after any accidental or incident has happened and focuses on:-

- Accident and ill-health investigations and records.
- Investigations and records of damage (to equipment and premises).
- Investigation and records of incidents which did not cause damage or injury, but had the potential to do so (near misses).

The production of meaningful statistics may be helpful with re-active monitoring.

Step 5 - Review your assessment and revise it if necessary

Most workplaces evolve over time and change be it through the introduction of for example new working practices, new staff or new equipment. The risks associated with this should be assessed as part of planning and change.

If there is any significant change, add to the assessment at the time the change is implemented to take account of the new hazard. You do not need to amend the assessment for every trivial change, but if a new job introduces significant new hazards of its own, you will want to consider them in their own right and do whatever is necessary to keep the risks down. In any case, you should review your assessment to make sure that the precautions are still working effectively. It is also sensible to view assessments on an annual basis as part of a rolling programme even when there haven't been any significant changes.

Reviewing When the monitoring (as indicated above) has taken place, the results can be measured against the existing risk assessment to decide whether or not changes are necessary to reduce the risks further, or whether the assessment needs to be revised to accommodate changes in circumstances, e.g. changes in the use of a room or building, the introduction of new equipment, a new member of staff with less experience than the previous person.

Revising If changes are required then these should be carried out as soon as possible.

Generic Risk Assessments

Generic risk assessments are assessments which are produced once only, where areas or activities are seen to be identical or very similar with very similar risks. For example, if there are a number of general teaching areas which are similar in layout equipment and use, or where there is a work activity that is carried out by numerous different teams within the department, one generic assessment can be carried which covers the risks and control measures applicable for that similar work area or task.

In practice, generic assessments are best used as a starting point for similar areas and activities, but usually some form of adaptation. Although these adaptations may be quite minor they are often required to make the generic assessment suitable and sufficient for an individual establishment or teams particular circumstances.

The LA has produced a number of Generic Assessments which can be accessed via both Dnet and Services for Schools, S4S (traded area).

What You Must Do – A Quick Guide Action Plan for Managers

- **Carry out a status review** to establish where you are in terms of meeting risk assessment requirements.
- **Ensure all significant risks have been identified.**
- **Nominate appropriate staff** to help you with or carry out risk assessments on your behalf. This will depend on the size of your establishment or team.
- **Ensure** the nominated staff and appropriate senior staff have received **risk assessment training**.
- **Set achievable and realistic timescales** for carrying out risk assessments where required, bearing in mind this has been a specific legal requirement since 1993.
- **Allow staff sufficient time and authority** to carry out the process effectively.
- **Identify** which **LA generic risk assessments** can be adapted to suit your establishment.
- **Communicate** the significant findings of the risk assessment (including hazards identified, level of risk and any control measures required) to affected staff, provide necessary training and ensure this is recorded.
- **Monitor and review** progress against the identified timescale.
- Set up a system for **periodically reviewing all risk assessments**.
- **Include risk assessment** progress and effectiveness **in the annual governors' report**.

Establishments and teams which have followed an action plan with timescales have found that risk assessment has now become part of their general activity..

What are the benefits to you?

- Reduces the likelihood of accidents to pupils, young people, clients and staff.
- Reduces the likelihood of criminal prosecution.
- Reduces the likelihood of civil actions which impact on the overall county council budget.
- Reduces the chance of negative publicity for the LA, school or centre following an accident.
- Increases staff morale due to a perceived safe and healthy workplace.
- Reduces staff absence caused by injury.
- For Schools enables you to send positive messages to parents about safety in the school prospectus.

What if I do nothing?

Failure to comply with the statutory obligation to carry out risk assessment could lead to prosecution for the county council and/or the individual manager or headteacher.

What assistance is available to help me meet this responsibility?

Derbyshire County Council Health and Safety team are available to support with;

- Issues risk assessment guidelines for you to adopt and adapt.
- Provides health and safety training. This includes a co-ordinators' certificate programme and a one-day risk assessment course.
- Employs Health and Safety Consultants who offer advice on and help with completing risk assessments.

GENERAL HEALTH & SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT FOR:

PART 1 : ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Section/Establishment Name:			
Date of Assessment		Date of Issue	
Assessment carried out by			
		Signature	

Reviews				
Review Date	Reviewed by	Date	Changes	
			Y	N

<input type="checkbox"/> Affected	Young <input type="checkbox"/>	Staff <input type="checkbox"/>	Visitors <input type="checkbox"/>	Contractor <input type="checkbox"/>	Others (specify) <input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/>
Name of Manager confirming and agreeing Assessment:					
Signature:					

The following sections should be completed by all staff who need to be made aware of and abide by the findings of the Risk Assessment. NB: If, as a result of a review, changes are made to the Risk Assessment the relevant box on the attached page should be completed as appropriate by the staff concerned.

RISK ASSESSMENT

I confirm that I am aware of and understand the findings of the Risk Assessment and agree to ensure that I will work to the stated Control Measures

RISK ASSESSMENT

What are the hazards?	Generic Control Measures implemented	✓ X	Person to implement	Additional Control measures needed to reduce risk to an acceptable level	Person to implement	Date to be actioned

