

RISK ASSESSMENT POLICY

Purpose of this Section

1. The purpose of this Section is to set out the procedure for producing, retaining and updating risk assessments at Frensham Heights.

Background

2. A risk assessment has three purposes:
- to identify all things and activities which may cause harm to our staff, pupils visitors etc. (the hazards);
 - to consider the chance of that harm actually befalling anyone in the circumstances identified, and the possible consequences which could arise from it (the risks);
 - to enable plans to be made for the introduction and monitoring of preventive measures to ensure that the risks are adequately controlled at all times. Without effective assessment there can seldom be effective control (i.e. a safe system of work).

Definitions

3. As ever, the terms used need to be understood and these definitions should help:

HAZARD – the potential to cause harm, including ill health and injury; damage to property, plant, products or the environment;

LIKELIHOOD – the chances of an event involving the identified hazard actually happening;

RISK - is the combination of the hazard and likelihood. For example, the HAZARD existing in an electric light fitting above your head is severe but the LIKELIHOOD of it falling on you is so low, that the RISK is negligible. Conversely walking along the edge of a cliff at night in a force 8 gale has a high HAZARD rating and high LIKELIHOOD that you might fall, so the RISK is very severe. The RISK from a substance or activity is, therefore, the likelihood that it will cause harm in the circumstances of use. This will depend on:

- the hazard presented by the substance or activity;
- how it is used or done;
- how it is controlled;
- who is exposed, how much, for how long, etc.;
- what they are doing;
- what guards, precautions, etc, already exist.

4. Poor control of activities can create a substantial risk even from a substance or activity with low hazard. However, with proper precautions most risks of being harmed can be adequately controlled.

General Guidance

5. Within our school community, the majority of hazards, likelihoods, and risks have already been identified and documented, and will already be adequately controlled in conformity with existing legal requirements. Undertaking another formal risk assessment will simply confirm that the hazards are already identified and adequately controlled and will simply act as a review, as required by the legislation.

6. Where previous risk assessments have not been comprehensive, or have never taken place, the exercise will identify potential hazards and the risks they present so that effective action can be taken to control them before an incident takes place. The important point is to ensure that the hazards associated with ALL areas and activities have been assessed and are adequately controlled

7. Risk assessment will assume a place in health and safety management that will be seen to be caring, cost-effective and central to the objective of the school's health and safety policy statement. In using the standard framework risk assessment forms you can help to ensure that risks can be addressed and, where necessary, safe systems of work created. The Health and Safety Consultant and the Bursar are also available to assist.

8. The existence of an effective risk assessment procedure together with self-inspection is a prerequisite for the system of monitoring by proper safety audits. This task cannot be achieved instantly but will require persistence from a wide range of teaching/support staff.

9. When it comes to assessments previously carried out such as those under the COSHH Regulations it is not the intention that these should be repeated under this general assessment. Cross-reference and annual review will suffice.

10. We must assess not only the risks that our staff are exposed to, but also any person affected by our business. This includes pupils, parents, contractors e.g. caterers and window cleaners; visitors, people who let parts of the building and members of the public. We must assess both the risks that occur on a daily basis, and those that happen only occasionally, e.g. daily floor cleaning and occasional gutter cleaning or Founders' Day.

11. As we employ contractors, e.g. caterers, grounds staff and window cleaners, we need to provide them with comprehensive information on the risks that they are exposed to by working on the premises and the measures that need to take in order to ensure health and safety. A contractor may introduce new risks to our staff e.g. ground keeping equipment or cleaning chemicals, and we need to ensure that the contractors need to inform us about these risks so that effective and coordinated controls can be implemented.

Detailed Assessment of Risk

12. When considering a new activity, firstly consult your Head of Department, Deputy Head or Bursar. They may be able to help. Also look in the currently completed risk assessments to see if there are any areas already covered (see M Drive\risk assessment). A list of the major existing risk assessments is on the M Drive. Where possible a detailed risk assessment should be undertaken using the format held on the M:Drive.

13. If one is not available then ask the School H&S Consultant for guidance and follow the guidance for the area identified, completing an appropriate form and saving it to the shared area. Any standard form **must** be personalised to your own particular need.

14. In completing a risk assessment you should:

- Identify the likely hazard – use the Consultant’s suggested ones plus any you can think of with your knowledge of the activity.
- Give a severity score should the hazard happen.
- Give a probable frequency score on the likelihood of the hazard happening.
- Work out the Risk Score by multiplying the these scores
- If above 9, you must consult the Health and Safety Consultant or the Bursar to identify whether the activity should occur.
- Identify the control measures to minimize the risk. For most general risks this can be done by stating the controls in the “Comment” column.
- Produce Safe Systems of Work for specific hazardous activities, such as CDT or Rock Climbing.

15. All completed risk assessments should be placed on the M Dive under the appropriate folder in the Risk Assessment area. In addition, two hard copies should be printed off and signed; one should be retained by the individual undertaking the activity and one should go to the Estate Bursar’s office for filing.

Review of Risk Assessments

16. Risk Assessments are not a once-and-for-all activity; they should be 'living documents' that are reviewed and amended if necessary:

- After an accident, incident or significant near miss
- After any significant changes have been made, e.g. change of staff, introduction of a new working method or piece of potentially hazardous equipment
- Annually

17. The review should be conducted by an appropriate senior member of staff and the Health and Safety Consultant or the Bursar.