



NORWICH SCHOOL

# Risk Assessment Policy

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**This Policy will be adopted and ratified by the Council of Management  
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made. CJW





NORWICH SCHOOL

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## FOREWORD

This document sets out the strategy, management responsibilities and implementation procedures for undertaking risk assessments at Norwich School. Its purpose is to:

- ensure early recognition and assessment of all risks to staff, pupils, visitors and others affected by Norwich School's activities;
- ensure effective communication between management and staff to raise awareness of the findings of the risk assessment;
- put into place suitable control measures to reduce identified risks and establish effective monitoring of control measures;
- set up effective assessment and monitoring to evaluate the effectiveness of the arrangements put in place to minimise the risks;
- encourage individual responsibility to recognise and inform management of hazards and risks.

This policy and associated procedures cover all activities, teaching and non-teaching, undertaken at Norwich School: the Lower School and the Senior School.



## SCOPE

The aim of this policy is to provide a system for assessing risks across all our work activities involving Norwich School staff, temporary staff, pupils, contractors and visitors.

Within this policy and associated procedures Hazard, Risk and Harm have the following meanings:

**Hazard** - Potential to cause harm.

**Risk** - Likelihood that harm will occur and its consequences.

**Harm** – Injury to people, damage to products, equipment, plant and buildings; pollution of the environment.

The term 'Line Manager' is used throughout to mean the person with direct responsibility for the safe conduct of the work activity.

## INTRODUCTION

A basic risk assessment is simply a careful examination of what, in your work, could harm people, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm to yourself, your colleagues, pupils, contractors, visitors or anyone else who may be affected by your work. The examination can be extended to include damage to products, equipment, plant and buildings; and pollution of the environment.

Risk assessment is a process that becomes easier with training and experience. Training will continued to be delivered to staff who are expected to undertake risk assessments. Those identified as responsible for conducting risk assessments are strongly advised to take advantage of this training to ensure correct and effective application of the risk assessment process.



## REQUIREMENT

Risk assessment helps Norwich School to focus on the risks that really matter in our workplace – i.e. the significant ones with real potential to cause harm. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations require employers to undertake suitable and sufficient risk assessments. However, they do not necessarily require the elimination of all risk, but employers are required to protect people so far as *reasonably practicable*. This means considering the balance of the risk on one side and the cost, time and effort needed to mitigate that risk on the other side.



This means that our staff are expected to make an informed, rational and structured evaluation of the risks presented by working practices and/or the working environment so that an effective plan to control the risks can be put in place. When staff are unsure or feel that they are stepping outside of the competency, then Norwich School encourages staff to ask for help. That might mean contacting the Bursar or the Assistant Bursar who will seek the assistance of the school's external competent advisor for safety as necessary.

Risk assessment is not a substitute for making things safe e.g. spilled liquids should immediately be cleaned up rather than a risk assessment produced warning of the slip hazard.



## Types of Risk Assessment

All significant risks shall be assessed, however, although the principles of assessment remain the same their application can differ. 4 methods of assessment:

- Dynamic** - A mental assessment of risk for use when any delay would increase the risk of harm. Dynamic assessment can also be used as the initial step in formal risk assessment.
- Formal** - A written method of evaluating the risk of harm.
- Generic** - An evaluation of risk that can be applied to common tasks and adapted locally as needed.
- On-the-go** - Re-assessment of risk as the situation changes

Dynamic risk assessment allows for immediate mental safety assessments to be made without implementing the formal risk assessment process e.g. the decision to tackle a small fire, a task with obvious safety risks which would increase if delayed by formal assessment. Therefore, dynamic risk assessment can be effectively used in emergencies where any delay increases the risk of harm, it is not to be used purely to save time or avoid additional work.

Dynamic risk assessment can be used as an initial step in establishing which risks are significant and require further assessment. It can also be used prior to the use of generic assessments to identify if the assessment is suitable and sufficient for the task in hand.

Formal risk assessment is a documented process of assessing risks and involves a process of measuring the likelihood of an event occurring with its likely consequences.

Some common tasks, tasks that share the same hazards and controls e.g. routine maintenance or cleaning activities, can be assessed and a generic risk assessment produced. These assessments can only be used when the influencing factors are the same and they will still need to be adapted slightly to reflect local factors.

There are occasions (e.g. educational visits and sports fixtures) when the risks need to be re-assessed as the situation changes. The “on-the-go” re-assessment should be recorded, discussed amongst all staff present and brought to the attention of the pupils as necessary.

The risk assessment methods described shall only be deviated from where alternative legislation applies.



## RESPONSIBILITY

The following specific organisational responsibilities apply:

At Norwich School will do all that we can reasonably do to:

- be committed to increasing the general awareness and understanding of risk assessment within the school.
- recognise and understand the importance of skilled management of staff by the provision of appropriate training on an on-going basis for managers and staff.

The Heads of Departments, the Master of Lower School and the support staff managers have responsibility for monitoring implementation, review and compliance of risk assessments within their own areas. They are responsible for ensuring that suitable and sufficient arrangements are in place to implement this policy within their sphere of responsibility including:

- having sufficient knowledge and understanding to enable them to discharge their duties and responsibilities;
- ensuring all hazards in their areas of responsibility have been identified and all significant risks are assessed;
- maintaining a register of all risk assessments conducted in their area;
- ensuring that all those who might be exposed to a hazard are made aware of the risk assessment and the identified control measures;
- ensuring that the control measures identified by the risk assessment are effectively implemented and complied with;
- providing positive leadership and a visible commitment to this Policy;
- ensuring that all new starters have received suitable induction and all staff received on and off the job training and coaching to ensure that they have the ability to carry out their existing or new roles;
- encouraging personal development to ensure that staff have suitable skills to cope with their work demands;
- monitoring their area risk assessment programme. If there are changes to be made it is not necessary or desirable to wait until the review date to change the assessment, it is to be done at the earliest opportunity;
- informing all staff under their control of sources of support and advice within the organisation. Attend training as requested in good management practice and health and safety.

All staff are responsible for:

- understanding and complying with this Policy which is to be read in conjunction with the school's Health and Safety Policy;
- protecting the health of themselves and others at work;
- ensuring that they comply with any control measures that are in place;
- Informing their line manager when a process or task changes or it is felt the risk assessment fails to identify appropriate control measures.



## WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE (THE 5 STEPS)

Risk assessment is a subjective but logical process which can be broken down into 5 steps:

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| Step 1 | Identify the hazard                            |
| Step 2 | Decide who might be harmed and how             |
| Step 3 | Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions   |
| Step 4 | Record your findings and implement them        |
| Step 5 | Review your assessment and update if necessary |

When conducting a risk assessment, involvement of staff or their representatives will provide useful information about how the work is done, this will make assessment of the risk more thorough and effective.

### Identify the hazards

Review the task and or work area, talk with the people involved and identify any hazards. Remember to include hazards arising from normal activities and potential hazards if things go wrong. Focus on the reasonably foreseeable (that is an event that can logically be predicted to occur and which could result in harm) not remote possibilities. Tasks/activities that pose trivial safety consequences should not be subject to risk assessment.

It is important to remember that an effective risk assessment looks at the whole activity not individual hazards. This avoids the need for unnecessary paperwork and subsequent additional review and will in the end show a complete picture of how the hazards and associated risk are to be managed. There is a tendency to break risk assessments down into bite sized chunks for simplicity, but it is sometimes more effective to manage the hazards collectively thereby making the risk easier to manage overall.

### Decide who might be harmed and how

For each hazard, establish who might be harmed. It will help to identify the best way to manage the risk. This does not mean listing everyone by name, but rather identifying groups of people, e.g. contractors, staff, pupils, visitors, members of the public etc.

In each case decide how they might be harmed, i.e. what type of injury or ill health might occur. For example, staff may suffer back injury from repeated lifting of boxes.

Some workers have particular requirements, e.g. new and young workers, women of child-bearing age, new or expectant mothers and people with disabilities may be at particular risk.





## Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions

Evaluating the risk is a subjective process which becomes easier with experience. To help assessors a 'Risk Rating' calculation matrix is shown below at Table 1. Below the table are guidance notes on definitions of 'likelihood' and 'consequence'.

Table 1 Risk Matrix

		Severity					
		0	1	2	3	4	5
Likelihood	0						
	1	1	2	3	4	5	
	2	2	4	6	8	10	
	3	3	6	9	12	15	
	4	4	8	12	16	20	
	5	5	10	15	20	25	

The table shows three bands (low, medium and high risk)

The following numerical values are put against factors, in order to quantify the risk. Each of the numbers allocated should be **multiplied**, to identify the risk.

- Likelihood:**
- 0 = Impossible for the event to happen.
  - 1 = Highly improbable, only likely in exceptional circumstances.
  - 2 = Might happen, but on balance this is unlikely.
  - 3 = There is a 50/50 chance that the event will happen.
  - 4 = More likely to happen than not to happen.
  - 5 = Virtually certain to happen.

- Severity:**
- 0 = No injury would arise.
  - 1 = A trivial injury would arise.
  - 2 = The resultant injury would require first-aid treatment.
  - 3 = Someone would be incapacitated from normal work because of the injury.
  - 4 = One person would suffer a major injury (as specified in RIDDOR\*)
  - 5 = Death or multiple major injuries would result.



The legal requirement for most Health and Safety Regulations is to reduce the risk of harm so far as is reasonably practicable. The level of acceptable risk is dependent on circumstances; the perceived risks of working in an office environment are different to those of working in the site support activities of the school.

Some Regulations, such as the Electricity at Work Regulations, require a higher degree of compliance and therefore do not allow the use of 'so far as is reasonably practicable'. These Regulations are limited to high risk activities and guidance should be sought if there is any doubt regarding compliance.

The first step in evaluating the risk is to establish what controls are currently in place, it is important that this is based on what is actually being done not what is thought to be done. The second step is to decide whether anything else can and needs to be done, this could involve the introduction of additional control measures or better implementation of existing control measures.

If the need for additional control measures is identified then their implementation needs to be managed. This will require identification of ownership and the setting of implementation dates. Large numbers of additional control measures should be addressed in priority order, the most affective being implemented first. Once additional controls have been identified the risk rating is to be recalculated and recorded.

When assessing risks the following points should be considered:

- Is the person carrying out the assessment adequately trained?
- Can the hazards be eliminated altogether?
- Can the risks be controlled so that harm is 'most unlikely'?
- Is there a less risky option?
- Can access to the hazard be eliminated or reduced e.g. barriers, guards etc.?
- Can the work be reorganised to eliminate or reduce the risks?
- Are additional welfare facilities required e.g. first aid or washing facilities for removal of contaminants?
- Is Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) required? The use of PPE is a last resort and should not be preferred to other forms of risk elimination or reduction.

## **Record and implement findings**

On completion of the risk assessment the details shall be recorded and the assessment brought to the attention of all those who are at risk or are responsible for implementing the control measures.

It is best practice to record dynamic risk assessments retrospectively and at the earliest opportunity. By recording these assessments, it may be possible to use the findings as a starting point for future similar tasks, thus improving the control of risks and reducing workloads. It also provides an auditable record of decisions allowing for more effective accident investigation.



The most important part of any risk assessment is the effective implementation of the control measures. Once implemented, the line manager is to ensure that the control measures remain effective and that staff are compliant with the risk assessment requirements.

## **Review and update**

Risk assessments are to be regularly reviewed to ensure that they remain suitable and sufficient.

A review is to be conducted:

- at least annually;
- if there is reason to doubt the effectiveness of the assessment;
- following an accident or near miss;
- following significant changes to the task, process, procedure or line management;
- following the introduction of more vulnerable people, e.g. those who are not familiar with the process, task or environment or people who may have special needs.

If, following review there are no changes to be made to the assessment, the line manager is to sign and date the risk assessment and insert a new review date in the next 12 months.