# Risk Assessment Policy

# Overley Hall School

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## Introduction

As part of managing the health and safety of school, it is the employer's along with employee's responsibility to control risks wherever they are working. To do this we need to think about *what might cause harm* to people and decide whether we are taking reasonable steps to prevent that harm occurring. This is known as risk assessment; it is something we are required by law to carry out.

The Independent School Standards Guidance (2019) shares this opinion and identify that, '*Well-run schools have proper risk assessment across the whole range of their activities affecting pupils…… these should not be an afterthought or confined to the most obvious dangers for pupils. Schools are needed to consider risk in relation to all ….with appropriate action taken to reduce any risks that are identified….. Risk assessment should be a constant process, with input encouraged from all staff and pupils, and based on a school's particular circumstances*.'

Overley Hall School supports learners with severe and complex learning disabilities. Risk assessments therefore take into account the individual needs of our learners whilst also ensuring that their human rights are maintained. The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) rules that schools should ensure that unnecessary restrictions are not put on students' rights to autonomy, privacy or dignity.

## Aims

Overley Hall School aims to ensure that:

- All risks that may cause injury or harm to staff, pupils and visitors are identified, and all control measures that are reasonably practicable are in place
- Risk assessments are conducted and reviewed on a regular basis
- Risk assessments are balanced between the health and safety considerations of staff and individual learners' rights to dignity, autonomy and privacy.

- Effective management of health and safety considerations for our learners allow them maximum access to educational opportunities.
- Risk assessments encourage staff to consider inclusion and equality when planning activities

## Legislation

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

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

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): Health and safety matters for special educational needs: Legal issues including risk assessment.

A table of all the risk assessments schools are required to have in place can be found in Appendix 1 of this policy.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

## Definitions

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|---|---|
| Hazard | Something with the potential to cause harm to people, such as chemicals or working from height |
| Risk | The likelihood (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 |
| 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 |

## Roles & Responsibilities

### The Proprietor (Mrs Brown)

The Proprietor has ultimate responsibility for health and safety matters in the school, but delegates day-to-day management responsibility to the Head Teacher.

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The Proprietor has a duty to take reasonable steps to ensure that staff and learners are not exposed to significant uncontrolled risks to their health or safety. This applies to activities on or off the school premises.

As the employer, the Proprietor has a duty to:

- 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 Teacher

- The Head Teacher, or in the Head Teacher's absence an Assistant Head, is responsible for the identification of hazards and ensuring that all risk assessments are completed and reviewed.
- Responsible for the implementation of this procedure across School
- Maintaining sufficient knowledge of risk assessment principals, through formal training and instruction
- The implementation and maintenance of appropriate risk control measures.

## 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 Headteacher to any hazards they find in the working environment, work tasks or activities as soon as they become aware of them.

## Learners and parents

Due to the complexity of need of our learners they will be supported at all times by at least one member of staff. It is the responsibility of the member if staff to ensure that they follow the above requirements. Parents are responsible for following the school's

advice in relation to risks, on-site and off-site, and for reporting any hazards they identify to a member of staff.

### Contractors

Contractors are expected to take into consideration the specific hazards of our environment and provide evidence that they have adequately risk assessed all their planned work.

## Different types of risk assessment

There are three different types of risk assessments - generic, specific and dynamic.

**Generic risk assessments** are those which identify and control hazards that do not change, even if the time and location of the activity alter

**A specific risk assessment** may be applicable where the hazards and risks are only applicable to a certain activity.

**A dynamic risk assessment** is a *continuous process of identifying the hazards* that occur in, for example, an emergency situation, assessing the risks and taking immediate action to eliminate or reduce these to an acceptable level, with the resources available at the time.

## The Risks

When writing risk assessments, assessors are aware of the increased risks that our pupil population may bring due to:

- Being unable to recognise everyday hazards, communicate distress, or move around independently
- Using facilities differently

- Unregulated behaviour
- Transport issues such as getting in and out of transport and making sure that access to the premises is appropriate.

## Risk Assessment Process

When assessing risks in the school, we will follow the process outlined below and findings will be recorded on a Risk Assessment Form (see Appendix 2 for sample).

We will also involve staff, where appropriate, to ensure that all possible hazards have been identified and to discuss potential control measures, following a risk assessment.

**Area Risk Assessments** Hazard identification and risk assessment shall be completed across each area used by the school including outside areas. All physical characteristics of the area and equipment used within it shall be considered within the risk assessment.

**Provision of Service Risk Assessment** All elements of the provision of education through Overley Hall School are considered and significant hazards are identified and controlled to an appropriate level.

**Off site visits** Any off-site visit, involving learners being taken to a venue will be assessed before the visit. This assessment will ensure correct provision of staff and equipment and that proportionate plans are in place to successfully and safely complete the activity and also mitigate any complications that may arise.

**Risk Control**

Measures to eliminate or control risk shall be identified in the following order, known as the hierarchy of control:

- Elimination – complete removal of the hazard or risk of exposure

- Substitution – replace hazardous equipment, substance or work process with a less harmful variant
- Isolation – to reduce exposure to the hazard
- Engineering – redesign the work area, fixing guards or handrails
- Administrative – Standard operating procedure, supervision, training and signage
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – Aprons, rubber gloves, safety shoes etc.

**Step 1: Identify hazards** – we will consider areas, processes and substances within the school and identify what hazards could injure or harm the health of staff, pupils and visitors.

The Head teacher (or delegated person) will develop a list of hazards and detail them on a Risk Assessment Form.
We may also use the following sources to identify hazards:

- Direct report from Employees or Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
- Industry and legislative requirements information
- Incident reports
- Safety inspection reports
- Observation of work tasks and activities
- OFSTED inspections
- Consultation with employees
- Manufacturers' instructions for equipment
- Material Safety Data Sheets for chemicals
- Near Miss, accident and ill-health records
- Health and Safety Executive (HSE) website (www.hse.gov.uk)

**Step 2: Decide who may be harm, and how** – for each hazard we will establish who might be harmed, listing groups rather than individuals. This will include people who have special requirements such as our learners who have special educational needs, and any staff who are 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 our existing control measures. We will balance the level of risk against the measures needed to control the risks 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 our risk assessment. A Risk Assessment Form can be found in appendix 2 of this policy.

Our risk assessments will be suitable and sufficient, and will show that:

- a proper check was made.
- we asked who might be affected;
- we dealt with all the obvious significant hazards, taking into account the number of people who could be involved.
- the precautions are reasonable, and the remaining risk is as low as possible.
- we involved our employees in the process

**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 pupils spotted a problem?
- Have we learnt anything from accidents or near misses?

**Step 6: Retaining risk assessments** – will be formally documented and placed in a risk assessment folder. The folder will be accessible to employees, contractors and

visitors. All employees will be shown the risk assessments that are relevant to them, and this will be recorded on a training log. Risk assessments are retained for 3 years after the length of time they apply. Risk assessments are securely disposed of.

Before staff are authorised to take students on off-site visits, a Senior Member of staff will review their risk assessment / plan and sign the document to demonstrate that they have read and agree with the controls shown.

## Monitoring

Risk assessments are written as needed and reviewed by the Assistant Headteacher (Dee Marshall).
This policy will be reviewed by the Assistant Headteacher (Dee Marshall) every year and approved by the Senior Leadership Team.

## Links with other policies.

Health and safety
First aid
Supporting pupils with medical conditions
Accessibility Plan
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

## Appendix 1: statutory risk assessments checklist

The following table lists the risk assessments that schools are required to have in place.

| Statutory or mandatory risk assessment | ✓ | Completed by | Date of review |
|---|---|---|---|
| Workers under the age of 18 | NA | No workers under 18 | |
| Asbestos | y | Rob Carlin | 15/05/25 |
| Substances hazardous to health | y | Rob Carlin | 15/05/25 |
| Display screen equipment | Y | Dee Marshall | 16/05/25 |
| Fire | Y | Rob Carlin | 15/05/25 |
| First aid | Y | Rob Carlin | 15/05/25 |
| Manual handling | Y | Rob Carlin | 15/05/25 |
| Working at height | Y | Rob Carlin | 15/05/25 |
| Children being drawn into terrorism | | In progress | |
| Swimming pools Wellington/Oakengates/Shortwood | y | Dee Marshall | 23/09/25 |

## Appendix 2: sample risk assessment. (see additional document)