



## Risk Assessment Policy

Risk assessment is important because it:

- makes sure the setting is safe for children, staff and parents and is an essential tool used in the prevention of accidents, injuries and ill health.
- is an Early Years Foundation Stage Safeguarding & Welfare requirement
- is good practice.
- is a legal requirement under the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (Risk Assessment).
- is also a requirement of Ofsted registration.

What is a risk assessment?

- Identifying a hazard which might cause harm.
- Making sure that the risk attached to it is acceptable.
- Putting appropriate control measures in place if the risk is not acceptable.

The Early Years Foundation Stage requirements ensure that essential standards of provision are in place. School's Out Henleaze conduct regular risk assessments; at least once a year or more frequently when the need arises, to identify aspects of the environment that need to be checked on a regular basis. The process involves deciding what should be done to prevent harm, making sure that the relevant actions are taken and are updated whenever necessary.

Health and safety law does not expect all risk to be eliminated, but that 'reasonable precautions' are taken and that staff are trained and aware of their responsibilities. This is particularly important at School's Out Henleaze, as children should be able to grow and develop being able to take appropriate risks through physically challenging play. Children must also have the opportunity to work out what is not safe and what they should do when faced with a risk.

At School's Out Henleaze, the Managers are responsible for the implementation of risk assessments. All staff are involved in reviewing these as they are the ones with first-hand knowledge as to whether the control measures are effective, and can give an informed view to help update procedures accordingly.

This will be increasingly important with the focus on identifying areas that need to be checked on a regular basis, as we work within the requirements of the EYFS, and move away from the idea of a risk assessment being an annual or bi-annual event carried out under headings that rarely change.

The EYFS also states that 'a health and safety policy *should* be in place which includes procedures for identifying, reporting and dealing with hazards and faulty equipment'.

The basis of effective risk management is that everybody is involved and can take responsibility for their, and others' safety. We therefore understand that parental involvement is important as they have an active role to play too. They will be made



aware of their responsibilities such as not letting strangers into the building, and encouraged to report any potential hazards to staff.

School's Out Henleaze carry out risk assessments on aspects such as the security of the building, fire safety, food safety, bathroom hygiene and safety, outings, and personal safety of children and staff. Some activities we do with children will in some cases require risk assessments, for example cooking activities, supervising children's use of climbing equipment, or a visit from somebody outside the organisation who may be bring equipment for the children to use.

School's Out Henleaze also act upon any pattern of minor accidents that have been recorded.

## Definitions

A **risk assessment** involves identifying any hazards present in the childcare setting/premises and then deciding the extent of any risks involved, taking into account any precautions already in place.

A **hazard** is anything that may cause harm, such as chemicals, electricity, working from ladders, an open drawer, computers, group games etc.

The **risk** is the chance, high, medium or low, that somebody could be harmed by the hazards, together with an indication of how serious the harm could be.

## Risk Assessment Procedures

When we carry out risk assessments at School's Out Henleaze, we understand the importance of allowing children to take risks and engage in risky play. Our provision aims to respond to these needs and wishes by offering children stimulating, challenging environments for exploring and developing their abilities. In doing this, play provision aims to manage the level of risk so that children are not exposed to unacceptable risks of death or serious injury.

At School's Out Henleaze, risk assessments are written and reviewed by the Manager or Deputy Manager, who will have attended Health and Safety training. All staff are required to read appropriate risk assessments. At each of our settings, risks are well known and the necessary control measures (precautions) are always applied.

The five steps to risk assessment are:

1. Identification of risk or hazard: where is it and what is it?

- Walk around the setting and look at what could reasonably be expected to cause harm.
- Ask staff and committee members what they think. They may have noticed things that are not immediately obvious.
- Visit the HSE website. HSE publishes practical guidance on where hazards occur and how to control them. [www.hse.gov.uk/risk](http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk)



- Call the HSE Infoline (Tel: 0845 345 0055), they will identify publications that can help.,
- Contact [Workplace Health Connect](#) (Tel: 0845 609 6006), a free service for managers and staff of small and medium-sized enterprises providing practical advice on workplace health and safety.
- Contact trade union or association. Many produce very helpful guidance.
- Check manufacturers' instructions or data sheets for chemicals and equipment; these can be very helpful in spelling out the hazards and putting them in their true perspective.
- Review accident and ill-health records. These often help to identify the less obvious hazards and may also identify trends.
- Consider particular activities that may be planned.

2. Decide who is at risk and how, for example staff, children, parents etc.

3. Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions: Complete a risk assessment form. Is it possible to get rid of the risk altogether, if not how can it be controlled?

Having spotted the hazards, decide what to do about them. The law requires that everything 'reasonably practicable' is done to protect people from harm. There are many sources of good practice - the HSE website and the HSE Infoline for example.

4. Record your findings and implement them: prioritise, make a plan of action if necessary.

For Ofsted registration purposes, even if your organisation employs fewer than five people, it is a requirement to record the results of the risk assessment. It is good practice to share the written record with staff.

5. Monitoring and review - How do you know if what has been decided is working, or is thorough enough? If it is not working, it will need to be amended, or maybe there is a better solution.

School's Out Henleaze rarely stays the same. Sooner or later, new equipment, activities and procedures will be introduced that could lead to new hazards. It makes sense therefore, to review what we are doing on an ongoing basis. Every year we formally review our risk assessment to ensure that it is still relevant.

During the year, if there is a significant change, we don't wait for the review date: we will check our risk assessments and where necessary, amend them. Any actions taken following review or accident/injury will be recorded.

For further information:

Health and Safety Executive: [www.hse.gov.uk/risk](http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk)

HSE Infoline: 0845 345 0055

Workplace Health Connect: 0845 609 60