

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.

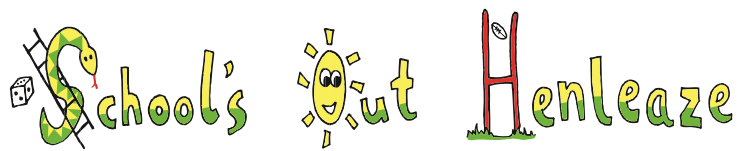
For settings registered on the Early Years Register, the EYFS requirements sit alongside other legal obligations and do not supersede or replace any other legislation which providers must still meet. Other duties on providers include health and safety legislation.

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'. Parent/carer involvement will also be welcomed as they have an active role to play too. They will be made aware of their responsibilities, such as closing gates behind them and not



letting others into the building and they should be encouraged to report any potential hazards to staff. It is also good practice to invite parents/carers to take part in reviews of procedures whenever possible. The basis of effective risk management is that everybody is involved and can take responsibility for their, and others' safety.

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. What is being done with the children will also 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 bringing equipment to show the children as part of a topic or activity. A pattern of minor accidents/incidents would also require risk assessing. Whatever the reason for the risk assessment though, the process remains the same.

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.

Vulnerable Workers

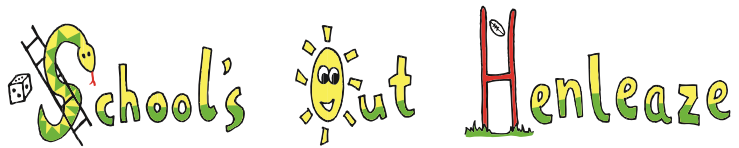
Some workers have requirements, for example young workers, migrant workers, new or expectant mothers and people with disabilities.

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 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. Identify hazards
2. Assess the risks
3. Control the risks
4. Record your findings
5. Review the controls

1. Identify Hazards

Look around the setting and think about what might cause harm (these are called hazards). Think about:

- how staff work/play and any equipment/resources used.
- procedures in place, such as arrival and departure procedures.
- what chemicals and substances are used.
- any activities you carry out or may be planning
- the general state of the building.

Look back at your accident and ill health records as these can help you identify less obvious hazards. Take account of non-routine operations, such as maintenance and cleaning.

Think about hazards to health, such as manual handling, use of chemicals and causes of work-related stress.

For each hazard, think about how staff, children, parents/carers, contractors, visitors or members of the public might be harmed.

2. Assess the Risks

Once you have identified the hazards, decide how likely it is that someone could be harmed and how serious it could be. This is assessing the level of risk. Decide:

- who might be harmed and how.
- what you're already doing to control the risks.
- what further action you need to take to control the risks.
- who needs to carry out the action.
- when the action is needed by.

3. Control the Risks

Look at what you're already doing and the controls you already have in place. Ask yourself:

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

If you need further controls, consider:

- redesigning the job/activity.
- replacing the materials, machinery or process.
- organising the work to reduce exposure to the materials, machinery or process.
- identifying and implementing practical measures needed to work safely.
- providing personal protective equipment and making sure workers wear it.

What Reasonably Practicable Means

Put the controls you have identified in place. You're not expected to eliminate all risks but you need to do everything 'reasonably practicable' to protect people from harm. This means balancing the level of risk against the measures needed to control the real risk in terms of money, time or trouble.

4. Record Your Findings

If you employ 5 or more people, you must record your significant findings, including:

- the hazards (things that may cause harm).
- who might be harmed and how.
- what you are doing to control the risks.

It is good practice to share the written record with staff. You might also need to record your risk assessment to fulfil the requirements of Ofsted registration.

5. Review the Controls

You must review the controls you have put in place to make sure they are working. Few workplaces stay 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 you are doing on an ongoing basis. In addition, every year formally review your risk assessment to ensure that it is still relevant. During the year, if there is a significant change, don't wait for the review date: check your risk assessment and where necessary, amend it. If possible, it is best to think about the risk assessment when you're planning your change. Also, review if your workers have spotted any problems or there have been any accidents or near misses.

For Further Information:

Health and Safety Executive:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/steps-needed-to-manage-risk.htm>