ROYAL HIGH SCHOOL
BATH

GDST

RISK ASSESSMENT [ALI ADAMS] 2021-22

The key thing to note during the Covid-19 Emergency is the constant updating of the whole-school Risk Assessment in the light of the guidance coming from the GDST, which considers government advice, Public Health England announcements etc. The DFO ensures that the Risk Assessment is updated and the SLT ensure that details are passed onto departments etc.

Applicable to: All students, staff, contractors and visitors to the school.

Aims: To ensure that risk assessments are written for all potentially hazardous activities and situations in the environment of RHSB, and for when students are taken off-site on educational visits.

N.B. Points in bold italics are examples of how the policy is implemented at RHSB. The main text comes from the GDST's Hub.

A. Risk Assessment Policy Statement

The GDST recognises that Risk Assessment is one of the keystones of good health and safety management; it can make a significant contribution to promoting welfare and reducing health and safety risks to employees, pupils, visitors and others who may be affected by the way in which the school operates.

All GDST schools, academies and Trust Office must complete comprehensive risk assessments for all potentially hazardous activities and situations, regularly review them, and implement the controls necessary to reduce the risks to an acceptable level following the principles of prevention: eliminate the hazard at source, reduce the hazard, prevent contact with the hazard, implement safe systems of work, employ personal protective equipment.

All GDST schools, academies and Trust Office will provide training and comprehensive guidance to employees on how to complete risk assessments.

B. Risk Assessment Procedures

1. What is a risk assessment?

A risk assessment is a systematic method of looking at the school environment and activities to identify things that could happen or go wrong and cause injury or ill health and deciding on the actions needed to prevent this. If it is not possible to remove all the risks, they should be reduced or minimised to an acceptable level. It helps to protect:

- pupils, employees, visitors, contractors and members of the public
- the school and its reputation
- the GDST and its reputation

2. What are the legal requirements?

Risk assessments are required by the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. They must be 'suitable and sufficient', i.e. they should show that:

- A proper check was made
- All the people who could be affected were considered
- All the obvious, significant hazards and risks were considered
- The precautions are reasonable, and the remaining risk is low
- The relevant staff were included in the process

Risk assessments must be written down if the organisation has more than 5 employees.

3. What are the different types of risk assessment?

There are three main types of risk assessment:
i) Risk assessments required by specific legislation such as the Fire Safety Order, the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations, or the Work at Heights Regulations - for more info follow the links in the right hand column.
ii) Area/activity risk assessments such as classrooms, laboratories or offices & sports activities, educational visits and drama productions.
iii) Individual (personal) risk assessments triggered by a specific event such as a member of staff announcing she is pregnant, or if an individual pupil or member of staff has special needs relating to H&S e.g. as a result of a disability or illness - for more info follow the links in the right hand column.

4. Who should complete the risk assessment?

Heads of Department are responsible for completing and regularly reviewing the risk assessments for all the areas, activities and people that they are responsible for.

It is good practice for all the relevant staff in the department to be involved with completing and reviewing the risk assessments as they will have useful information about how the tasks or activities happen in practice, what can (and sometimes does) go wrong, and they are the people who will implement the controls – so they need to know what they are!

All GDST schools, academies and Trust Office will provide training and comprehensive guidance to employees to ensure they are able to complete risk assessments competently.

At RHSB all risk assessments are reviewed annually and the majority are reviewed in September.

5. Who should be told about any significant findings from the Risk Assessment?

If the risk assessment identifies significant risks which need specific action to control them, these must be brought to the attention of the affected people, e.g. staff, pupils or visitors. This could be in the form of a training session for staff, e.g. if a new piece of equipment is introduced; safety reminders at the beginning of a practical science lesson for pupils; or in a letter to parents prior to pupils going on a school trip or to an adventure activities centre.

6. Where should the risk assessments be stored?

The risk assessments should be easily available to the staff that they apply to. A master set should be stored on a shared computer drive, but paper copies can also be made available, e.g. in the staff room, departmental office, or to take off-site, e.g. on an educational visit.

Each department should list all their risk assessments on an index sheet. This should include the following information:

- Name of risk assessment
- Date of completion / last review
- Name of person who completed / last reviewed RA
- Date RA is next due for updating
- Where RA is stored (soft or hard copy)

Each member of staff should have easy access to a copy of the index sheet so they know where to find the risk assessments.

At RHSB Heads of Department complete Risk Assessment Index Sheets annually in September.

7. How long should risk assessments be kept?

There are no official requirements for the length of time records relating to risk assessments should be kept. However, it is recommended that records should be kept for three years at the very least, since this is the period in which a civil claim can be made by an employee following an incident. If health risks are involved, then the length of time may have to be much longer e.g. 40 years, as claims can be made within three years of the disease or ill health being diagnosed.

At RHSB risk assessments are kept for a minimum of 3 years.

8. Reviewing risk assessments

Risk assessments need to be reviewed regularly (normally annually) to ensure they are complete and up to date.

They must also be reviewed and updated if an accident occurs or there is a change in the circumstances, e.g.:

- New or changed activities
- New or altered equipment
- New or altered environment
- People involved who are unfamiliar with the activity
- An incident occurs that casts doubt on whether the risk is adequately controlled?

If nothing has changed since the last review, and the person reviewing the risk assessment is confident that all the risks have been considered, and appropriate controls are identified and implemented, then they simply re-date and re-initial the assessment.

9. Example and template Risk Assessments

A blank template, suitable for general area and activity risk assessments is available to download from the **Related Documents** tab. Templates for other types of risk assessments, eg Use of DSE, Pregnancy and COSHH, are available on other pages on the H&S Hub.

There are also many examples of risk assessments available on the H&S Coordinators Microsoft Teams site.

10. Where can I get training and more information about risk assessments?

- In the following sections of this guidance: C. Risks to assess and D. Undertaking the assessment
- The GDST H&S e-learning system has a module on risk assessment - contact your DFO/School Health & Safety Coordinator for more information on how to access this.
- Many H&S training courses include information on completing risk assessments, and many professional qualifications provide candidates with specific knowledge about the hazards, risks and appropriate controls associated with the topic.
- The HSE Risk Assessment booklet (below) is very helpful, and there is a lot of useful information on risk assessments on the HSE website.
- The GDST H&S Handbook includes a section on risk assessments and how to complete them. Your DFO/School H&S Coordinator can also provide you with support and training.

C. Risks to Assess

Schools are complex places and a significant number of risks exist. These can be broken down into seven groups:

- The site
- Curricular and pupil activities including school trips and educational visits
- Employee activities
- Foreseeable emergencies
- Equipment chemicals and substances
- People who need extra care
- Events

The Health and Safety section of the Hub provides a list of the risk assessments that each school needs to complete. However, it is not exhaustive and the schools may identify other significant risks that need to be assessed.

D. Undertaking the Risk Assessment

Risk assessment is a natural process which is used all the time, at work and elsewhere.

1. Set the limits

First, set the limits of the risk assessment. What is being assessed? If it as an area, define it, e.g. 'sports hall and associated changing rooms and store rooms'. If it is a task, where does it start and finish? Take the example of putting up a display. The task starts when the teacher goes to fetch the steps and finishes when s/he has put them away again.

2. Identify the hazards

The next step is to identify the HAZARDS in the task being assessed. A hazard is something with the potential to cause harm to people, or damage property, reputation or less tangible assets such as course work. It may not be very likely to do so, but that will be revealed in step 6. If a hazard exists, and it is not trivial, it needs to be identified and recorded.

Hazards include:

- Electricity
- Gas
- Deep water
- Flammable liquids/gases, e.g. petrol or LPG
- Fire and explosions
- Extreme ambient temperature (hot or cold)
- Inadequate ventilation
- Asbestos
- Hazardous substances, e.g. chemicals or dusts
- Manual handling
- Working at height
- Slippery surfaces
- Confined spaces (where there could be inadequate air or toxic gases, or difficulties escaping in an emergency, e.g. under a stage, or in some plant rooms)
- Ionising radiation, e.g. from radioactive 'sources' in the physics dept.
- Poor housekeeping or storage
- Inadequate lighting
- Falling or moving objects
- Sharp edges
- Animals / birds / insects / allergies / stings)
- Hot and cold water/hot surfaces/steam / legionella
- Adverse work environment (layout)
- Trees
- Noise
- Vibration
- Lone working
- Adverse weather
- Lack of supervision
- Lack of training

Where relevant hazards should be described more specifically, so that the risk assessment is more informative to third parties looking at it. For instance, in an Art room slipping hazards could include:

- Slipping on wet floors by the external entrance door
- Slipping on wet floors by the sinks
- Slipping on spilt art materials such as paint or clay
- Slipping on wet floors after cleaning

Taking the example of a teacher putting up a display, the following hazards can be identified:

- Falls from height (using the stepladder)
- Manual handling (carrying the stepladder and items to be displayed)
- Work equipment (e.g. staple gun)
- Impact injury (objects, e.g. hammers / staple guns falling onto people assisting the task from below, or person climbing ladder bumping against ceiling door frames etc.)

There could also be a risk of striking against something e.g. if the ladder is kept in a crowded cupboard; contact with hot surfaces if hot pipes are in proximity; electrocution if there are low light fittings with bare bulbs/tubes. This explains why risk assessments have to be done for each particular job, situation, and individuals undertaking the task – each task will have unique hazards and a generic risk assessments are therefore less useful.

3. Identify the risk

Using the example of a teacher putting up a display, the risks are:

- Serious injury - broken bones, concussion - from falling from the step ladder
- Serious injury - back strain from poor manual handling techniques

- Serious injury - inserting staple into body if staple gun used incorrectly or malfunctions
- Serious injury - if objects such as hammers or staple guns fall from a height onto people assisting the task from below

4. Identify who will be affected by the risk

This is simple to determine. Remember that risks may be different for different groups of people - assess them separately if this is likely to be the case. For instance, the risk from a harmful chemical used in chemistry demonstration differs depending on whether you are the teacher doing the demo, or the pupil watching it.
Always identify any group or individual likely to be particularly affected by a risk, e.g. staff and pupils suffering from asthma might be more at risk from a harmful solvent than those that do not. Do not forget to think about visitors, contractors and parents.

5. Assess the severity of the injury if the risk occurs

Refer to the Risk Rating Matrix. Take each hazard in turn. Consider the most likely worst case scenario outcome that could result from the identified hazard if an incident were to occur. This is the SEVERITY, consequence or harm.

Catastrophic – 5	Multiple death
Major – 4	Single death, permanent disability, life altering injury
Moderate – 3	Broken bones, several days off work
Minor – 2	Basic first aid treatment required
Insignificant – 1	Minor scratch or bruise

Example - For an electrical accident, the most likely 'worst case scenario' outcome is electrocution, which could be fatal for the individual concerned – a hazard score of 4. This will usually be the case with falls from height too. On the other hand, the most likely 'worst case scenario' outcome from use of simple equipment such as scissors, staplers, compasses etc, will probably be a cut or scratch – a score of 1 or 2.

6. Consider existing control measures

How each hazard is currently controlled needs to be considered in turn. In many cases there will be adequate controls in place, often arrived at over years of establishing good practice.

The controls need to be listed in the 'Existing Control Measures' section of the assessment. It is important to make sure the control is relevant to the risk, and that it is practicable, achievable and reflects likely practice.
The controls might be a system, such as prohibiting people from doing something, or from using a piece of equipment (like a ladder or a dangerous piece of machinery). They might include having written instructions for a job or using protective equipment or making sure people have had particular training.
They might be simple physical measures – like having window restrictors on a second storey classroom window.

Particular control measures to be considered include:
- elimination
- substitution by something less hazardous
- guarding
- safe system of work (written procedures)
- supervision
- training
- information/instruction – signs etc.
- personal protective equipment

7. Assess the likelihood of the hazard occurring

Now determine how likely it is that an incident could occur (both expected outcome or worst case scenario). It will be determined by a number of factors including:
- How hazard is controlled
- Who is exposed to hazard and for how long?
- Level of training and experience
- Age / maturity of those exposed to the hazard
- Understanding of the hazard by those exposed to it
- What protective measures are in place?

Take the example of slips and trips in a Junior School playground. Slips and trips may be caused by uneven surfaces, steps, slippery surfaces as a result of moss, ice, objects such as bags on the ground, loose or unsuitable footwear, or just children tripping over their own feet as they play. The risks will vary depending on whether or not:

- Any uneven surfaces are cordoned off, or are only in small infrequently used areas, as opposed to main play areas/walkways
- Steps are even and in good condition and clearly marked
- Areas where moss grows are regularly treated, and play areas are salted to clear any ice if the children are to be allowed out to play
- Children are encouraged to leave unnecessary bags, coats etc. inside, or in a safe place, e.g. on a bench
- Children wear sensible shoes, and, if necessary, adults help younger children tie up any loose shoelaces
- Pupils are well supervised during playtimes and clearly understand the playground 'rules'

Certainty – 5	Could happen at any time and on any day
Probable – 4	Could happen perhaps once a term
Likely – 3	Could happen perhaps once a year
Conceivable – 2	Might happen perhaps once in 5 years
Improbable – 1	Will probably never happen

8.Calculating the risk

To obtain the risk rating, multiply the severity by the likelihood.
Risk = Severity x Likelihood

9. Acceptable, tolerable, action required or activity prohibited

Sensible judgement and reference to the Risk Rating Matrix will indicate if the risks are 'acceptable', 'tolerable', 'action required' or 'prohibitive'.
Acceptable: Risk is either no greater than everyday living or is deemed to be so minimal that management decide to accept the risk.
Tolerable: Risk has been reduced or controlled as far as is reasonably practicable given current technologies, best practices and resources. This does not negate the need to keep the risk under review and will require further action once developments allow. If Severity >Moderate, ensure contingency plans are in place.
Action Required: Risk should not be tolerated and all reasonably practicable controls should be applied to reduce risk. (Risk score is probably 9 or more)
Prohibitive: Cease this activity or isolate risk area until substantial risk reduction is achieved.
Sometimes the existing controls will give very satisfactory control of a risk. For instance, window restrictors will stop a student or staff member from falling out of the window whilst allowing the window to be opened for ventilation, so a high risk is reduced to low by this control. In this case, although there is still a small residual risk, the overall benefit of having openable windows against the unlikely event of a student falling out (due to the restrictors) allows the risk to be deemed 'tolerable'; this is saying that all reasonably practicable controls have been implemented given current resources and technology.

On the other hand, if the only control to prevent drowning in the swimming pool is the provision of a float and throw line, this will not have much impact on the risk, as a person could still drown. Further action is required to reduce or eliminate (if possible) the risk, e.g. the provision of lifeguards at all times when swimmers use the pool, and keeping the pool locked so no-one can gain access without a lifeguard being present. If further controls are necessary, it is important to ensure that the controls you are planning to introduce will reduce the risk adequately.

10. Improvements/action required to make risk acceptable, tolerable

If you cannot conclude that you have taken all reasonably practicable control measures, then you must develop an action plan to implement further improvements. Even if the risk rating is low, consider whether there are simple steps that can be taken to reduce it further.
For instance, if window restrictors are fitted to reduce the risk of falls from 2nd storey and above windows it would be an improvement if they were checked occasionally to ensure that nobody had removed them or interfered with them.

If there are improvements to the way the risk is currently managed and the improvements are practicable, list them down in the 'Improvements / Actions' column on the Risk Assessment. The measures taken to manage a risk should

always be proportionate to the risk. For example, it is not expected that £20,000 should be spent to prevent a bruise but it might be to prevent a serious injury.

At RHSB staff who write risk assessments endeavour to incorporate the 'Improvements/Actions Required' into the risk assessment at the same time (wherever feasible).

11. Implement controls

Take all necessary steps to ensure all the controls identified in the risk assessment are implemented.
E. Recording the Risk Assessment
Risk assessments need to be written down. A template for an area/activity risk assessment is available to download from the Hub.
Template risk assessment forms for the following hazards and activities are available in other sections the Hub.

- COSHH
- Employee Pregnancy/Nursing Mothers
- Fire
- First Aid
- Manual Handling
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment
- Science
- Use of Computers (Display Screen Equipment)
- Work at Heights

Even if it appears certain that a risk is adequately controlled, make sure it can be demonstrated by documenting the assessment. This record will form key evidence in the event of any accident or injury.

When completing the risk assessment, the level of detail should be proportionate to risk. For example, a risk assessment on the use of equipment such as a sewing machine, will probably only need a few sentences relating to cuts & stabbing injuries, electrocution and the need for training and suitable supervision, depending on the age of the student. In contrast the risk assessment for the use of power tools in DT departments should include all hazards posed by the equipment (cuts/lacerations/amputation, electrocution, entrapment, ejected materials, dust, noise, jamming/kick back, broken blades/cutters, inadvertent starting of machine, unauthorised use, etc.) and should address these risks not just when used by students, but also during cleaning, setting up/adjustment and servicing/maintenance.

12. Authorisation

- In the Prep school, people in charge of key areas are responsible for creating and updating the relevant risk assessments. These are then overseen by Mr D Rushworth who is responsible for collating all things Health & Safety.
- In the Senior School, Heads of Department are responsible for ensuring that all necessary Risk Assessments are carried out. Technicians might prepare them but the HODs sign them off.
- Trips out are dealt with through the EVOLVE system and this is overseen by the EVC.

13. Monitoring

- There is a Risk Assessment Register which is checked by the Health & Safety Coordinator to ensure that there is continuity in the school and that all aspects of Risk have been considered.
- If there are concerns regarding any assessments, then these are highlighted to the DFO for further action.

14. Effectiveness

- There is an annual review process that all departments carry out. At which point the RAs are checked to ensure that they are still fit for purpose.
- If an incident occurs, then the H&S Coordinator will review the report relating to this and consider possible changes or amendments to the RA that may have covered the activity.
- After trips the leaders will ensure that they review the RA to examine whether there were risks encountered that were previously unconsidered.