

BEBINGTON HIGH SPORTS COLLEGE



RISK ASSESSMENT
POLICY AND GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

Agreed/Reviewed by Governors – see reverse

1) Who can assess the risks?

Each curriculum area is required to complete Risk Assessment forms to identify and quantify any hazardous activities or procedures undertaken within their subject area. Copies to be held by L. Chamberlain

Staff who take pupils out of School should complete Risk Assessment forms prior to the activity, in addition to completing any other relevant forms. Copies to C. Bale and L. Chamberlain.

L. Chamberlain to complete Risk Assessment forms, in conjunction with appropriate personnel, to identify and quantify other non-curriculum hazardous activities or procedures involving Staff and pupils occurring during the School day. L. Chamberlain to retain copies.

2) What risks should be assessed?

For regulations such as Manual Handling Operations or COSHH Regulations, the risks to be assessed are clearly defined as they are very specific. But for general assessments the following should be considered:-

- i) **Lessons** – in particular practical lessons such as art, science, design technology, physical education, also wet playtimes and parental help.
- ii) **School activities** – visits, trips, competitions, summer fairs, first-aid.
- iii) **Building issues** – security, playground safety, vehicle access, deliveries, maintenance, out of hours use, contractors, building work, fire safety (NB these lists are not exhaustive).

Risk assessment requirements for all new Health and Safety regulations indicate that your assessment of risk must be either 'adequate' or 'suitable and sufficient'. These mean the same thing and tell you that you do not have to be overcomplicated. In deciding the amount of effort you put into assessing risks, you have to judge whether the hazards are significant and whether you have them covered by satisfactory precautions so that the risk is small.

The use of LA Policy and Guidance Documents are an ideal way of ensuring that risks are minimized by following the advice given.

In many cases the principal of Risk Assessment has been done for you via the Policy and Guidance Document, in suggesting supervision ratios, training required by teaching staff, methods of carrying out a lesson or activity. The school needs to satisfy themselves that the LA guidance can be followed and that there are no 'local' anomalies which could affect the safety of the lesson or personal safety of staff or pupils.

3) **When to assess.**

You have to assess the risks in your workplace before you begin any new work or if conditions change which would have an effect on the safety of the work or activity, when changing a scheme of work for example.

For specific Regulations e.g. COSHH and Manual Handling you cannot start work until you have assessed the risks they cover.

4) **Recording the assessment.**

The Management Regulations require the recording of significant findings of your assessment. For more complex and hazardous activities, or generic assessments, a specific Risk Assessment sheet should be completed. However, many school activities require a lesson plan or scheme of work to be written; it would be perfectly acceptable for a risk assessment to be incorporated here. The benefit of using a recording mechanism that is simple and referred to on a regular basis ensures that health and safety issues are constant reminders to employees and that, any risk assessments that are carried out are not just filed away and never referred to again.

5) **Reviewing the assessment.**

All the regulations require that you review your assessment and revise it as necessary. They all say that you have to do this if you 'suspect that your assessment is no longer valid or there has been a significant change'. Schools should establish systems within their organisation to review assessments, this might be done via a whole school approach, though Safety Committees or by Departments in Secondary Schools. Whatever system is used by a school this should be clearly outlined within the School Safety Policy.

STEPS TO RISK ASSESSMENT

As we've said before an assessment of risk is nothing more than a careful examination of your work activities, and the aim ultimately is to make sure no-one is harmed either by an injury or ill-health.

Don't be put off by some of the words used.

- 'Hazard' – means anything that has the potential to cause harm (e.g. chemicals, electricity, using PE apparatus etc)
- 'Risk' – is the chance, great or small, that someone will be harmed by the hazard.

STEP 1 – Look for the hazards.

If you are doing the assessment yourself, walk around your workplace and look afresh at what could reasonably be expected to cause harm. Governors, safety representatives, nominated teaching staff, caretakers, can all help you look for hazards. Ignore the trivial and concentrate on significant hazards which could result in harm or affect several people. Accident records can help you identify hazards such as; rough play-time activities, slippery surfaces etc.

STEP 2 – Decide who might be harmed and how.

Think about people who may not be in the workplace all the time, e.g. cleaners, visitors, maintenance personnel etc. Include members of the public or others sharing your workplace, if there is a chance they could be hurt by your activities.

STEP 3 – Evaluate the risks arising from the hazards and decide whether existing precautions are adequate or more should be done.

Even after all precautions have been taken, usually some risk remains. What you have to decide for **each significant hazard** is whether this risk is high, medium or low. A simple 'risk rating' mechanism has been incorporated on the risk assessment form M34 for your use (see appendix) this will focus your attention on significant risks which require some control. **First**, ask yourself whether you have done all that the law says you must do. **Then** think whether you have done everything that is reasonably practicable to keep your workplace safe.

Improving health and safety need not cost a lot of money.

If you find that something needs to be done, ask yourself:-

- (a) Can I get rid of the hazard altogether?
- (b) If not, how can I control the risks so that harm is unlikely?

STEP 4 – Record your findings.

You must record significant findings of your assessment and be able to show that:-

- a proper check was made
- you asked who might be affected
- you dealt with all the obvious significant hazards
- the precautions are reasonable, and the remaining risk is low

Keep the written document for future reference; it can help if an inspector asks what precautions you have taken, or if you become involved in any action for civil liability.

You must also tell your fellow employees about your findings. To make things simpler, you can refer to other documents, such as manuals, the arrangements in your Health and Safety Policy, LA Policy and Guidance Notes, CLEAPSS handbook and hazards.

Whilst for significant risks a separate risk assessment form should be completed (see appendix) for simple assessments information can be incorporated within lesson plans or schemes of work, with reference made to safety texts such as 'Be Safe', 'Make it Safe', 'CLEAPSS Laboratory Handbook', 'Hazards', LA Policy and Guidance documents etc.

Remember an assessment should be suitable and sufficient – not perfect!

STEP 5 – Review your assessment and revise it if necessary.

Sooner or later you will bring in new machines, apparatus, substances and procedures which could lead to new hazards. If there is any significant change, you should add to the assessment. There is no need to amend your assessment for every trivial change.

Indicate in your Health and Safety Policy your schools mechanism for reviewing and updating assessment and who will carry them out. This will make sure that the precautions are still working effectively.

ASSESSMENTS IN THE CURRICULUM

In previous sections of this guidance suggestions have been made on how to fulfil your obligations under the Management Regulations, in carrying out risk assessments using existing recording mechanisms already in place at your school.

Examples of recording mechanisms are enclosed as well as specific risk assessment recording sheets.

It is important that all staff play a part in the risk assessment process, not just one or two people. Health and Safety is an important role for every employee and is a legal obligation.

Wirral's Advisory teachers have produced schemes of work which have risk and hazards clearly identified. Whilst the significant risks have been assessed each school still has to look at its own environment, pupils, teacher skills etc to ensure that the lesson can be carried out safely.

Safety texts are widely available to assist schools in the risk assessment process i.e. 'Make it Safe', 'Be Safe', CLEAPSS handbook, hazards and bulletins, Data assessments (Design Technology) etc.

Schools are strongly advised to place risk assessment on the agenda of school health and safety committees, staff meetings and governors meetings, in order to discuss the implications for staff and the school in general.

Remember, the Health and Safety Section is here to assist you in the risk assessment process and to provide training.