



**First Thought
Independent School**

FIRST THOUGHT CARE SERVICES

Risk Assessment Policy

2026-2027

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1. Aims

The 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 to avoid injury or harm
- Risk assessments are conducted and reviewed on a regular basis

2. Legislation and Statutory Requirements

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
- Employers must assess the risk to workers from substances hazardous to health under regulation 6 of [The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002](#)
- 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 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 \(HSE\)](#) say schools that manage their own pools must conduct a risk assessment

A table of all the risk assessments that the school will have in place can be found in appendix 1 of this policy.

3. Definitions

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

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Proprietor

The proprietor has ultimate responsibility for health and safety matters in the school, but will delegate day-to-day responsibility to Head of School.

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

The proprietor, as the employer, also 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

4.2 The Head of School

The Head of School, or in the Head of School's absence the Assistant Head (Quality of Education) is responsible for ensuring that all risk assessments are completed and reviewed.

4.3 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 Head of School to any risks they find that need assessing

4.4 Pupils and parents/carers

Pupils and parents/carers are responsible for following the school's advice in relation to risks, on-site and off-site, and for reporting any hazards to a member of staff.

4.5 Contractors

Contractors are expected to provide evidence that they have adequately risk assessed all their planned work.

5. Risk Assessment Process

When assessing risks in the school, we will follow the process outlined below.

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

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

Step 2: decide who may be harmed and how – for each hazard, we will establish who might be harmed, listing groups rather than individuals. We will bear in mind that some people will have special requirements, for instance pupils with special educational needs (SEN) in other words, all our pupils and 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 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 to 3 will be written up and recorded in order to produce the risk assessment using the school's template.

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 – risk assessments are retained for 3 years after the length of time they apply.

Risk assessments are securely disposed of.

6. Monitoring Arrangements

Risk assessments are written as needed and reviewed by school leaders or staff who are leading activities. They will receive training to ensure they are able to create effective risk assessments.

This policy will be reviewed by the Head of School every year and approved by the proprietor.

7. Links with other Policies

This risk assessment policy links to the following policies:

- Health and safety
- First aid
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions

Appendix 1: Statutory Risk Assessments Checklist

The following table summarises the range of risk assessments undertaken by the school. These assessments ensure that risks to pupils, staff, visitors and contractors are identified, managed and reviewed appropriately. They reflect both statutory requirements and the specific context of the school as an independent special school for pupils with SLD, ASC and complex needs. All assessments are completed by competent persons, approved by the Head of School, and reviewed in line with the schedule below or sooner if circumstances change.

Category	Type of Risk Assessment	Purpose / Focus	Completed by	Review Frequency
Individual Pupil	Individual Pupil Risk Assessments	To identify and manage risks arising from pupils' specific needs (e.g. medical, behavioural, sensory, mobility, communication). Linked to EHCPs.	Assistant Head (SEND and Inclusion)	Reviewed termly or following any incident/change in need
Curriculum & Activity-Based	Classroom / Curriculum Area Risk Assessments	To ensure subject-specific and activity-related safety (e.g. sensory room, cooking, practical learning).	Class Teacher / Subject Lead	Annual or when activity changes
	Regular Activity Risk Assessments	Standing risk assessments for frequent activities (e.g. swimming, local community visits, playground use).	Activity Lead	Annual review or after incident
	One-off / Non-Routine Activities	To assess new or unusual activities (e.g. trip to Parliament, theatre visit).	Trip/Activity Organiser	Per activity; approved prior to event
Educational Visits	Educational Visits & Off-Site Activities	To ensure safe travel, supervision, accessibility, and emergency planning. Includes review of individual pupil risks.	Visit Leader / Head of School	Per visit
Premises & Site	Whole-Site Risk Assessment	Comprehensive assessment of all areas of the site to ensure a safe environment for pupils, staff and visitors.	Competent Person / Health & Safety Lead	Annual or following site changes
	Fire Risk Assessment	Statutory assessment to prevent and manage fire risk.	Competent Person	Annual or after significant change
	Legionella Risk Assessment	To ensure water systems are safe.	Competent Contractor	Annual or per contractor schedule
	Asbestos Risk Assessment	Statutory requirement to identify and manage asbestos risks.	Competent Contractor	As per regulations (at least annually if asbestos present)
	Security and Access Risk Assessment	To manage entry, egress, perimeter, and safeguarding of site users.	Head of School / Proprietor	Annual
Staff and Operational	Lone Working	To protect staff who may work alone or off-site.	Head of School	Annual
	Manual Handling	To assess risks from lifting or moving objects/pupils.	Competent Person	Annual or after incident
	Display Screen Equipment	For staff using computers or devices regularly.	Head of School / Line Manager	Every 2 years or upon change of

	(DSE)			workstation
	Expectant / New Mothers	To assess and manage risks for pregnant or new mothers.	Head of School	Upon notification, reviewed regularly
	Stress Risk Assessment	To identify and mitigate work-related stress factors.	Head of School / Proprietor	Annual or following concern
Safeguarding & Compliance	Prevent Duty Risk Assessment	To assess risk of pupils being drawn into extremism or radicalisation.	DSL / Head of School	Annual
	Child on Child Abuse Risk Assessment	To assess and reduce the risk of peer-on-peer abuse within the school environment, identifying supervision, curriculum, and staff training measures that promote early intervention and pupil safety.	DSL / Head of School	Annual review, or following any incident or concern
	Health & Safety (General)	To meet overall H&S duties and ensure safe operation of the school.	Head of School / Health & Safety Lead	Annual
	Minibus / Transport Risk Assessment	For safe travel arrangements to and from school or off-site venues.	Trip Lead / Driver / Head of School	Annual or before new journeys

Templates Available

- Individual Risk Assessment
- General Risk Assessment
- Educational Visits Risk Assessment
- [Prevent Risk Assessment](#)
- Child on Child Abuse Risk Assessment

Templates for premises-related risk assessments are not included, as these are provided and completed by the competent person or contractor undertaking the assessment.

