

Risk Taking and Assessments Policy

Version number:	Version 1	Document owner:	HND Children's Care Ltd.
Version Date: Review Date:	January 2026 January 2027	Document ID number:	3.6 Risk Taking and Assessments Policy
Version expiry:	January 2027	Document classification:	Final
Version status:	Live document		

Regulations and Standards:

The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015:

- Regulation 6 - The quality and purpose of care standard
- Regulation 12 - The Protection of children standard.

Introduction:

HND Children's Care Ltd are committed to maintaining the health, safety and well-being of its employees, visitors and the children in its care. To that end HND Children's Care Ltd recognises that suitable risk assessments are an essential tool in helping to identify and manage significant risks associated with a diverse range of activities and operations. The aim of this policy is to set out the systematic approach for suitable and sufficient risk assessment along with appropriate and proportional management of those risks at HND Children's Care Ltd

No matter how comprehensive the written policies, procedures and guidance appear to be, residential social work by nature cannot always be so easily classified. There will be situations where HND Children's Care Ltd staff must make quick, spur of the moment decisions on a situation with which they are faced. The following principles should be understood by all HND Children's Care Ltd staff members in order to facilitate and support such decisions. Staff members must remember that they are accountable and liable for the actions that they take and must be confident that in taking a risk, they are acting in the best interests of the child.



Contents:

1. Risk Taking
2. Registered Managers Responsibility for Risk Assessments
3. Reviewing Risk Assessments
4. What Risk Assessments Should Cover
5. What is a Significant Risk
6. What is an Unnecessary Risk
7. Unusual Risks
8. The Assessment of Risk
9. Providing and Arranging Activities

Appendix – Risk Taking Guidance

1. Risk Taking:

Much of HND Children's Care Ltd work with children concerns the need to reduce or eliminate risk. HND Children's Care Ltd will support children by understanding the risks they may encounter and helping them to develop a healthy attitude to risks.

Every child's Placement Plan will include a risk assessment, which considers the risks to which that particular child is vulnerable and how best to keep the child safe and help them to manage risk.

However, the key principle is that we will find a balance between protecting children and allowing them to learn and develop by taking manageable and managed risks.

For more detailed guidance, see 'Appendix – Risk Taking Guidance'.

2. Registered Manager's Responsibility for Risk Assessments:

It is the responsibility of all HND Children's Care Ltd managers to ensure that appropriate written risk assessments are undertaken. It is their responsibility to ensure that a person who has the knowledge and understanding of the issues and who is familiar with the risk assessment procedure assists with the completion of a risk assessment.

A "risk assessment" is a careful examination of what, in an establishment's activities, premises and day-to-day work could cause harm to children or lead them into, or fail to provide reasonable protection for them from unacceptably risk-taking behaviour. It is a matter of applying systematic common sense to the protection of children from risks that could have been minimised or averted.

Undertaking a risk assessment for each child is considered good practice. It supports the individual and staff to promote proactive planning that aids a settled placement.

An overview of the types of occasions when a risk assessment needs to be completed:

- When deciding upon a placement, often referred to as an 'Impact Assessment'.
- Prior to admission in relation to the needs of the child and the existing group.



- When children either display, or have displayed challenging risk-taking behaviours, we must identify this and assess how they can be managed safely.
- When planning activities
- When planning and purchasing new facilities that will be used by children.
- When new work practices are introduced
- When a child develops a special need or where there is a significant change to their existing needs.

3. Reviewing Risk Assessments:

There should be systems for regularly reviewing the risk assessments. No risk assessment should be written without a review date, monthly, quarterly, six monthly or annually, depending upon the need and updated when there is any change to the risks.

4. What HND Children's Care Ltd Risk Assessments Should Cover:

For example, the Children's Homes Regulations 2015 specifically require that any activities for children are also so far as reasonably practicable free from avoidable risks, and that generally, unnecessary risks to children, or risks to others are as far as possible eliminated.

A risk assessment should assess risks to children's health or safety, including risks from and activities and their vulnerable status. Risk assessments should also consider contextual safeguarding – risks outside of the home.

These risks include:

- physical, sexual or emotional abuse
- neglect
- damage to normal development
- accidental injury
- features of premises or activities which invite illicit and risky activities.
- bullying (it is as important to include risks of abuse and bullying, from both adults and other children both within and outside the home, as it is to cover risk of injury)
- becoming lost, being 'missing' or being taken by someone.
- becoming involved in sexual exploitation.
- becoming involved in substance abuse.
- becoming significantly distressed or upset.
- failure to safeguard and promote the individual's welfare.
- Internet safety

The above list is not exhaustive or all-inclusive and is designed as a guide. Risks posed and faced by individual children will often vary from child to child and it is important that this is considered, in conjunction with each child's individual history and known behaviours.

Disaster: Disaster encompasses a broad range of events. However, for the purposes of this policy, the following 'potential disasters' do require a risk assessment (there may well be



others which the manager must consider) to be completed by the manager.

Fire: Each HND Children's Care Ltd home must have in place a fire procedure that details evacuation procedures and calls to emergency services. In addition, in the event of a fire in respect to this policy, the manager must identify what actions will be taken should the home be unfit to return to. For example, where would young people and staff be temporarily accommodated? What are the arrangements to notify such persons of such events? Specifically, temporary accommodation must be reasonably identified, for example, venue (another company children's home, another external children's home, hotel, etc.) What will be the staffing arrangements? Who has the responsibility for coordinating such arrangements including advising staff and other temporary accommodation and any other matter concerning such an event?

Flood: In the event of a flood, similar arrangements must be recorded in a risk assessment as those for a fire (see above). For example, identifying temporary accommodation and other arrangements as detailed in the event of a fire in the above.

The risk assessment would also need to include the arrangements for ensuring that all services to the building are secure and safe. In addition, what are the arrangements for inspecting and checking out that all services are safe prior to any return to the home.

Power Failure: In the event of a power failure, similar arrangements must be recorded as how to respond to any power failure. The risk assessment would need to include for example:

- Impact upon safety of the home environment and those accommodated and working therein.
- The adequacy of maintaining proper heating, lighting and catering arrangements etc.
- The duration of any power failure including arrangements for temporary accommodation.
- The equipment needed in the home in respect to managing such an event; mobile phone, torches, first aid, additional bedding, staff knowledge of location of shut-off points for gas, oil, electricity etc.
- Heating Failure

Vehicle Accident: That staff are aware of what to do in the event of the above. This would include health and safety, notification to emergency services, notification to insurance, notification to any other i.e. The Inspectorate, social worker, parents etc. In addition, this would include equipment to be carried in car i.e., first aid, fire extinguisher, breakdown cover details etc.

Staff: In the event of staff not turning up for duty what arrangements would be put in place to ensure that staffing arrangements are satisfactory for the safe care of young people HND Children's Care Ltd accommodate?

5. What is a Significant Risk?



HND Children's Care Ltd consider A "significant" risk is one that a reasonable person would regard as significant rather than negligible, considering the ages, mix and characteristics of the children involved.

6. What is an "Unnecessary" Risk?

An "unnecessary" risk is one that arises in part or whole from reasonably preventable circumstances rather than being "a normally accepted part of living and growing up". What would be unnecessary would be where the risk arises from, or is increased by, negligence, failure to take reasonable (or legally required) safety measures and failure to consider the age, characteristics, needs and any problems of the individual children involved.

7. "Unusual" Risks:

An "unusual" risk is one that a reasonable person would be likely to regard as "out of the ordinary", or part of an activity that may seem to have risks involved or attached.

8. The Assessment of Risk:

Assessing risks needs a consistent and step-by-step approach. When it is completed, it needs to be shared with those people whom it affects - the children and the staff. Individuals need to know about the risks and the methods that are approved of to minimise them. The risk assessments need to provide people with clear instructions and directions on what actions will need to be completed.

9. Providing and Arranging Activities:

See Also: *Transporting Children Policy*.

Older children will naturally and rightly take greater responsibility for their own activities, free time and many children will participate in risky activities which are not provided, approved or arranged by the home.

There remains the statutory duty to safeguard and promote welfare, reasonably considering the age, understanding and relevant competence of the children concerned. Any activities in which children participate are so far as reasonably practicable, free from avoidable risks.

These responsibilities do not diminish as the child's age increases.

Appendix 1: Risk Taking Guidance:

The Staff Role in Children's Risk Taking:

It is the role of staff to be aware of the purpose that risk taking needs to play in each child's development. This will expose the differences in attitude to risk within the staff team, which will need to be discussed openly in order for the staff team to formerly consider each child's needs. This is a healthy process and just as children in families often witness adults discussing how much risk they should be exposed to; it is also important for children in care



to understand that the staff care enough about them to have strong feelings on these matters with clear justification and rationale.

Children need to be provided with opportunities to take 'controlled' risks, which have been subject to a Risk Assessment. The children cared for by HND Children's Care Ltd have often not had the developmental opportunities ordinarily experienced by trying things they are just learning to manage. While letting children take too big a risk is a mistake, stopping them from taking any at all is also a risk factor. The staff role is to provide these opportunities whilst understanding that by the nature of the endeavour children will 'fall over' or 'fail' many times before learning to manage the dangers without needing an adult to pick them up. So, opportunities to go out unsupervised, travel by bus, manage money, will need to be tried repeatedly.

As children begin to reach adolescence there appears to be a strong relationship between risk-taking and responsibility. The more responsibility children have, the fewer risks they seem to take and vice versa. This developmental stage may come later in children who have not had the earlier developmental foundations built; staff need to discuss carefully together whether particular children need to take more or less responsibility.

HND Children's Care Ltd are committed to maintaining the health, safety and well-being of its employees, visitors and the children in its care. To that end HND Children's Care Ltd recognises that suitable risk assessments are an essential tool in helping to identify and manage significant risks associated with a diverse range of activities and operations. The aim of this policy is to set out the systematic approach for suitable and sufficient risk assessment along with appropriate and proportional management of those risks at

HND Children's Care Ltd Staff should:

- Understand each child's relationship to risk according to their history, experience, and developmental stage.
- Use this understanding to inform and use Care Plans.
- Form strong relationships with children and supervise them well so that risk-taking behaviour is more likely to happen in front of them rather than 'going underground'.
- Discuss safety and risk taking in community meetings.
- Supervise children properly as per their risk assessment and set clear boundaries.
- Use the staff forums provided to talk together about risk-taking.
- Instigate activities to provide children with controlled risk-taking opportunities.
- Help children who are ready to take responsibility so that they are not left to create dangerous situations.
- Gently help and support children who are risk averse to take on small challenges.

A healthy attitude toward risk-taking can only be achieved within a framework of safety so staff must read all policies and understand their obligations in terms of safety. Staff members must:

- Ensure they know the areas where their role is to eliminate and reduce risk (car, road and bike safety, fires, health and infection control, child protection, visitor management etc.)
- Ensure rules about safety and policies are adhered to in all circumstances – especially



those where children may be at particularly acute risk – for example: absconding, restraint, child protection, substance misuse, car, road and bike safety, fires, health and infection control, child protection, visitor management etc.

- Ensure risk assessments are made, used and updated.
- Take collective responsibility for identifying and managing risky situations – do not just leave this to managers.

End.