

Risk Assessment: Pond Risk Assessment- Duck Provision

Risk assessment carried out by:	Headteacher	Date:	30 th April 2026	Due for review on:	April 2027
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Please state the benefits to the children of offering this experience?

Purpose

To ensure the safe use of a pond within the outdoor environment to support the care of ducks and enrich children's learning through water, nature and living things.

Curriculum Links (EYFS & Intent)

The pond supports:

- **Understanding the World** – life cycles, habitats, care for living things.
- **Communication & Language** – discussion, questioning, vocabulary.
- **Personal, Social & Emotional Development** – responsibility, empathy.
- **Physical Development** – safe movement, coordination outdoors.

Staff Guidance

- Always position yourself between children and water where possible.
- Use language modelling to reinforce safety and learning.
- Balance risk and exploration safely.
- Be proactive – intervene early if behaviour becomes unsafe.

Summary

This pond area is a **valuable learning resource** that, with effective supervision and clear safety measures, supports high-quality early years experiences while ensuring children remain safe.

Hazards	Who is at risk?	Existing Control Measures	Further action required, if any	Action by whom?	Action by when?	Completed
<p>Open Water (Drowning Risk)</p> <p>Children accessing pond water</p> <p>Slips, falls, submersion</p>	<p>Pupils</p> <p>Staff/ Supervisors</p> <p>Visitors</p>	<p>Pond is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shallow (recommended max depth: 20-30 cm). • Securely fenced or covered when not in use. • Clear boundary in place (e.g. fencing). • Supervised access only – no unsupervised child access. • Staff positioned to maintain clean line of sight at all times. • Robust adult: child ratios maintained. • Children taught clear safety rules (e.g. look, not touch, unless with an adult) 		All staff	Current	Yes
<p>Slips, Trips and Falls</p> <p>Wet surfaces around pond</p> <p>Injury from slipping</p>	<p>Pupils</p> <p>Staff/ Supervisors</p> <p>Visitors</p>	<p>Non-slip surfaces where possible (e.g. matting, bark, grass).</p> <p>Regulat checks for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mud build-up • Algae/ slippery surfaces <p>Clear pathways maintained.</p> <p>Children encouraged to walk (not run) in the area.</p> <p>Appropriate footwear expectations shared with families.</p>		All staff	Current	Yes


<p>Water Hygiene and Infection</p> <p>Stagnate water / bacteria</p> <p>Illness, infection</p>	<p>Pupils</p> <p>Staff/ Supervisors</p> <p>Visitors</p>	<p>Pond water:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitored regularly • Cleaned/ maintained to prevent stagnation <p>No drinking of pond water (explicitly taught)</p> <p>Handwashing mandatory after contact with pond/ ducks.</p> <p>Staff model good hygiene practices.</p> <p>Any cuts/ abrasions covered before outdoor play.</p>		<p>All staff</p>	<p>Current</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Duck Interaction and Animal Welfare</p> <p>Handling ducks near water</p> <p>Scratches, distress to animals</p>	<p>Pupils</p> <p>Staff/ Supervisors</p> <p>Visitors</p>	<p>Children supervised closely when interacting with ducks.</p> <p>Gentle handling modelled and reinforced.</p> <p>Clear routines for feeding and care.</p> <p>Ducks have safe retreat area away from children.</p> <p>Staff monitor behaviour of both children and ducks.</p>		<p>All staff</p>	<p>Current</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Objects in Pond</p> <p>Stones, toys or debris in water</p> <p>Throwing, splashing, contamination</p>	<p>Pupils</p> <p>Staff/ Supervisors</p>	<p>Clear rules: no throwing objects into the pond.</p> <p>Daily visual check of pond area.</p> <p>Staff remove hazards immediately.</p> <p>Resources for water play kept separate.</p>		<p>All staff</p>	<p>Current</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Weather Conditions</p> <p>Ice, heavy rain, extreme heat</p> <p>Slips, unsafe conditions</p>	<p>Pupils</p> <p>Staff/ Supervisors</p>	<p>Pond area closed during:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ice/ frost • Severe weather <p>Increased supervision during wet conditions.</p> <p>Shae available in warmer weather.</p>		<p>All staff</p>	<p>Current</p>	<p>Yes</p>

Supervision and Ratios Inadequate supervision Increased likelihood of accidents	Pupils	Named staff responsible for pond area during sessions. Staff deployed strategically for full visibility. EYFS ratios strictly adhered to. Staff confident in risk awareness and emergency procedures.		All staff	Current	Yes
	Staff/ Supervisors					
	Visitors					

<p>Daily Checks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water level safe and appropriate • No debris or hazards present • Ground conditions safe (not overly slippery) • Fencing/ cover secure and intact • Ducks healthy and environment clean 	<p>Emergency Procedures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff trained in Paediatric First Aid • Clear access to first aid kit • Walkie Talkie available <p>In the event of incident:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove child safely • Administer first aid • Inform SLT immediately • Record on accident/ incident form • Inform parents
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Sir James Knott Nursery School operates under a dynamic risk assessing process which is the continuous process of identifying hazards, assessing risk, acting to eliminate or reduce risk, monitoring and reviewing, in the rapidly changing environment of working with children.

Staff are requested to clearly brief their group/ class before or upon arrival and to set appropriate standards of behaviour in relation to the Health and Safety of the children, adults and ducks.

Signed: 	Position: Headteacher	Date: 30th April 2026
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