

Safeguarding and Welfare: Suitable premises, environment and equipment

Providers must ensure that they take all reasonable steps to ensure staff and children in their care are not exposed to risks and must be able to demonstrate how they are managing risks.

8.4 Risk assessment (January 2023)

Policy statement

We believe that the health and safety of children is of paramount importance. We make our setting a safe and healthy place for children, parents, staff and volunteers by assessing and minimising the hazards and risks to enable the children to thrive in a healthy and safe environment.

Risk assessment means by taking note of aspects of your workplace and activities that could cause harm either to yourself or to others, you can decide what needs to be done to prevent that harm and then make sure this is adhered to.

The law does not require that all risk is eliminated, but that 'reasonable precaution' is taken. This is particularly important when balancing the need for children to be able to take appropriate risks through physically challenging play. Children need the opportunity to work out what is not safe and what they should do when faced with a risk.

This policy follows the five steps below:

- Identification of a risk - where is it and what is it?
- Who is at risk – children, parents, staff, volunteers, students?
- Assessment as to whether the level of a risk is high, medium or low - this takes into account both the likelihood of it happening as well as the possible impact if it did
- Control measures to reduce/eliminate risk - what needs to be done and by whom to reduce that risk?
- Monitoring and review - how do you know if what has been implemented is working or is there a better solution.

Procedures

- Our risk assessment process covers adults and children and includes:
 - determining where it is helpful to make some written risk assessments in relation to specific issues, to inform staff practice, and to demonstrate how we are managing risks if asked by parents and/or carers and inspectors

- checking for and noting hazards and risks indoors and outside in relation to our premises and activities
- assessing the level of risk and who might be affected
- deciding which areas need attention
- developing an action plan that specifies the action required, the time-scales for action, the person responsible for the action and any funding required.
- Where required, risk assessments are written and reviewed regularly.
- We carry out a risk assessment before each session begins and a list of health and safety issues is maintained to be checked on a termly basis when a full risk assessment is carried out.
- The Manager ensures that checks, such as electricity and gas safety checks, and any necessary work to the setting premises are carried out annually and records are kept.
- Designated staff members carry out daily risk assessments that include relevant aspects of fire safety, food safety for all areas of the premises.
- Designated staff members carry out risk assessments for work practice including:
 - changing children
 - preparation and serving of food/drink for children
 - children with allergies
 - cooking activities with children
 - supervising outdoor play and indoor/outdoor climbing equipment
 - assessment, use and storage of equipment for children with special needs
 - the use and storage of substances which may be hazardous to health, such as cleaning chemicals
 - visitors to the setting who are bringing equipment or animals as part of children's learning experiences
- Designated staff members carry out risk assessments for off-site visits and activities if required including:
 - outings – involving the use of public transport
 - outings – using privately hired coaches
 - walks to local amenities such as the library or the woods

Legal framework

- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999)

Further guidance

- Five Steps to Risk Assessment (HSE)