

8.4 Risk Assessment

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:

Taking note of aspects of your workplace and activities that could cause harm, either to yourself or to others, and deciding what needs to be done to prevent that harm, making 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.

Health and safety risk assessments inform procedures. Staff and parents should be involved in reviewing risk assessments and procedures – they are the ones with first-hand knowledge as to whether the control measures are effective – and they can give an informed view to help update procedures accordingly.

This policy is based on the five steps below:

- **Identification of a risk:** Where is it and what is it?
- **Who is at risk:** Childcare staff, children, parents, cooks, cleaners etc?
- **Assessment as to whether the level of a risk is high, medium, 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 will you need to do, or ensure others will do, in order to reduce that risk?
- **Monitoring and review:** How do you know if what you have said is working, or is thorough enough? If it is not working, it will need to be amended, or maybe there is a better solution.

Procedures

- Our manager undertakes training and ensures our staff and volunteers have adequate training in health and safety matters.
- 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; and
 - developing an action plan that specifies the action required, the time-scales for action, the person responsible for the action and any funding required.

- All risk assessments are written and reviewed by the Manager and/or Deputy Managers, all of whom have a thorough understanding and experience of the process following training undertaken as part of their Early Years qualifications, as well as Risk Assessment training and CPD. Staff are involved in the writing of risk assessments wherever possible.
- Where more than five staff and volunteers are employed, the risk assessment is written and is reviewed regularly, approximately every six-months.
- We maintain lists of health and safety issues, which are checked daily before the session begins, as well as those that are checked on a weekly and termly basis when a full risk assessment is carried out.
- Our landlord 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.
- Our manager ensures that staff members carry out risk assessments that include relevant aspects of fire safety, food safety for all areas of the premises.
- Our manager ensures that staff members carry out risk assessments for work practice including:
 - changing children;
 - preparation and serving of food/drink for children;
 - children with allergies;
 - children where concerns have been identified relating to behaviour or safety;
 - cooking activities with children;
 - supervising outdoor play and indoor/outdoor climbing equipment;
 - assessment, use and storage of equipment for disabled children;
 - the use and storage of substances which may be hazardous to health, such as cleaning chemicals;
 - visitors to the setting who are bring equipment or animals as part of children's learning experiences; and
 - following any incidents involving threats against staff or volunteers.
- Where it has been identified that an individual risk assessment is required for a specific child, this will be completed within 5 working days, taking into account all areas they will access as part of the provision. No child will take part in any off-site visits until this has been completed.
- Our manager ensures that staff members carry out risk assessments for off-site activities, including:
 - children's outings (including use of public transport)
 - home visits; and
 - other off-site duties such as attending meetings, banking etc.
- The manager on duty will carry out a daily risk assessment checklist and ensure that the findings are fed back to the staff at a morning stand-up meeting. If the manager on duty delegates this to another member of staff, this will be countersigned and checked.
- We take precautions to reduce the risks of exposure to Legionella (Legionnaires disease). Our manager ensures that we are familiar with the HSE guidance and have seen the risk assessment relevant to the premises from the landlord.

Legal framework

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

| Version | Changes Made | Author | Date | Review Date |
|----------------|---|---------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1.0 | Baseline version | P Eccleston | 26 th April 2018 | April 2019 |
| 1.1 | Minor formatting changes and updated in line with the Early Years Alliance model policy | N Hanlon | 18 th April 2019 | January 2020 |
| 1.1 | Reviewed – no changes | N Hanlon | 24 th January 2020 | January 2021 |
| 1.1 | Reviewed – no changes | N Hanlon | 20 th January 2021 | January 2023 |
| 2.0 | Updated to reflect the requirement that risk assessments are only carried out by those suitably trained to do so, as well as the enhanced requirements for FS RA training. Also included requirements for individual child RA to be completed within a specified timeframe. | N Hanlon | 2 nd July 2021 | January 2023 |
| 2.1 | Removed reference to forest school | N Hanlon | 25 th January 2023 | January 2025 |