

Risk Assessment Policy

Policy title	Risk Assessment Policy
Applies to	All staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors; pupils and parents/carers (information)
Policy owner	Head of Centre / Health & Safety Lead
Approved on	23 September 2025
Review cycle	Annual

1. Purpose and ethos

This policy sets out how [provision lead] identifies, evaluates and controls risks so that pupils, staff and visitors are safe and learning can thrive. Effective risk assessment underpins our safer culture and is integral to day-to-day decision-making, not a one-off exercise. We emphasise proportionality: controls must be sensible, practical and balanced against the educational benefits of activities in Alternative Provision settings.

2. Legal and policy framework

Our approach complies with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, including the duty to undertake 'suitable and sufficient' assessments. We draw on HSE guidance, the Fire Safety Order and DfE guidance including Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025), Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023, updated 2025) and the DfE Non-school Alternative Provision Voluntary National Standards (2025).

3. Scope

This policy applies to all Churchwood Forest School CIC sites and activities, including curriculum delivery, workshops/vocational spaces, community-based learning, off-site visits, work experience, transport, and shared spaces with partner providers. It covers both planned assessments and dynamic, on-the-spot judgements made by competent staff when circumstances change.

4. Roles and responsibilities

The Proprietor/Responsible Person ensures this policy and resourcing are in place. The Provision Lead holds operational accountability and appoints a competent Health & Safety Lead to coordinate assessments, training and assurance. Line managers ensure assessments are completed, implemented and reviewed. Staff must follow control measures, report defects and contribute to reviews. The DSL ensures that safeguarding risks (e.g. exploitation, peer-on-peer abuse, missing episodes) are integrated into relevant assessments and plans. The SENCo ensures reasonable adjustments and individual plans are reflected, including PEEPs. Contractors must comply with our controls and provide their own assessments for their work.

5. Definitions

A risk assessment is a written record of how we will manage risks arising from our activities or environment. Hazards are anything with potential to cause harm; risk is the likelihood and severity of that harm. Control measures are the actions or arrangements that eliminate hazards or reduce risks to an acceptable level, prioritising the hierarchy of controls (eliminate, substitute, engineering, administrative, PPE).

6. Our risk assessment process

We follow a consistent five-step model across the organisation: 1) Identify hazards by observing the activity/environment, consulting staff and reviewing incident trends and manufacturer instructions. 2) Decide who might be harmed and how, including pupils with SEND, visitors, contractors and lone workers. 3) Evaluate risk and decide on controls, prioritising elimination/substitution and designing activities safely before relying on procedural controls or PPE. 4) Record the assessment using the organisation template, including responsible persons and deadlines. 5) Implement the controls and monitor their effectiveness in practice, updating the assessment when circumstances change. We use a simple severity/likelihood matrix to prioritise actions. Where risks remain high, the Provision Lead must sign off the residual risk and any additional mitigations.

7. Types of risk assessments we use

- General site assessments: premises, housekeeping, access/egress, supervision, security, contractor control. •



Activity-specific assessments: e.g. food technology, workshop machinery, science, sport and outdoor education.

- Individual pupil risk assessments: behaviour and regulation needs, contextual risks (e.g. exploitation, serious violence), triggers and early-help strategies; integrated with the pupil passport and safeguarding plan.
- Health-related assessments: medication, allergies, seizures and clinical protocols.
- COSHH and DSE assessments where required by regulation.
- Fire Risk Assessments are managed under the Fire Safety Policy but referenced here.
- Educational visits risk assessments, including provider assurances, led by the visit leader and approved by the EVC/Head of Centre.

8. Alternative Provision context and dynamic risk management

AP learners may present fluctuating risks. Staff are trained to make dynamic assessments when behaviour escalates, when unfamiliar peers interact, or when community intelligence indicates heightened risk (e.g. local exploitation activity). Dynamic decisions—such as altering grouping, adjusting supervision ratios or pausing an activity—are recorded in the daily log and trigger a review of the written assessment if changes persist.

9. Educational visits, transport and community learning

For off-site activity we complete a visit-specific assessment that covers travel arrangements, supervision levels, emergency contacts, medical needs, venue/provider competence and safeguarding considerations in public spaces. Where public transport is used, staff consider embark/disembark points, crowding, and contingencies for disruption. High-risk or adventurous activities require provider competence checks and, where applicable, licencing verification and parental consent.

10. Implementing controls

Controls are embedded into lesson planning, daily briefings and room signage. Staff practise routines with pupils (e.g. tool control, machine isolation, hot-surface cautions) and use positive behaviour support to pre-empt dysregulation. Where PPE is required, it is available in appropriate sizes, maintained and replaced as necessary, and its limitations are understood.

11. Recording, storage and version control

Assessments are written on the organisational template and stored on the central drive/MIS in the relevant site/activity folder. Each assessment states the author, date, review date and sign-off level. Superseded versions are archived but remain accessible for audit. Staff must be able to access current assessments at point of use.

12. Review and triggers for updating

Assessments are reviewed at least annually and sooner if there is a significant change to the activity, equipment, environment, staffing, pupil cohort or after an accident/near-miss. Individual pupil assessments are reviewed following changes in behaviour, attendance patterns (including going missing), or safeguarding intelligence.

13. Training and competence

All staff receive induction training on reading and using risk assessments and on dynamic risk principles. Role-specific training is provided for activities with elevated risk (e.g. food tech, workshop machinery, science). Managers and nominated staff receive training on writing and reviewing assessments using our template and matrix.

14. Monitoring, audit and assurance

Site leaders conduct termly compliance checks of assessment quality and implementation (spot observations, staff interviews, signage/equipment checks). Findings feed into the Health & Safety action plan, and learning is shared across sites. The Responsible Person samples high-risk areas each term and reports to governance.

15. Incident reporting and learning

All accidents, near-misses and behaviour incidents are recorded. Significant events are investigated to identify root causes and whether controls were appropriate and followed. Actions are tracked to closure and relevant assessments are updated.

16. Linked policies and documents

Fire Safety Policy; Health and Safety Policy; Educational Visits Policy; First Aid and Medication Policy; Behaviour Policy; Student Induction Policy; Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

17. Appendices (in templates library)



A. Risk assessment template and scoring matrix. B. Individual pupil risk assessment & pupil passport pro-forma. C. COSHH assessment template. D. Educational visits risk assessment template. E. Dynamic risk prompt card.

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