Risk Assessment Policy

1. Introduction

The purpose of this Policy is to outline the procedures in place to ensure that suitable and sufficient risk assessments are completed, recorded, implemented, communicated, and reviewed within Bedford Modern School.

Work-related accidents, injuries and ill health can ruin lives, damage reputations, and have significant financial impact. Apart from being a legal requirement, risk assessments make good sense by focusing on prevention as an active part of the planning process, rather than reacting when things go wrong.

Risk assessments help the School focus on the risks that really matter – the ones with the potential to cause real harm. Risk assessments should enable managers, and ultimately the School, to plan, introduce and monitor measures to ensure that particular hazards and the risk of harm are eliminated, or where this is not possible, controlled so that they are minimised.

Please refer to the Director of Finance & Operations should you have any questions about this document.

2. Policy Statement

The Governors of Bedford Modern School are fully committed to promoting the health, safety and welfare of all in our community. Their highest priority is ensuring that all school operations are carried out in a safe manner that complies with the law, and also demonstrate best practice.

Identification and completion of risk assessments is an essential element of successfully managing Health and Safety (H&S) under HSG65 (the School's chosen model of H&S management). It provides an opportunity for the School to:

- Identify and assess what could cause harm in the working/learning environment, who it could harm and how, and what we will do to manage the risk; and
- Decide what the priorities are for managing those risks.

The effective implementation of this Policy will ensure compliance with the relevant statutory legislation and assist in risk reduction throughout the School.

3. Legal Obligations

The School recognises its duty under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of its employees. The School also has a duty to ensure that persons not in its employment but who may be affected are not exposed to risks to their health or safety (e.g., students, visitors, members of the public, and contractors).

This Policy will deal with the requirements under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 for the School to make a suitable and sufficient assessment of:

- The risks to the H&S of employees whilst they are at work; and
- The risks to the H&S of persons not in its employment arising out of its activities (i.e., students, visitors, members of the public, and contractors).

Additionally, the regulations require employers to give special consideration to new and young employees, new and expectant mothers, and people with disabilities as these groups may be more vulnerable than the majority of the workforce.

This Policy will also deal with the requirements under Part 3, Standard 16 of the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 for the School to ensure that:

(a) the welfare of pupils at the School is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

The law does not expect the School to eliminate all risk, but the School is required to protect people 'as far as is reasonably practicable'.

4. Definitions

Risk Assessment – A careful and systematic examination of what, in the School environment, could cause injury or harm to people, and the subsequent consideration of the current precautions to help decide if you could do more to prevent harm.

Hazard – Anything with the potential to cause harm (i.e., personal injury, ill health, damage to plant/equipment/property/environment etc.). Hazards can include objects, substances, living organisms, plant/machinery, methods of working (such as work at height, lone/remote working etc.), the working environment, and other aspects of work organisation.

Hazardous Event – Where someone, or something, interacts with the hazard and harm results (e.g. a person tripping on a trailing power cable).

Risk – The chance or likelihood of the hazardous event occurring, together with an indication of how serious the harm could be (e.g., High., Medium, or Low).

Significant Risk – Those that are not trivial in nature and are capable of creating a real risk to H&S which any reasonable person would appreciate and would take steps to guard against.

So far as is Reasonably Practicable – The degree of risk must be balanced against the time, trouble and cost involved in taking measures necessary to eliminate or reduce risk.

Suitable and Sufficient – Risk assessments must be suitable and sufficient, i.e., they must demonstrate that:

- A proper check was made;
- You asked who might be affected;
- You dealt with all the obvious significant risks, taking into account the number of people who could be involved;
- The precautions are reasonable, and the remaining risk is low; and
- You involved your staff in the process.

The level of detail in a risk assessment should be proportionate to the risk and appropriate to the nature of the work.

Your risk assessment should only include what you could reasonably be expected to know - you are not expected to anticipate unforeseeable risks.

Risk Assessor – A Head of Department/Faculty, Line Manager, or other member of staff (such as Teacher or Technician) that has been nominated by their Head of Faculty or Line Manager to complete area/activity/event risk assessments for their department. It should be noted that in order to be deemed as competent, Risk Assessors should have vocational knowledge/experience of the areas/activities that they will be expected to risk assess and must have completed risk assessment training (refer to section 14 of this Policy).

Control Measures – The measures and procedures that are put into place to minimise the consequences of unfettered risk.

5. Key Points

- Heads of Faculty/Department and Line Managers are responsible for liaising with their department staff and the Head of Health, Safety and Compliance (Head of H, S & C) to ensure that suitable and sufficient area, activity and event risk assessments are undertaken and recorded for their areas of responsibility.

- Risk Assessors are responsible for completing and recording area, activity and/or event risk assessments in line with the guidance provided in section 7 (and Appendix 1) of this Policy, and for ensuring that all risk assessments are saved in the department folder in the designated Risk Assessments location on the shared network drive.

- Heads of Faculty/Department and Line Managers are responsible for ensuring that the findings of the risk assessments are fully implemented, and that any further risk control measures identified as being required (i.e. as specified on the Action Plan) are actioned within a reasonable timeframe.

- Heads of Faculty/Department and Line Managers are responsible for escalating any actions that cannot be resolved at department level to the Head of H, S & C immediately.

- Heads of Faculty/Department and Line Managers are responsible for ensuring that all area, activity and event risk assessments within their area of responsibility are reviewed in line with the procedure outlined in section 8 of this Policy.

- Heads of Faculty/Department and Line Managers are responsible for ensuring that the key findings of the area, activity and event risk assessments are communicated to relevant staff, and that such communication is recorded for audit and compliance purposes.

- Heads of Faculty/Department and Line Managers are responsible for ensuring that all new employees are made aware of the key findings of area, activity and event risk assessments which are relevant to their role as part of the induction process.

- Heads of Faculty/Department and Line Managers are responsible for ensuring that their staff are adhering to the recommendations and control measures specified in the risk assessments on a day-to-day basis.

- The Leadership Team (LT) are responsible for ensuring that staff are provided with suitable training as outlined in section 14 of this Policy.

- The Head of H, S & C is responsible for drawing up and maintaining a risk assessment register to assist with management oversight, and for undertaking audits, monitoring and spot checks of risk assessments to assist in ensuring that this Policy is being implemented.

- Employees are responsible for notifying their Head of Faculty/Department/Line Manager of any shortcomings that they identify in the risk assessments, and for complying with the control measures outlined in the risk assessments.

6. Identification of Areas, Activities and Events that Require a Risk Assessment

It is the responsibility of Heads of Faculty/Department and Line Managers to liaise with their department staff and the Head of H, S & C (where necessary) to ensure that suitable and sufficient area, activity and event risk assessments are completed and recorded for their areas of responsibility. This will normally include:

- Area risk assessments to cover the buildings, premises, grounds etc. Particular attention should be paid to higher-risk areas such as science labs, workshops, kitchens, dining halls, playgrounds, internal/external sporting facilities and vehicle movement areas;

- Activity risk assessments for practical teaching activities, science experiments, sporting activities, use of tools/equipment/machinery, cleaning/maintenance tasks, work at height, manual handling, lone/remote working, driving for work etc.;

- Educational visit risk assessments (please refer to the Educational Visits Coordinator for further information); and

- Event risk assessments for School-organised events (e.g., open days, sporting events, awards ceremonies, etc.).

The School will engage external specialists to complete risk assessments for key areas of risk such as fire and legionella.

7. Individual Risk Assessments

Where a concern about a student's welfare is identified, the risks to that student's welfare (and potentially others around them) will be assessed, and appropriate action taken to reduce the risks identified. Individual risk assessments may be completed due to concerns regarding a student's mental health, medical needs/treatment or behavioural issues.

In the Senior School, individual risk assessments are held and reviewed by the Mental Health Lead, who will liaise with staff members as required to ensure implementation of any specific control measures. They will also closely liaise with the Educational Visits Coordinator in relation to any school trips the student may be attending.

In the Junior School, individual risk assessments are held and reviewed by the Deputy Head Pastoral, who will follow similar procedures regarding liaising with colleagues to those outlined above in the Senior School.

Please refer to the Mental Health Lead or Deputy Head Pastoral (Junior School) for further information and a template risk assessment.

8. Conducting a Risk Assessment

Wherever possible, the risk assessment should be carried out by the Risk Assessor(s) in the area of interest (i.e., by inspecting the area/observing the activities being assessed - not sat at a desk) and should involve other relevant staff in order to gather information on possible hazards and existing/further control measures.

To carry out the risk assessment, Risk Assessors should follow the five steps outlined in Appendix 1 – Guide to Completing a Risk Assessment.

9. Review of Risk Assessments

Heads of Faculty/Department and Line Managers must ensure that all area and activity risk assessments within their area of responsibility are reviewed annually as a minimum.

In addition to this requirement, risk assessments must be reviewed if:

- A significant accident, incident, near miss or case of occupational disease has occurred;
- There have been any significant changes which may impact the validity of the risk assessment (e.g., new legislation/Approved Code of Practice/Guidance, new machinery/equipment, changes to the environment, or changes to the way in which work is carried out); and/or
- There is any other reason to suspect that the risk assessment is no longer valid.

10. Use of Model or Generic Risk Assessments

Reputable model or generic assessments can often serve as a useful base on which Risk Assessors can write their own. The HSE provide generic assessments and information on their website, as do some professional organisations such as CLEAPSS (i.e. for Science, Art and Design & Technology). It must be noted however that when model or generic risk assessments are used, it is the responsibility of the Risk Assessor(s) to review the content and ensure that it is fully customised to consider the hazards presented and required control measures specific to the area/activity/event/department concerned. It is not acceptable for Risk Assessors to just copy an example and put their name to it as that would not satisfy the law and would not protect people. Any instructions on customisation provided by the author of the generic work, e.g. CLEAPSS L196 for Science and CLEAPSS G235 for Design Technology, must be followed.

11. Dissemination of Risk Assessments and Feedback/Communication

Heads of Faculty/Department and Line Managers are responsible for ensuring that the key findings of the area/activity/event risk assessments are communicated to relevant staff, and that such communication is recorded for audit and compliance purposes.

This can be achieved in a variety of ways, for example:

- Staff could be asked to read and sign/date the risk assessments which are relevant to their role at induction and then ongoing following any reviews; and/or
- Through team/department meetings.

Any team/department meetings used to brief staff on risk assessments must be recorded as evidence of training.

It is the responsibility of Heads of Faculty/Department and Line Managers to ensure that all new employees are made aware of the key findings of area/activity risk assessments which are relevant to their role as part of the induction process.

Staff should be actively involved in the risk assessment process wherever possible and be encouraged to provide feedback on completed risk assessments. This is an important step in the process as it encourages ownership and ensures a collaborative approach whereby staff can provide feedback on the hazards identified and any further risk control measures required.

12. Staff Compliance

It is the responsibility of Heads of Faculty/Department and Line Managers to ensure that their staff are adhering to the recommendations and control measures specified in the risk assessments on a day-to-day basis.

13. Storage of Risk Assessments

Risk Assessors must ensure that all area/activity/event risk assessments are saved in the all staff shared folder and an electronic copy provided to the Head of H, S & C.

Upon review, previous versions of risk assessments should be saved and archived for audit and compliance purposes.

The Head of H, S & C is responsible for drawing up and maintaining a risk assessment register to assist with management oversight.

14. Training

All staff will receive training on risk assessments through the online iHASCO system when they first join and every 2 years thereafter.

15. Responsibilities

The Leadership Team (LT) are responsible for:

- Disseminating this Policy within their area of responsibility and ensuring its effective implementation by providing support and advice to their managers and staff;
- Ensuring that adequate resources are available for the effective implementation of this Policy; and
- Ensuring that staff are provided with suitable training as outlined in section 14 of this Policy.

The Director of Finance & Operations is responsible for:

- The overall implementation, monitoring and revision of this Policy.

Heads of Faculty/Department (both Teaching and Support Staff) and those staff with Line Management responsibilities are responsible for:

- Disseminating this Policy within their area of responsibility and ensuring its effective implementation by providing support and advice to their staff;
- Liaising with their department staff and the Head of H, S & C, where necessary, to ensure that suitable and sufficient area, activity and event risk assessments are undertaken and recorded for their areas of responsibility;
- Ensuring that the findings of the risk assessments are fully implemented, and that any further control measures identified as being required (i.e., as specified on the Action Plan) are actioned within a reasonable timeframe;
- Escalating any actions that cannot be resolved at department level to the Head of H, S & C immediately;
- Ensuring that all area, activity and event risk assessments within their area of responsibility are reviewed in line with the procedure outlined in section 8 of this Policy;
- Ensuring that the key findings of the area/activity/event risk assessments are communicated to relevant staff, and that such communication is recorded for audit and compliance purposes;
- Ensuring that all new employees are made aware of the key findings of area/activity risk assessments which are relevant to their role as part of the induction process; and
- Ensuring that their staff are adhering to the recommendations and control measures specified in the risk assessments on a day-to-day basis.

The Head of Health, Safety & Compliance is responsible for:

- Supporting Heads of Faculty/Department and Line Managers with completion of risk assessments upon request;
- Reviewing risk assessments submitted by Risk Assessors;
- Drawing up and maintaining a risk assessment register to assist with management oversight; and
- Undertaking audits, monitoring and spot checks of risk assessments to support the DFO in ensuring that this Policy is being implemented.

Risk Assessors are responsible for:

- Completing and recording area, activity and/or event risk assessments in line with the guidance provided in section 7 (and Appendix 1) of this Policy; and

- Ensuring that all area/activity/event risk assessments are saved in the department folder in the designated Risk Assessments location on the shared network folder

Staff are responsible for:

- Notifying their Head of Faculty/Department/Line Manager of any shortcomings that they identify in the risk assessments; and
- Adhering to the recommendations and control measures specified in the risk assessments on a day-to-day basis.

16. Monitoring

This Policy will be monitored by the Health & Safety Committee using a number of indicators, including but not limited to:

- Accident, incident and near miss data;
- RIDDOR incidents reported to the HSE;
- Legal action and claims data;
- Occupational health data; and
- Internal/external inspections and audits.

Ms C Harrison
Director of Finance and Operations

Mrs G Staley
Head of Health, Safety and Compliance

October 2026
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Appendix 1 – Guide to Completing a Risk Assessment

Wherever possible, the risk assessment should be carried out by the Risk Assessor(s) in the area of interest (i.e., by inspecting the area/observing the activities being assessed – not sat at a desk), and should involve other relevant staff in order to gather information on possible hazards and existing/further control measures.

To complete the risk assessment, Risk Assessors should follow the five steps outlined below:

Step 1 – Identify the Hazards

The first step is for Risk Assessors to identify the hazards associated with the area, activity or event being assessed, and record them in the 'Hazard' column on the Risk Assessment form (blank risk assessment templates are available from the Head of H, S & C). A hazard can include objects, substances, living organisms (e.g., people, animals etc.), plant/machinery/equipment/tools, methods of working (such as work at height, manual handling, and lone working), the environment (e.g. lighting, temperature, weather etc.), and other aspects of work organisation.

Where an area, activity and/or event involves students or others who are children (i.e. those under the age of 16) and/or young persons (i.e. those aged 16 or 17), then Risk Assessors should identify this as a specific hazard on the risk assessment due to their lack of:

- Knowledge
- Experience
- Emotional and physical maturity; and
- Risk perception.

Children and young persons are also likely to engage in horseplay (i.e., messing around), and may not listen to or follow instructions. As all this is entirely foreseeable, the risk assessment should provide details of any existing risk controls measures, together with any further risk control measures required to reduce the risk so far as is reasonably practicable. There are likely to be a number of risk control measures already in place, and it is important that these are recorded on the risk assessment form to demonstrate the thought process. Example control measures include:

- Provision of an area-specific Health & Safety induction by the Head of Faculty/Department;
- Staff supervision;
- 1:1 supervision for certain tasks;
- Ongoing training and instruction;
- Code of conduct/H&S rules agreed, displayed, and reinforced; and
- Any prohibitions are agreed and clearly communicated.

Step 2 – Decide Who Might be Harmed and How

For each of the hazards, Risk Assessors should identify who could be harmed and how; and list the groups of people who are at risk, with some examples of how they could be harmed.

Step 3 – Evaluate the Risk

Firstly, Risk Assessors should consider what is already being done to reduce the risk – i.e., what risk control measures are already in place, and record these in the 'Existing Control Measures' column on the Risk Assessment form.

Based on the existing control measures in place, Risk Assessors will then need to consider how likely it is that someone could be harmed by the hazard, and how serious the consequences could be. This is assessing the level of risk, and Risk Assessors will need to assign a Risk Rating of either:

- High
- Medium; or
- Low

This is recorded in the 'Residual Risk' column on the Risk Assessment form.

If Risk Assessors are wavering between two Risk Ratings it is recommended that they assign the higher rating, as it is better to overestimate the risk than to underestimate it.

Regardless of the level of risk (i.e. even if it has been identified as Low), Risk Assessors will then need to consider whether there are any further control measures that can be implemented in order to reduce the risk so far as is reasonably practicable, and record a 'Yes' or 'No' in the final column on the Risk Assessment form. If the Risk Assessor has recorded 'Yes' in this column, they should provide full details of what is required on the Action Plan.

When deciding if additional action can be taken, look at what you're already doing and the controls you already have in place. Ask yourself if you can get rid of the hazard altogether. If not, then assess how you can control the risks so that harm is unlikely.

If you need further controls, consider:

- redesigning the area/activity
- replacing the materials, machinery or process
- organising your work to reduce exposure to materials, machinery or process
- identifying and implementing practical measures needed to work/learn safely
- providing personal protective equipment and making sure staff (and where relevant, students) wear it

Step 4 – Record the Significant Findings

Risk Assessors must record the significant findings on the Risk Assessment form.

It is the responsibility of Heads of Faculty/Department and Line Managers to ensure that the findings of the risk assessments are fully implemented, and that any further control measures identified as being required (i.e. as specified on the Action Plan) are actioned within a reasonable timeframe. Any actions that cannot be resolved at department level should be escalated to the Head of H, S & C immediately.

Step 5 – Review

Heads of Faculty/Department and Line Managers must ensure that all area and activity risk assessments within their area of responsibility are reviewed annually as a minimum.

In addition to this requirement, risk assessments must be reviewed if:

- A significant accident, incident, near miss or case of occupational disease has occurred;
- There have been any significant changes which may impact the validity of the risk assessment (e.g., new legislation/Approved Code of Practice/Guidance, new machinery/equipment, changes to the environment, or changes to the way in which work is carried out); and/or
- There is any other reason to suspect that the risk assessment is no longer valid.

If you have any questions about how to complete a risk assessment, please speak to the Head of Health, Safety and Compliance.

Approved By:	Director of Finance & Operations
Date:	September 2026
Next Review:	September 2027