

RISK ASSESSMENT POLICY

“Sensible risk management is about practical steps to managing real risks, not bureaucratic back covering. Address the real risks, not only to pupils, but also to the health and well-being of your staff. And remember, risk assessment is just good planning - keep it fit for purpose and act on it.” Sir Bill Callaghan, former Chairman, HSC

The Governors of Newcastle School for Boys are fully committed to promoting the safety and welfare of all in our community so that effective education can take place. Their highest priority lies in ensuring that all the operations within the school environment, both educational and support, are delivered in a safe manner that complies fully with not just with the law; but with best practice. Risks are inherent in every day life. We need to identify them and to adopt systems for minimising them. Our pupils need to be educated into how to cope safely with risk.

WHAT IS A RISK ASSESSMENT?

A risk assessment is a tool for conducting a formal examination of the harm or hazard to people (or an organisation) that could result from a particular activity or situation.

- A hazard is something with the potential to cause harm (e.g. fire).
- A risk is an evaluation of the probability (or likelihood) of the hazard occurring (e.g. a chip pan will catch fire if left unattended).
- A risk assessment is the resulting assessment of the severity of the outcome (e.g. loss of life, destruction of property).
- Risk control measures are the measures and procedures that are put in place in order to minimise the consequences of unfettered risk (e.g. staff training, clear work procedures, heat detectors, fire alarms, fire practices, gas and electrical shut down points and insurance).

Accidents and injuries can ruin lives, damage reputations and cost money. Apart from being a legal requirement, risk assessments therefore make good sense, focusing on prevention, rather than reacting when things go wrong. In many cases simple measures are very effective and not costly.

Risk assessments need reviewing and updating regularly and annually in settings providing for EYFS children. A “library” of risk assessments is maintained on the school network for staff to refer to and use for themselves.

WHAT AREAS REQUIRE RISK ASSESSMENTS?

There are numerous activities carried out in Newcastle School for Boys, each of which requires a separate risk assessment. The most important of these cover:

- Fire safety, procedures and risk assessments
- Educational visits and trips.

But risk assessments are also needed for many other areas, including:

Educational

- Science experiments
- Design and Technology
- Each sport and PE activity
- Duke of Edinburgh award
- Art (including the clay and print studios)
- Music (including minimising the risk of hearing loss to staff)
- Drama (including the theatre back stage, stage, props room and lighting box)

We subscribe to the CLEAPSS Advisory Service that provides model risk assessments for our lessons in Science and Design and Technology, as well as providing professional training courses for both teachers and technicians who work in Science and D&T. All teaching staff and technicians receive regular induction and refresher training in risk assessments tailored to their specific areas.

Pastoral

The focus of our pastoral policy is to ensure that every boy leaves as a confident, articulate young man capable of keeping himself safe on the streets, in the home and in all situations. Our PSHE programmes and Assemblies are directed towards promoting an increasing understanding as the pupil develops, of the risks that exist in both the real and the electronic worlds, and on sensible precautions that should be taken. Our Science lessons encourage boys to conduct their own safety-related research into the potential hazards of chemicals, gas, electricity and flammable materials.

Medical and First Aid

Accident forms are filed in the office at West Avenue for junior, infant and early years boys and at The Grove for senior boys. The respective school secretaries are responsible for ensuring that accident reports are passed to the Estates Manager, the Deputy Head, Head of Juniors or Head of Infants.

The Headmaster is responsible for reporting any notifiable accident that occurs on school premises to a pupil, member of staff, parent, visitor or contractor to the HSE in accordance with the Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations (RIDDOR).

Unsupervised access by boys

We ensure that boys understand why they do not have unsupervised access to potentially dangerous areas such as the science laboratories, the design technology rooms etc. Doors to these areas are kept locked when not in use other than where to lock doors would compromise emergency evacuation routes and procedures. Boys are not permitted access to the cleaning, maintenance and caretaking areas of the school and the potential for access and the risk of access is mitigated by security. All flammables are kept securely locked.

Child Protection

Our Child Protection policies and training for all staff form the core of our child protection risk management. Safer recruitment policies and procedures ensure that the school is not exposed to the risk of employing staff who are barred from working with children, and are not allowed to work in the UK. By extending this regime to Governors and volunteers, and by ensuring that everyone in our community receives regular child protection training, we manage this risk to an acceptable level.

Support Areas

- **Catering and Cleaning**: risk assessments and training is required for every item of catering and cleaning equipment, as well as for manual handling, slips and trips and the control of substances hazardous to health (COSHH). Induction and refresher training covers risk assessments, protective equipment and safety notices. These risk assessments are maintained by Sodexo Limited, the external catering and cleaning contractors used by the School.
- **Caretaking and Security**: risk assessments cover every room, laboratory, stairs, corridor and emergency exit in the entire school. Particular emphasis in training is given to minimising the risk of both fire and to security by adhering to good practice. Risk assessments also cover manual handling and working at heights. Induction and refresher training covers risk assessments, protective equipment and safety notices.
- **Maintenance**: risk assessments and training is required for tools and item of equipment, as well as for manual handling, slips and trips, working at height, lone working, control of contractors on site, electricity, gas, water, and the control of substances hazardous to health (COSHH). Induction and refresher training covers risk assessments, safe working practices, communication and health and safety notices and protective equipment.

- **Grounds:** risk assessments and training is required for tools and , as well as for manual handling, slips and trips, working at height, lone working, use of pesticides, storage of flammables and COSHH. Induction and refresher training covers risk assessments, protective equipment and safety notices.
- **Office staff:** risk assessments are required for the display screen equipment and cables used by those staff (primarily office-based) who spend the majority of their working day in front of a screen.

CONDUCTING A RISK ASSESSMENT

There are several possible techniques; but at Newcastle School for Boys we use the model recommended by the HSE in its publication “Five Steps to Risk Assessment”. (www.hse.gov.uk)

The five steps are as follows:

1. Identify the hazards
2. Decide who might be harmed and how
3. Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions
4. Record the findings and implement them
5. Review the assessment and update if necessary

Identify the hazards

Consider what could reasonably be expected to cause harm. The HSE website provides practical guidance on where hazards might occur and how to control them.

Decide who might be harmed and how

For each hazard it is necessary to identify groups of people who might be harmed as this helps to identify the best way to manage the risk.

Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions

The law requires that everything “reasonably practicable” is done to protect people from harm. It is necessary to consider what controls are already in place and compare it with good practice. Consider

Is it possible to eliminate the hazard altogether?

If not, how can the risks be controlled so that harm is unlikely?

When controlling risks apply these principles in the following order:

- try to find a less risky option
- try to prevent access to the hazard
- reduce exposure to the hazard
- use protective equipment
- provide facilities to removal contamination

Record findings and implement them

Write down results of risk assessments. A risk assessment must be able to show that a proper check was made, consideration was given as to who might be affected and that all the significant hazards were dealt with.

Review risk assessments and update if necessary

Risk assessments need to be reviewed on a regular basis or if there are any significant changes.

Our policy at Newcastle School for Boys is not to carry out any high risk activity. Activities involving boys are normally low risk. We undertake a few medium risk activities with older pupils, such as skiing but only using qualified instructors. Boys are always given a safety briefing before participating in these activities, and are expected to wear protective equipment, such as mouth-guards, and to follow instructions.

We will always employ specialists to high risk tasks. Support staff may only carry out medium rated activities if they have been properly trained and work in pairs. All members of staff and pupils are expected to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) for tasks that have been assessed as requiring its usage.

Specialist Risk Assessments

The Estates Manager arranges for specialists to carry out the following risk assessments:

- Fire safety
- Legionella
- Gas safety
- Electrical safety

Reviews

All risk assessments are reviewed (and recorded) annually, when major structural work is planned, or in the event of an accident. The separate policy on the

management of health and safety describes the arrangements for regular health and safety audits of the fabric of the school, its plant, machinery and equipment, together with its arrangements for catering and cleaning and for water sampling.

Responsibilities of all Staff

All members of staff are given a thorough induction into the school's arrangements for risk assessments and health and safety (which is recorded). Specialist training is given to those whose work requires it. However, staff are responsible for taking reasonable care of their own safety, together with that of pupils and visitors. They are responsible for cooperating with the Headmaster, the Bursar and other members of the SLT in order to enable the Governors to comply with their health and safety duties. Finally, all members of staff are responsible for reporting any risks or defects to the Estates Manager.

AUDIT COMPLIANCE STATEMENTS

The Governors maintain a risk register which is reviewed at each full Governors' meeting.

The Bursar produces a review of internal financial controls annually which is reviewed by the Governing Body as the same time as they review the audited accounts.

Other key controls used by the Governors include:

- formal agendas for all Committee and Board activity;
- detailed terms of reference for all Committees;
- comprehensive strategic planning, budgeting and management accounting;
- established organisational structure and lines of reporting;
- formal written policies;
- clear authorisation and approval levels, and
- vetting procedures as required by law for the protection of the vulnerable.

Governors are invited to approve the compliance risk assessment annually and to endorse the insertion of a statement along the following lines (or a more detailed version thereof) in the School's annual accounts:

“Through the risk management processes established for the School, the Governors are satisfied that the major risks identified have been adequately mitigated where necessary. It is recognised that systems can only provide reasonable but not absolute assurance that major risks have been adequately managed.”