

Risk Assessment Policy

Introduction

The Executive Headteacher and Directors at Spruce House School are fully committed to ensuring the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of this policy and Risk Assessments so that effective education can take place. Thus, appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified. 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 comply fully with not just with the law; but with best practice.

Risks are inherent in everyday 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 thus equipping them with lifelong skills of staying safe and adopting safe practices.

This policy also works closely with the Health and Safety policy, Curriculum policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and the First Aid and Safe Administration of Medicine policy.

This policy acknowledges the guidance provided by the DfE document Health and safety: advice for schools (February 2014).

www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-advice-for-schools

Roles and responsibilities

Directors

Under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, Spruce House School must take reasonable steps to ensure that staff and pupils are not exposed to risks to their health and safety. This applies to activities on or off school premises. Regulations made under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 set out in more detail what actions employers are required to take.

For example, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require employers to:

- assess the risks to staff and others affected by school activities in order to identify the health and safety measures that are necessary and, in certain circumstances, keep a record of the significant findings of that assessment;
- introduce measures to manage those risks (risk management);
- tell their staff about the risks and measures to be taken to manage the risks; and

- ensure that adequate training is given to staff on health and safety matters. Schools must set out health and safety arrangements in a written health and safety policy. The HSE's website contains useful information.

Spruce House School's Directors recognise and discharge all of the responsibilities indicated above.

Although Spruce House School retains responsibility for health and safety, they delegate tasks to the Executive Headteacher and other school staff. Spruce House School considers in its the size of each school and the risks associated with its activities. For example, regard is given to the capacity of each school and the age range of the pupils who attend each school.

Staff

The law requires staff to:

- take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by what they do at work;
- co-operate with their managers on health and safety matters;
- do their work in accordance with training and instructions; and
- inform Spruce House School of any work situation representing a serious and immediate danger, so that remedial action can be taken. In addition, teachers and other staff in schools have a common law duty to act as any prudent parent would do when in charge of pupils. Staff should follow any health and safety procedures put in place by their employer. However, if they feel that the procedure is inappropriate (e.g. it is too bureaucratic) they should discuss this with their line managers and request that it is reviewed. Usually the Executive Headteacher will work with the Directors to ensure that the procedures at the school are proportionate, effective and appropriate.

Spruce House School has a named Health, Safety and Maintenance Co-ordinator responsible for identifying issues and advising the Directors regarding remedies.

The aim of Spruce House School is to provide a safe and healthy working and learning environment for staff, pupils and visitors.

The Executive Headteacher accepts that he/she has a responsibility to take all reasonably practicable steps to secure the health and safety of pupils, staff and others using the school premises or participating in school-sponsored activities. The Executive Headteacher believes that the prevention of incidents, accidents, injury or loss is essential to the efficient running of the school and is part of the good education of its pupils.

The Lead Teacher accepts that he/she has a responsibility to take all reasonably practicable steps to secure the health of pupils, staff and others using their school premises or participation in local school sponsored activities.

Specific responsibilities of the Directors:

The Directors are specifically responsible for:

- Ensuring the safety of the pupils in Spruce House School at all times through receiving detailed monthly accident/incident/issues reports from the Health, Safety and Maintenance Co-ordinator. In addition, related monthly meetings take place between the Directors, Head of Education and the Health, Safety and Maintenance Co-ordinator.
- Ensuring that all agreed corrective action to address issues is effective and timely through rigorous monitoring and follow up reports from the Head of Education and the Health, Safety and Maintenance Co-ordinator.
- Visiting Spruce House School regularly to check on each schools general performance and also welfare, health and safety provisions.
- Liaising with the Head of Education and the Health, Safety and Maintenance Co-ordinator throughout the year to discuss processes, make changes and improvements wherever appropriate and ultimately lead to the highest standards in Health and Safety.

Specific responsibilities of the Health, Safety and Maintenance Co-ordinator

The Health, Safety and Maintenance Co-ordinator is specifically responsible for:

- Ensuring that Spruce House School is a safe learning environment by undertaking regular, frequent and robust checks (including unannounced monitoring visits) to check that the Risk Assessment Policy and procedures are fully and effectively implemented.
- Ensuring that any necessary remedial actions identified in Health and Safety reports are carried out promptly and effectively
- Ensuring that all required documentation eg. Risk Assessments for existing and new activities planned are completed and sent to the Head of Education for approval.
- Ensuring that Risk Assessment processes are improved in a timely fashion
- Reviewing Health, Safety, Fire and Risk Assessment policies and procedures annually or earlier when significant changes are required, with the Head of Education.
- Ensuring that this policy is amended promptly when significant changes are required by the DfE, in partnership with the Head of Education.
- Liaising with the DfE, Directors, Head of Education and Lead Teachers and staff throughout the year to discuss processes, make changes and improvements wherever appropriate and ultimately lead to the highest standards of Health and Safety.

Specific responsibilities of the Head of Education

The Executive Headteacher is specifically responsible for:

- Ensuring that Spruce House School is a safe learning environment by undertaking regular, frequent and robust checks at each school (including unannounced monitoring visits) to check that the Risk Assessment Policy is fully and effectively implemented.
- Ensuring that all staff are well trained and accredited as required in Risk Assessment matters.
- Ensuring that Spruce House School implements the company's Risk Assessment Policy and Procedures by holding the Lead Teachers to account.
- Ensuring that Lead Teachers make all staff at each school including volunteers and temps aware of this policy.
- Ensuring that all required documentation e.g. Risk Assessments for existing and new activities planned are completed and sent to the Health, Safety and Maintenance Co-ordinator for approval.
- Ensuring that any necessary remedial actions are carried out promptly.
- Ensuring that Risk Assessment processes are approved in a timely fashion.
- Reviewing health, safety, fire and risk assessment policies and procedures annually or earlier when significant changes are required, with the Health, Safety and Maintenance Co-ordinator.
- Ensuring that all policies and procedures are amended promptly when significant changes are required by the DfE.
- Liaising with the DfE, Directors, Health, Safety and Maintenance Co-ordinator and Lead Teachers and staff throughout the year to discuss processes, make changes and improvements wherever appropriate and ultimately lead to the highest standards of Health and Safety.

Specific responsibilities of the Lead Teacher

The Lead Teacher is specifically responsible for:

- Ensuring that their school is a safe learning environment by undertaking regular, frequent and robust Risk Assessments are carried out including in relation to accommodation/premises matters, learning activities (including educational visits) and any local considerations
- Ensuring that levels of pupil supervision and day to day vigilance of welfare, health and safety are effective
- Ensuring that all staff are well trained and accredited as required in Risk Assessment matters
- Ensuring that their school implements the company's Risk Assessment Policy and procedures
- Ensuring that all required documentation e.g. Risk Assessments for existing and new activities planned are completed and sent to the Head of Education and Health, Safety and Maintenance Co-ordinator for approval
- Ensuring that any necessary remedial actions are carried out promptly
- Ensuring that Risk Assessment processes are improved in a timely fashion
- Liaising with the Head of Education, Health, Safety and Maintenance Co-ordinator and staff at their school throughout the year to discuss processes, make changes and improvements wherever appropriate and ultimately lead to the highest standards of Health and Safety.
- Ensuring that they support their staff to discharge their duties in relation to Health and Safety
- Ensuring that staff in their line management control and any volunteers and temps are aware of this policy.

Specific responsibilities of Staff

Staff are specifically responsible for:

- Ensuring that they have read, understood and are committed to the company's Risk Assessment policy
- Ensuring that their school is a safe learning environment by undertaking regular, frequent and robust Risk Assessments including in relation to accommodation/premises matters, learning activities (including educational visits) and any local considerations
- Ensuring that pupils are supervised diligently and with due care for their safety and well being
- Ensuring that they attend accredited training as required by Spruce House School in Risk Assessment matters
- Ensuring that any necessary remedial actions they are asked to carry out in relation to health and safety are completed promptly
- Liaising with the Lead Teacher, Head of Education and the Health, Safety and Maintenance Co-ordinator throughout the year to discuss processes, make changes and improvements wherever appropriate and ultimately lead to the highest standards of Health and Safety
- Ensuring that any weaknesses they feel exist regarding the company's policy and procedures are promptly reported to their line manager.

What does assess and managing risks mean?

Health and safety law requires Spruce House School to assess the risks to the health and safety of staff and others affected by their activities. The terms Risk Assessment and risk management are used to describe the process of thinking about the risks of any activity and the steps taken to counter them. Sensible management of risk does not mean that a separate written Risk Assessment is required for every activity.

Staff should always take a common sense and proportionate approach, remembering that in their schools Risk Assessment and risk management are tools to enable pupils to undertake activities safely, and not prevent activities from taking place. Sensible risk management cannot remove risk altogether but it should avoid needless or unhelpful paperwork.

Some activities, especially those happening away from school, can involve higher levels of risk. If these are annual or infrequent activities, a review of an existing assessment may be all that is needed. If it is a new activity, a specific assessment of significant risks must be carried out. Lead Teachers should ensure that the person assigned with the assessment task understands the risks and is familiar with the activity that is planned. Where a Risk Assessment is carried out the Lead Teacher must record the significant findings of the assessment on the Spruce House School Risk Assessment Proforma (see Appendix 1- General Risk Assessment For Spruce House School Use).

However, schools need not carry out a Risk Assessment every time they undertake an activity that usually forms part of the school day, for example, taking pupils to a local venue which it frequently visits, such as a swimming pool, park, or place of worship. Any risks of these routine activities should already have been considered when agreeing the school's general health and safety policies and procedures. A regular check to make sure the precautions remain suitable is all that is required.

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 assessment includes 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 these risks (e.g. staff training, clear work procedures, heat detectors, fire alarms, fire practices, 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.

What areas require Risk Assessment?

There are numerous activities carried out at the school which require a separate Risk Assessment. The most important of these are:

- Fire safety, procedures and Risk Assessments
- School visits and trips.

But Risk Assessments are needed for many other areas, including:

Educational

- Design and Technology
- Food Technology
- PE activities
- Art
- Outdoor play.

We make use of model or generic risk assessments, for our educational activities and visits and these are completed by the schools Lead Teachers and sent to the Health, Safety and Maintenance Co-ordinator who has completed appropriate accredited training.

In addition to this all-teaching staff are required to ensure that suitable Risk Assessments are in place regarding risks during their teaching activities. The Health, Safety and Maintenance Co-ordinator is always available to provide support for Lead Teachers carrying out these Risk Assessments. Moreover teachers, assistants and volunteers receive regular induction and refresher training in Risk Assessment and its importance.

Pastoral

The focus of our pastoral care is to ensure that every pupil leaves as a confident, articulate young adult capable of keeping him/herself 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 pupils develop, 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 pupils to conduct their own safety-related research into the potential hazards of chemicals, gas, electricity and flammable materials.

Medical and First Aid

Accident books are kept in the main office and the teacher/s dealing with the accident are responsible for ensuring that accident reports are filed away appropriately. Spruce House School and its Health, Safety and Maintenance Co-ordinator are responsible for reporting any notifiable accidents that occur 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).

The procedure to follow in such situations is outlined in our First Aid and Safe Administration of Medicine Policy.

Unsupervised Access by Pupils

We ensure that pupils understand why they do not have unsupervised access to potentially dangerous areas, such as the science equipment, the design technology equipment, etc. Such equipment is kept locked away when not in use. All flammables are kept securely locked. Pupils do not have unsupervised access to the school grounds, maintenance, and catering or caretaking areas of the school.

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, for example, employing staff who are barred from working with children, and are not allowed to work in the UK. By extending this regime to volunteers and by providing safeguarding training to people in the community we manage this risk to a good level.

Support Areas

Cleaning: Risk Assessments and training is required for cleaning equipment, as well as for manual handling, slips and trips and the control of substances hazardous to health (COSHH).

Security: Risk Assessments cover every room, stairs, corridor and emergency exits 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.

Maintenance: Risk Assessments and training is required for the equipment used, as well as for manual handling, slips and trips, working at height, lone working, control of contractors on site, electricity, gas and maintenance and the control of substances hazardous to health (COSHH).

Risk Assessments also cover manual handling, working at heights, and asbestos. Induction and refresher training covers risk assessments, protective equipment and safety notices.

Conducting a Risk Assessment

Activities involving pupils are normally low risk. We undertake a few medium risk activities with such as trampolining and snowboarding but in-depth risk assessments are carried out prior to the activity starting. Pupils are always given a safety briefing before participating in these activities and are expected to wear personal protective equipment and to follow instructions.

Specialist Risk Assessments

Spruce House School arranges for specialists to carry out the following risk assessments:

- Fire safety
- Gas safety
- Electrical safety
- Portable Appliance Testing (PAT)

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. 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 Spruce House School, the Health, Safety and Maintenance Co-ordinator and other members of the senior management team in order to enable Spruce House School and Directors to comply with their health and safety duties. Finally, all members of staff are responsible for reporting any risks or defects to Spruce House School and the Health, Safety and Maintenance Co-ordinator.

Policy review

This policy document will be reviewed by the Education Director on an annual basis to ensure it is up to date with current legislation and best practice.

Date approved: July 2016

Date last reviewed: September 2026

Next review (or before): September 2027

Signed: 

Position: Education Director

Staff Acknowledgement

In signing this document I am confirming I have read the information and have an understanding of the procedures outlined within the information provided.

I have had the opportunity to discuss this document with a Senior Leadership member of staff to gain further clarity.

I also know that if I feel I need further guidance I know I can access through the Head of Education.

School name:

Staff member name:

Position:

Date:

School name:

Staff member name:

Position:

Date:

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Appendix 1- Spruce House School Generic School Risk Assessment

Spruce House School: _____

- *This is a generic Risk Assessment for school use which identifies the common hazards.*
- *Lead Teachers must also make an assessment of any special risks which are specific to their particular pupils.*
- *Additional rows should be completed for additional areas and hazards.*

Interior of school:

Hazard	Persons at Risk	Level of Risk (H/M/L)	Control Measures	Tick if in Place	Level of Risk Following Control Measures (H/M/L)	Comments / Action
Stairs	Pupils Staff		• To educate pupils around safe use of corridors and danger of uncontrollable movement on stairs • Staff to patrol and obstruct whenever a child attempts to climb the stairs			
Bannister	Pupils		• In the event of a pupil trying to slide down the banister staff are to initially prevent such action but if not to monitor closely and support to prevent injury.			
Doors	Pupils and staff		• All doors in school are fire doors and shut			

			following entry automatically therefore staff to educate on why they are necessary for such doors and on proper use i.e. not slamming or trapping fingers.			
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Exterior of school:

Hazard	Persons at Risk	Level of Risk (H/M/L)	Control Measures	Tick if in Place	Level of Risk Following Control Measures (H/M/L)	Comments / Action
Fallen leaves	Pupils and staff		To check area is free from fallen leaves			
Fence	Pupils and Staff		- Educate children Re: Safe Outdoor Play outside - Prevent children from climbing over the fence. Staff supervise closely			
Slips, trips and falls	Pupils and staff		Make sure areas are clear from loose debris, no broken flags, grass mowed regularly, ask children to avoid grass when wet and muddy.			
Trees	Pupils and Staff		Educate children Re:			

			Safe Outdoor Play outside • Prevent children from climbing trees. Staff supervise closely			
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When all of the above conditions are in place the activity is considered low risk. If not in place, then a further assessment must be carried out to determine the level of risk.