Risk Assessment Policy

# Success Indicators

The following indicators will demonstrate success in this area:

* Managers and employees must ensure that activities/tasks/locations/work equipment that require an assessment are identified and adequate risk assessments completed.
* Competent individuals complete suitable and sufficient risk assessments and implement appropriate control measures.
* Implementation and effectiveness of control measures are monitored and where necessary corrective action is taken to ensure risks are adequately controlled.
* Employees are aware of the risk assessments and control measures that are in place that are associated with their role, their working areas and the events and activities they are involved in and are provided with access to these upon induction.
* Risk assessments are reviewed annually as a minimum, and following a change in circumstance, practice or procedure, an accident, incident, or near miss, and/or if there is reason to believe they are no longer valid.

# Overview

It is a legal requirement for every employer to make an assessment of significant health and safety risks arising from their activities. It is required that the findings of assessments are recorded and that everything “reasonably practicable” is done to protect people from harm.

Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, organisations must:

* Identify what could cause injury or illness in your setting (hazards)
* Decide how likely it is that someone could be harmed and how seriously (the risk)
* Take action to eliminate the hazard, or if this isn’t possible, control the risk (control measures)

# Health, Safety and Wellbeing Management Arrangements

This policy will apply to employees, pupils, contractors and members of the public if they are on SUAT premises or when engaged in Academy or Trust activities.

# Management of Risk Assessments

Managers will ensure that suitable and sufficient risk assessments are carried out for all tasks, activities, locations and work activities that present a significant hazard in their area(s) of responsibility. This will involve employee engagement in the risk assessment process. Additionally, there may be a requirement to create a risk assessment for an individual (employees, pupils or others working on SUAT premises) if they are at specific risk, for example, due to health reasons or specific needs. This may include those who are pregnant, young workers and those with specific support needs. Managers must plan, co-ordinate and monitor how risk assessments are managed and communicated locally including:

* + - Identifying competent individuals to carry out assessments.
    - Referring risks which cannot be managed locally to senior managers.
    - Establishing communication and information sharing of outcomes with those who may be affected by the risk.

Risk assessments shall be undertaken using the following process:

# Identify the hazards

Managers and employees will identify all the hazards associated with their area of responsibility that could reasonably be expected to cause harm. Hazards can be identified by:

* + Observing the task or area;
  + Referring to available guidance and information about best practice;
  + Looking at accident and ill-health records;
  + Checking manufacturers’ instructions or data sheets;
  + Asking employees for their views.

# Decide who might be harmed and how

For each hazard, the groups of people who might be harmed and how, must be identified. The groups of people to be considered include:

* + Employees;
  + Employees with particular requirements e.g. new and young workers, people with disabilities, new or expectant mothers;
  + Pupils/students;
  + Cleaners, visitors, contractors, lettings, maintenance workers who may not be in the workplace all the time;
  + Members of the public, visitors;
  + Shared workplaces – how the work affects others and the risks to employees from those who share the workplace.

# Evaluate/assess the risks and decide on the precautions to control the risks

For each hazard identified the level of risk must be evaluated (High/Medium/Low). This evaluation will include the level of harm presented by the hazard, the number of people involved, and the likelihood of the harm occurring.

Once the level of risk is established, managers and employees must consider what control measures are already in place and what actions are already being taken to reduce the risk, consider whether these are suitable and sufficient and whether further control measures are required.

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|  | | **Potential severity of harm**  *(this may include injury, loss or damage)* | | |
| **Minor Harm**  **1** | **Moderate Harm**  **2** | **Serious Harm**  **3** |
| **Likelihood of harm occurring** | **Highly unlikely 1** | Trivial 1 | Low 2 | Medium 3 |
| **Unlikely 2** | Low 2 | Medium 4 | High 6 |
| **Likely 3** | Medium 3 | High 6 | High 9 |

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| **Risk**  **Rating** | **Priority** |
| High (6-9) | Immediate action required |
| Medium (3-  4) | Actions to control the risk must now be considered and steps to manage the  risk until control measures can be provided must be implemented |
| Low (2) | Implement reasonable control measures and monitor |
| Trivial (1) | No action required unless level of harm or likelihood changes |

# Controlling the Risk

When controlling risks, the following principles should be applied where possible, in the following order:

* + Eliminate the hazard altogether;
  + Substitution by something less hazardous or with less risk;
  + Prevent access to the hazard e.g. by guarding;
  + Organise work to reduce exposure to the hazard e.g. putting barriers between pedestrians and traffic;
  + Create safe methods of work and safe systems of work designed to reduce the risk;
  + Provide welfare facilities e.g. first aid and washing facilities for removal of contamination;
  + Provide suitable information, instruction and training;
  + Ensure appropriate supervision;
  + Issue personal protective equipment e.g. clothing, footwear, goggles etc.

# Personal Protective Equipment

Where managers select and provide PPE for employees/pupils/others, managers must ensure that they meet the requirements of the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations. This can be accessed via the HSE website, which details the current guidance. Guidance is also available on the Staffordshire Learning Net, for the selection of PPE.

# Record and implement findings

Managers must ensure that risk assessments are recorded accurately, including the dates of compilation, review, a signature by the assessor and a signature of approval by their line manager.

Once risk assessments have been completed, they must be shared with employees. Employees must provide written confirmation that they have read, understood, and will adhere to the risk assessment. The Academy must retain this written confirmation in accordance with the Retention and Records Management Policy. Employees must also be invited to feedback regarding the contents of the risk assessments, and how the content could be developed, or amended if inaccurate or invalid.

General risk assessments must be accessible to all staff, at all times, during working hours. Individual risk assessments must be accessible to those which require access to the risk assessment in accordance with their role and responsibilities. They will be maintained as confidential documents with restricted and secure access at all times.

# General risk assessments

Assessments of processes or areas rather than an individual person should be recorded on the General Risk Assessment Form.

# Other Risk Assessments

The General Risk Assessment Form is not suitable for recording risks to individuals, complex risk assessments or where there is agreed standard documentation for inter-agency working. Specific forms have been developed to support the development of effective risk assessments for employees and pupils, the Individual Risk Assessment Form.

Templates are available separately, for the following risk assessments:

* Hazardous substances
* Manual handling
* Display screen equipment
* Fire
* Work equipment or machinery
* Stress
* Educational visits

# Monitoring and reviewing arrangements

Risk assessments should also be reviewed following significant changes or if there is reason to suspect it is no longer valid e.g. after an accident, incident, near miss, or change in circumstance, practice or procedure. Risk assessments should be reviewed annually as a minimum if there are no significant changes. Managers must monitor the effectiveness of control measures and ensure that they are implemented and effective.

# Employee Engagement

Employees must be aware of, and have read and understood, the risk assessments and control measures for their area of work, their use of the premises, and the activities and events that they are involved in, and co-operate and engage in the risk assessment process including complying with control measures.

Employees shall report any defects in control measures immediately to their manager, to enable the risk assessment to be further developed as required.

# Dynamic Risk Assessments

Where an unexpected hazard arises when an activity is in progress, and this has not previously been risk assessed, employees may have to make common sense decisions based on the information available and their competencies allowing them to take action to manage the risk. This is known as a dynamic risk assessment. Following completion of a dynamic risk assessment, a formal risk assessment must be completed as soon as practicable.

# Training and information

Managers and employees responsible for the planning, co-ordination and monitoring of risk assessments must be competent to complete these tasks and may require appropriate training. Employees involved in the creation of risk assessments must be competent to complete the process and may require training.

Managers must ensure that they retain employee training records, using a training matrix.

# Record Keeping

Once a risk assessment is no longer valid it must be archived in accordance with the Retention and Records Management Policy. This is the case for activity or area risk assessments, individual risk assessments, hazardous substance assessments, manual handling assessments, display screen equipment assessments, fire risk assessments, work equipment or machinery assessments, stress and wellbeing risk assessments and risk assessments for educational visits.

Employees must be aware that different risk assessments will have different retention periods.

Each Academy must hold a register containing the following information (as a minimum) about all of their general risk assessments. This will inform the risk assessment review process and support in avoiding review lapses. It will also identify where new risk assessments are required to meet the needs of the setting:

* Name of the risk assessment
* Date completed
* Date that a review is due by (at least annually)
* Who it was assessed by
* When the risk assessment was communicated to staff
* Who the risk assessment was communicated with
* Any feedback or comments from staff

The risk assessment register will be updated on each occasion that risk assessments are reviewed and updated.

**Individual Risk Assessments**

1. **Introduction**

There may be a requirement to create a risk assessment for an individual (employees, pupils or others) if existing general risk assessments do not adequately address individual matters. This may be due to their health, pregnancy, for vulnerable individuals or those with specific needs.

1. **Employees with ongoing health issues**

A number of individuals experience and manage physical and psychological health issues. The issues may be short, medium or long term in nature and may not have caused absence. Where the health issues have the potential to present significant risks to the individual, or others, an individual risk assessment must be undertaken. Return to Work meetings with employees can be an appropriate time to discuss if an individual risk assessment is required. Absence policies and procedures should be followed, and the SUAT Return to Work template document should be used.

The risk assessment must consider work activities that may affect the individual’s health and appropriate control measures should be agreed, implemented and their effectiveness monitored. It may also be appropriate to consider if the health of the individual has any effect on how a work activity or service is undertaken and any adjustment required.

During the risk assessment process, managers should discuss with the individual:

* An estimate of how long the control measures may be required;
* How frequently the assessment will be reviewed; and
* Where appropriate, agree at what point the risk assessment will no longer be required.

All reviews to the risk assessments must be recorded and signed by the assessor and the individual. For staff, this should be accompanied by a signature from their line manager. For pupils/students, this should be accompanied by a signature from their parent.

Adjustments detailed in a “fit note,” Occupational Health, and/or medical report may form some of the controls which can be included in an individual risk assessment. It may be appropriate to include a risk assessment completed for an individual employee with referrals to Occupational Health.

1. **Young people at work**

There is a legal responsibility to ensure that young people employed by the Trust are not exposed to risk due to:

* Lack of experience;
* Being unaware of existing or potential risks and/or;
* Lack of maturity.

If existing workplace risk assessments take account of the characteristics of young people and the activities which may present significant risks to their health, these may be sufficient and additional risk assessments may not be required. Before employing a young person, managers must ensure that existing risk assessments take account of the following:

* The design and layout of the workplace where they will work;
* Hazards from physical, biological and chemical agents they will be exposed to;
* The work equipment they will use and how this will be handled;
* How the work and processes are organised;
* The extent of health and safety training needed; and
* Risks from particular agents, processes and work.

Young people must be protected from the risks to their health and safety that arise from:

* Limits to their physical or psychological capacity;
* The pace of the work;
* Temperature extremes, noise and vibration;
* Radiation;
* Compressed air;
* Hazardous substances; and
* Lower levels of experience and training.

Managers need to consider whether the work the young person will carry out:

* Is within their physical or psychological capacity i.e. check they are capable of safely lifting/moving weights, instructions are clear and understood.
* Involves exposure to substances that have long-term health effects on a still-developing young body and that are toxic, can cause cancer, can damage or harm an unborn child, or can chronically affect human health in any other way.
* Involves harmful exposure to radiation.
* Involves risk of accidents that cannot reasonably be recognised or avoided by young people due to their insufficient attention to safety or lack of experience or training.
* Has a risk to health from extreme cold, heat, noise or vibration.

All employees must receive information about the risks to their health and safety and the measures in place to control them.

**4. Work experience placements**

Head Teachers must appoint a work experience Co-ordinator and ensure that they are appropriately trained. Co-ordinators must ensure that placements are only arranged after the required insurance and health, safety and welfare checks have been confirmed. Co-ordinators must ensure that students receive a thorough briefing prior to commencing their placement.

Students must be told what action to take in the event of an accident and should know how to contact the school immediately. Co-ordinators must immediately report ALL work experience accidents to the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service via My Health and Safety, and the Head Teacher. Where it becomes apparent that a student on work experience is being exposed to significant risks to their health, safety of welfare, the Co-ordinator should immediately remove the student from the placement provider (the employer) and inform the Head Teacher. Co-ordinators must consider whether the work placement is appropriate for the students in their care.

Managers must ensure that workplace risk assessments adequately consider any hazards, the child's age, any learning or behavioural difficulties, possible immaturity, physical capability and the amount of supervision available.

**5. New and expectant mothers**

The specific hazards within a workplace that may affect pregnant or nursing women should be considered in existing risk assessments including exposure to chemical, biological and physical hazards. It is recommended that managers consider reviewing risk assessments if they are notified that an employee is a new or expectant mother. A number of hazards are non specific to the workplace and will apply to new and expectant mothers. Within low risk office environments the requirement for individual risk assessments for new and expectant mothers may be limited.

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| **Hazards affecting new and expectant mothers** | | |
| **Hazard** | **Potential risk to mother or child** | **Control** |
| Exposure to hazardous chemicals (including mercury and lead) | Some substances may be hazardous to new or expectant mothers (identified with risk phrases R40, R45, R46, R47, R60/62, R61/63, R64 indicating effect) | Assessments must identify substances which pose hazards to new or expectant mothers and adequate control measures implemented. |
| Exposure to biological agents and infections | Includes pathogens which can be transmitted to the foetus.  Some may cause abortion, physical or neurological damage to the foetus. | For most employees the risk of infection is the same at work as in the community. Where exposure to infections is more likely e.g. laboratory workers, health care workers, animal husbandry and contact with animal products COSHH assessments must identify the hazards and suitable control measures which may include immunisation, effective hygiene measures, and correct use of PPE or avoidance of exposure. |
| Ionising radiation | Ionising radiation can be harmful to the foetus and mother. | Exposure must be kept as low as reasonably practicable and certainly below the statutory dose limit for pregnant women. Exclude the employee from work where the risk of contamination is high. |
| Vibration | Regular exposure to shocks, low frequency vibration (e.g. driving/riding in off-road vehicles) or excessive movement may increase the risk of miscarriage. | Pregnant workers should avoid work likely to involve uncomfortable whole body vibration, especially at low frequencies, or exposure to shocks or jolts. |
| Manual handling activities | Pregnancy increases risk of ligament damage and reduces the ability to adopt correct stance for manual handling. | Avoid manual handing where reasonably practicable and regularly review risk assessments as pregnancy develops and after delivery. |
| Physical fatigue | Fatigue from standing and heavy physical work is associated with premature birth and miscarriage. | Discuss workload with employee. If necessary temporarily adjust working hours and other working conditions, including the timing and frequency of rest breaks, and to shift patterns and duration. Provide rest facilities. |
| Heat | Pregnancy reduces the ability to tolerate heat and may increase the risk of heat stress. | Provide adequate rest and refreshment breaks alongside unrestricted access to drinking water. Avoid excessive heat so far as practical. |
| Work Equipment and Personal Protective Equipment (including clothing). | PPE may be difficult to use or ineffective as pregnancy advances. | Regularly review PPE fit. If PPE become impracticable review work that is undertake. |

**6. Pupils and Students**

Some individual pupils and studentspresent hazards to employees, themselves and others, for a variety of reasons including health conditions, physical issues, those that self-harm, and those that show aggression or challenging behaviour. In these circumstances, a risk assessment for individuals should be part of an overall risk management process which is where the maximum acceptable level of overall risk to and from a proposed activity, is balanced with the need for independence, wellbeing and choice.

Risk assessments should not be undertaken in isolation and should involve other appropriate individuals including employees, other professionals (e.g. G.P, school nurse, social worker), carers or parents and where relevant the pupil or student. Where possible, individuals should be able to make informed choices enabling them to take control of their lives and manage any risks.

Managers and Head Teachers must ensure that risk assessments and risk management decisions are, documented, communicated to relevant parties and reviewed regularly. Risk assessments of this type may be recorded on an Individual Risk Assessment or it may be part of the care plan.