

Risk Assessment Policy

Last Review May 2024	Next Review May 2026	Review Frequency Every 2 years	Coordinator Head of Group Living	Nominated Trustee EC&T Committee
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Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to create a clear statement to advise staff at the School on how risk assessments should be carried out.

Risk Assessment is about identifying significant risks in the workplace and then taking steps to prevent accidents and ensure good health. Staff at the School are continually carrying out risk assessments when making decisions about how to manage different situations with the children, or by maintaining a safe environment for children and staff.

Aims

(include the intended impact on the children)

The aim of this policy is to identify how risk assessment is carried out at the school, when these assessments should be written down and how this should be done.

Levels of risk at the Mulberry Bush School

All of the children placed at the school have a long history of severe social, emotional and behaviour difficulties. The aim of the organisation is to ensure that, after a placement of 3 years, each child should be able to cope with living back in their local community. The staff at the school endeavour at all times to create and maintain a positive ethos and atmosphere in all aspects of our work with the aim of preparing each to manage safely in a family environment, school environment and wider community settings. A central part of this task is to provide an environment and experiences that build children's self-esteem and sense of self-worth, and enable them to learn to trust other people and feel trusted themselves. To achieve these goals it is important that the school provides a carefully planned environment:

- Which helps the child feel 'normal' by having normal characteristics of a home and school
- Where children can practise living and learning together in real ways
- With expectations that genuinely promote growth and development

- Where values such as trust and personal responsibility can be developed

It is important that the children have the opportunity to learn to manage situations within this environment so that they can learn to make safe choices when faced with potential risk. It is the responsibility of class, house and Shifford teams to provide such opportunities, whilst ensuring that a high level of overall supervision will ensure a safe and well-managed environment at all times (term time, weekends and holidays).

The levels of staffing within the Mulberry Bush at any given time, in terms of adult: pupil ratios, training and experience, are carefully planned to take into account the level of potential risk of working alongside the children on a day-to-day basis. It is the responsibility of all managers to monitor the level of risk within their area of responsibility. When risks become significant staff should report these to line managers.

Procedure

Particular attention should be given to the following areas:

Bullying and discrimination

Particular care should be given to assessing the risk of times, places and circumstances in which the risk of bullying and discrimination including bullying amounting to abuse by other pupils is greatest (see Anti Bullying Policy for more information).

The use of tools and equipment

Particular care should be given to the supervision and management of children around tools and equipment that could prove a significant risk to the children or adults. Dangerous tools and equipment are locked away and only used within carefully planned situations.

Trips out of school

By visiting certain places regularly like a local swimming pool, park or shopping venue staff can become aware of the potential risks that these trips may present. Trips to unfamiliar venues will require particularly detailed planning.

Individual pupil behaviour

The knowledge that staff teams acquire about each child's patterns of behaviour, and how to effectively manage these in a way that reduces the risk for all members of the Mulberry Bush community, is central to the safe running of the school / houses.

Environmental risks

The Senior Administrator and members of the maintenance team are responsible for ensuring that all aspects of the physical environment are maintained in good order to minimise risk. All members of staff are responsible for reporting any risks to the Charity Resources Manager, Maintenance Manager or a member of the maintenance team.

Written Risk Assessments

An Individual Child Risk Assessment Proforma is completed for each child as part of the referral to the Mulberry Bush. This is the responsibility of the Deputy Head of Group Living in conjunction with the referring authority. These are then checked and updated as part of the child's Internal Case Conference. They can however be updated any time, and should be, whenever circumstances change for that child. This is the way that all staff across the school can be informed about risk management for any child. If substantial changes are made, staff should be informed by email ASAP. The risk assessments are found on the child's Integrated Treatment Plan.

Activity and Trip Risk Assessments are completed for all venues that are regularly used by the school and for activities that pose a risk of harm to children. Old risk assessments will be kept on file for reference and to aid in writing new ones. Activity and Trip Risk Assessments will be held collectively on SharePoint for easy reference. Risk Assessments produced by the venue that is being visited should be used. An Activity and Trip Risk Assessment should be completed in advance of any trip that involves high risk or unusual hazards.

Responsibilities of all members of staff:-

- Read the Risk assessment Policy.
- Read the school Transport Policy before planning a trip using a school vehicle.
- Familiarise yourself with children's Individual Risk Assessments & Positive Handling Plans.
- Use the information held within the Activity and Trip Risk Assessment File before planning a trip. Be aware of the date of risk assessments, as they may not have been used for some time. Update any risk assessments that are out of date. Ask a senior member of staff to approve before adding to the file.
- Complete an Activity and Trip Risk Assessment for a venue not included in the Risk Assessment File and add to the Risk Assessment SharePoint file. Ask a senior member of staff to approve before adding to the file.
- Inform line manager of any significant risk you become aware of.
- Prior to taking children on a trip or activity, complete a Trip Planner document and leave a hard copy in reception.

Role of the Trustee Body

Oversight through EC&T. Monitoring of policies in the course of Trustee visits.