



ORCHARD HOUSE  
SCHOOL

**Policy on  
Risk Assessments  
(including risk assessments for  
educational visits)**

September 2022

## **Policy on Risk Assessments including *inter alia* risk assessments for educational visits**

### **I Introduction**

1.1 Risk assessments (RAs) form the central strand of a self-regulated safety management system. They are an important tool to help heads and teachers manage new, unusual or unfamiliar situations with inherent risks and thus RAs when applied systematically and diligently for such situations help to promote the welfare of children and staff. This policy sets out the OHS approach to the systematic management of risk via RAs.

### **2 Aim of a risk assessment**

2.1 The aim of RAs is to manage to an acceptable level the hazard identified and the risks contemplated, such that it is entirely safe for the member of staff and the children to engage in the activity or, for general hazards, for the peril to be avoided.

2.2 The level of risk should always be managed to an acceptable level, which should be low. However, it should be noted that achieving a situation with no risk may not always be practical: for example, however well run a game of football, it is still a low risk that a player may fall and twist his or her ankle. The point therefore is at all times and taking a diligent but common-sense approach to manage risk to an acceptable level.

### **3 Who is responsible for managing risk assessments?**

3.1 The ultimate responsibility for welfare, and health and safety matters is the head, who reports on such matters to the governors, in the first instance via the governor, the which latter has specialist training in the preparation and use of risk assessments. The governors have identified certain areas of risk that, in order to manage and mitigate risk, are addressed by policies or risk assessments (RAs) or both. These policies are reviewed regularly (see Health and Safety policy no. 480 and the list shown at s.7). Certain areas of risk are managed at group level by the governors, aided by the school offices: an example of this are the steps taken to avoid fire, which relies not only on an RA approach but also on a biennial audit of our fire precautions across the entire estate.

3.2 At the level of a school, the head will delegate the preparation of an RA. This is likely usually to pertain to an educational visit and the procedure for such an RA is described later in this policy. But other than RAs handled at a group level, all school risk assessments must ultimately be shown to and approved by the head of the school concerned.

3.3 Where the governors or head identifies a material risk that merits recognition and management by means of a risk assessment, or even through a specific school or a group policy, a draft of such an RA must be prepared promptly for review and implemented with dispatch (noting and ensuring the provision of any relevant training of

staff that may be necessary). Guidance on the preparation of RAs or any policy is always available from the governors.

#### **4 When are risk assessments needed?**

4.1 The first matter to consider is when a risk assessment is *not* needed. For example, there is no need for a risk assessment for play in the playground or for normal games lessons. Risk assessments are not ordinarily required for everyday mundane activities although there are generic RAs covering regular activities in the local facilities such as the sports hall and swimming pools which are hired by a school and these will need consideration and revision from time to time (see ‘Dating RAs and revisiting these’ later).

4.2 However, an unusual risk may arise within a familiar context, and it might well be one which will require an RA. So, were the playground facilities to have changed at a school, for example through the introduction of a new apparatus (eg high monkey bars) which might pose a risk on several dimensions, then an RA of this provision will be required. Similarly, a qualified sports specialist teacher running a session of non-contact sport will not ordinarily need an RA for that sport or lesson. But were a new contact sport to be introduced, such as rugby, then the sports teacher should prepare for the head’s approval an RA covering the activity and how any risks will be managed. Other PE activities where one might expect a specific RA include as examples water sports, activities at height (eg abseiling, rock climbing etc.), riding, cycling and any hiking where there might be a risk of exposure or dehydration.

4.3 Turning to academic activities in school and as another example, if the children in an art activity were to be dealing with chemicals or pottery glazes that might pose an unusual risk, or be involved in stacking or unloading a kiln, then it will be appropriate for the art teacher to prepare an RA to agree with the head that outlines the hazard, the level of risk for the hazard and through what precautions any risks may be mitigated. The same requirement for an RA would apply if new chemicals that are unusually reactive were to be deployed during a science lesson, or if eggs are to be hatched, or hamsters or other rodents, or tortoises, to be kept.

4.4 Any doubts on whether an RA should be prepared must be referred to the head, who may decide to take advice from the governors: a decision will then be forthcoming.

#### **5 Regular risk assessments**

5.1 There are certain risks that are assessed on a regular basis. These include:

- Fire – risk assessments and procedures to reduce the risk of fire, or, should it break out, to protect life, are detailed in the OHS fire policy – staff are required to familiarise themselves with this policy on a termly basis and are invariably trained within days of the start of each academic year
- Classrooms – In the Early Years, a specific risk assessment is made on each EY classroom on an annual basis. All classrooms have individual risk assessments.



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- Legionella infection control – the risk has been assessed and is covered in the health and safety policy – legionella prevention, which sets out regular procedures to eliminate the possibility of legionella infection within any part of the OHS estate
- Working at heights policy
- Risk assessments for educational visits (see immediately below)

All risk assessments should also consider how safeguarding will be managed and should be included, where necessary.

### **6 Dating RAs and revisiting these**

6.1 An RA might be prepared for an activity and agreed by all to be comprehensive and to list effective strategies for mitigation of risk. It is then all too easy to file the RA and to forget about it. However, all such standing RAs will nonetheless benefit from regular revisit and scrutiny. Thus such RAs should be dated and revisited on an annual, biennial or three yearly basis. No standing RA should exceed three years without being scrutinised again, revised and updated with the new date shown thereon.

### **7 Risk Assessments for educational visits**

7.1 The school takes risk assessment for any educational visit extremely seriously and all staff should ask the Educational Visits coordinator for help if they are not clear why such details are important, or require assistance to complete the forms.

7.2 The event specific RA must be completed by the leader of any activity that does not take place on a regular basis, e.g. an outing, a concert off site, a new sports activity. Orchard House School has a set of 'Standard Operating Procedures' which apply to all trips and activities outside of the school grounds and staff should ensure they are familiar with all of these common operating procedures for every trip. All event specific RAs should detail risks and ways they are mitigated that do not feature in the 'Standard Operating Procedures' document.

7.3 For trips or visits where an external provider will be leading the children in an activity, visit leaders should either:

7.3.1 Ask them to complete the 'OHS Provider Form' which asks for further details about their operating procedures and requests: an RA completed by the external provider for activities which they lead; and a copy of public liability insurance for a minimum of £5 million.

7.3.2 Or, an up to date LoTC Quality Badge which can be verified at <https://www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk>. The LoTC Quality Badge independently scrutinises the external provider's policies, risk assessments and insurance policies.

7.4 An example of: the school's event specific RA, OHS Standard Operating Procedures and an OHS Provider Form are shown in the appendices to this policy.



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7.5 Each draft RA completed as far as the trip leader is capable must be submitted to the educational visits coordinator at least a week in advance and, only when acceptable, will be approved and signed by the head. To the school's RA may be attached a risk assessment from the venue itself and this forms part of the OHS RA.

7.6 The leader is responsible for making a copy for each adult involved with the activity; the original should be stored electronically under Shared Drive/Admin/Risk Assessments.

7.7 The visit leader is responsible for fully briefing all staff before each trip sets off. Staff or adults accompanying a trip must read the RA with great care and should invariably, and before the trip begins, check that the details of their mobile phone numbers, as shown in the RA, are correct. Should any part of the documentation be unclear, the issue should be raised during the briefing and clarification obtained prior to the commencement of the trip.

7.8 After the activity or visit has been successfully carried out, a short evaluation of the activity should be completed electronically on the RA and saved under Shared Drive/Admin/Risk Assessments. The evaluation must comment on whether staffing levels, timings, etc were adequate to the management of the risks of the hazards encountered, so that should the activity be repeated these observations can inform the preparation of the next risk assessment.

## **8 Methodology of preparation of a risk assessment**

8.1 It is best to adopt a systematic approach. Thus:

- For almost all staff, the consideration of risk will relate to an educational visit. In this case, download the relevant school's risk assessment form. If, however, the risk pertains to another activity that is not an educational visit, then the teacher concerned will need to describe the circumstances and risks identified on a less prescriptive form.
- The person considering the activity or excursion (usually the teacher leading the trip) should walk through all the items that will be encountered along the way and document each of these steps and should consider: staffing levels, method of transport, the nature of activities children will participate in, the group of children going on the excursion, the environment where the activities will be conducted and the distance from school.
- It is best practice for the visit leader to complete the RA together with other members of staff that are going on the trip or excursion.
- The risks that may be entailed in each step should be described.
- The objective of risk management via a risk assessment is at this stage to identify and put into place such procedures that will reduce a high or a medium risk to one that is low risk, and therefore acceptable.
- As an audit check on the RA, show the draft to an experienced colleague. Work through the RA with him or her, noting any areas that are deficient where additional work must be done. Always pose the question: Is this form in a practical sense comprehensive and complete?

- When the draft RA is complete as far as it may be, submit to the Educational Visits Coordinator who will scrutinise the RA before passing it onto the head.

## **9 Training**

9.1 For staff new to the group, there is a brief training session on the management of educational visits, given by the educational visits coordinators (EVC). For such new staff, training in risk evaluation will be given by the EVC in advance of the first trip the new member of staff is due to lead.

9.2 For other staff evaluating a risk and preparing a risk assessment, in the event of concern he or she should contact either the head or the Risk Assessment Coordinator, from whom help and/or training will be available (see 'Help' section later).

## **10 Nothing is risk free**

10.1 As mentioned at the outset in paragraph 2.2, staff should remember that there is no activity that will be entirely risk free. Staff should never be frightened of risk, rather what is imperative is that risk should always be managed to an acceptable and safe level.

10.2 For instance, for a child playing a game in the playground, he or she may on very rare occasion slip and graze his knee, or, during a football match, fall and twist an ankle. These are known but fairly rare risks, where there is no sensible mitigation strategies to be deployed (unless the teacher were to decide after rain to avoid an unusually slippery surface until it had dried further): in normal conditions, the benefits of exercise and of letting off steam outweigh the very slight and rare risks of quite minor harm.

10.3 Consider then a child rock climbing on an artificial rock wall: if a child were to do this with no safety aids there would be a high risk of injury. If however, the child is required to wear a helmet, safety harness and to be making use of a belay rope handled by expert supervisors, then the risk will be managed to 'Low' and the sense of achievement when the child successfully climbs to the very top of the apparatus will outweigh the now 'low' risk. For this latter activity, it is certain that there will be an RA, either prepared by the school, or prepared by the educational centre being visited, but nonetheless approved by the school's head (see below).

## **11 Residential visits**

11.1 Most residential visit or specialist sports centres or, for example, children's zoos and/or farms, will offer and on request send to the school concerned a current risk assessment for all activities. Although such risk assessments have usually been prepared with great care, often by a professional risk assessor, and thus appear to be extremely comprehensive, the receipt of such an RA does not excuse the school from its own duty to consider and mitigate all risks that are likely to be encountered. It is therefore necessary for the trip leader to consider all such risk assessments with care and to indicate to the head any areas of concern.

11.2 There have been instances during or in advance of an educational visit where the school has decided:

- For a particular activity, to require an improvement in the ratio of specialist supervisory staff
- To modify the activity
- To eschew and avoid an activity in its entirety

11.3 In short, the final responsibility for the management of risk on such excursions remains firmly with the school.

11.4 While the school's head will have examined and signed off each excursion RA, it is obvious that only rarely will he or she be present during an excursion. In the head's absence, the responsibility for the management of risk is that of the trip leader. If circumstances should change during a trip that alter risk, it is the trip leader's responsibility to ensure that she or he remains comfortable that the risks have been managed to a low and acceptable level. Thus the teacher in charge has to remain alert to risk and, if necessary, should intervene if it should ever appear that any risk mitigation stratagems are not being followed to his or her satisfaction.

## **12 Help with risk assessments and the effective management of risk**

12.1 In addition to the help within each school that is invariably available from experienced colleagues and/or the deputy head or the head, the governors are always happy to consider risks and stratagems to manage these, to give guidance and to review documentation. Staff who remain concerned by any aspect of risk assessment should always seek assistance: it will be forthcoming and given generously.

## **13 Health and Safety policy**

13.1 This policy **must** be read in conjunction with the OHS Health and safety policy

The Educational Risk Coordinator at Orchard House School is Mr Michael Searle.



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**OHS APPENDIX**

**APPENDIX I - Risk assessment template for an educational visit**



**EVENT SPECIFIC RISK ASSESSMENT**

**I. ESSENTIAL INFORMATION**

<b>EVENT/TRIP:</b>	
<b>DATE:</b>	
<b>VENUE:</b>	
<b>NUMBER OF PUPILS AND FORM(S);</b>	
<b>STAFF/PUPIL RATIO:</b>	
<b>LEADER OF TRIP and contact number:</b>	
<b>DEPUTY LEADER and contact number:</b>	
<b>OTHER STAFF and contact numbers:</b>	
<b>TRANSPORT:</b>	
<b>NEAREST HOSPITAL (A&amp;E):</b>	
<b>LOTQ QUALITY MARK OR COMPLETED PROVIDER FORM</b>	(Please delete and replace - for events where an <b>external provider</b> is leading the trip/event, check whether they have the LOTQ Quality Badge <a href="#">here</a> . If they do not, please download and send the OHS provider form to the provider for <b>them</b> to complete and return and attach a link to the completed form here).

**2. INTENDED PUPIL OUTCOMES**

<b>LINK TO AREA OF CURRICULUM</b>	
<b>LEARNING INTENTIONS</b>	(Please delete and replace - what are the outcomes/benefits of the trip?)
<b>IMPLEMENTATION</b>	(Please delete and replace - what activities/experiences are planned to achieve above outcomes?)

Orchard House School: 16 Newton Grove London W4 1LB Tel: 020 8742 8544  
 Head: Mr Kit Thompson 07706311918  
 Managing Director/Safeguarding Governor: Libby Nicholas 07791 953 552  
 Chairman: Aatif Hassan 07956 665 988





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**3. TIMINGS**

TIME	EVENT/ACTIVITY

**4. EVENT SPECIFIC ISSUES**

Listed below is the management of event specific hazards/issues that are needed in addition to those listed in the Standard Operating Procedures. All staff should be aware of the Standard Operating Procedures at all times.

ISSUE (CONSIDER STAGED) Staff - Transport - Activities - Group - Environment - Distance	MANAGEMENT	AFFECTS WHO

**5. ROUTE OF JOURNEY (IF WALKING - PLEASE DELETE FOR COACH TRAVEL)**

To be entered

**6. CHILDREN ALLOCATED TO MEMBERS OF STAFF**

Staff Member	Pupils allocated to group	Any pupils with medicine

**7. MEDICAL INFORMATION OF PUPILS ON TRIP**

Please delete - medical information for pupils available here. Copy/paste the information of any pupils on the trip

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**8. SIGNATURES**

I believe this risk assessment to be suitable and sufficient, and consider the overall risk level to be acceptable. I agree to adopt the control measures/precautions above, but will remain alert and ready to implement additional measures if circumstances change unexpectedly. The risk assessment and planning of the trip has been made with regard to the standard operating procedures for trips and events and with regard to the trip leader's guidance/checklist.	
<b>RISK ASSESSMENT CARRIED OUT BY</b> (enter all names):	
<b>SIGNED BY LEADER</b> (I have assessed and managed the risks, paying close attention, where relevant, to any risk assessments provided by the venue or transport provider).	
Signature	Date

<b>SIGNED BY RISK ASSESSMENT COORDINATOR</b> (I have read this risk assessment thoroughly and am happy with the provisions made by the trip's leader).	
Signature	Date

<b>SIGNED BY HEAD</b>	
Signature	Date

**9. EVALUATION**

Please complete after the event/trip	
Notes on planning/venue organisation/ideas for next time	
<u>Impact</u> : how did the trip meet the planned LI's?	

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## APPENDIX 2 - OHS Standard Operating Procedures



### LEARNING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM - STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Please see below guidance, potential hazards and ways of managing them detailed below that are applicable to all trips, events and learning that takes place outside of the classroom. All staff must be aware of the below points at all times. An event specific risk assessment should be conducted by a visit leader for events and trips that consider and manage risks or hazards specific to that trip. Hazards or issues that are detailed below do not need to be included in event specific risk assessments.

ISSUE	MANAGEMENT	AFFECTS WHO
<b>Safe Working Practice</b>	All staff briefed regarding roles, responsibilities and procedures All staff briefed regarding risk assessment and control measures All staff briefed and trained regarding administering relevant medication All staff carry charged mobile phones First aid kit checked and accessible to group at all times Any medication is kept secure and only accessible to staff members Regular briefings with pupils regarding itinerary and arrangements All staff aware that they need to maintain on-going, dynamic risk assessments Pupils briefed regarding response if approached by a stranger or offered anything on streets or become lost or separated All staff keep alert to media reports of specific terrorist threats and, if necessary, adapt or cancel programme if a significant risk is perceived All staff have maps, a copy of the event specific risk assessment and are briefed regarding routes Large groups are divided into small units, each with own specified staff member leading Pupils remain in groups, operating a buddy system Individual pupils to never be on their own Frequent head counts by staff particularly at arrival/departure points, and when separating/reforming groups All staff aware of relevant contingency plans	All Staff
<b>Visit Leader Responsibilities</b>	Visit leader to conduct detailed pre-visit to check area and facilities, and identify hazards Contact details of all pupils held by Visit Leader Visit Leader to carry information regarding medical conditions and ensure relevant medication is carried Ensure programme is planned to avoid high risk situations Ensure there are contingency plans in place	Visit Leader
<b>Crossing the road</b>	Zebra crossing and crossing at traffic lights, wherever possible A staff member should be at the front and back of the line at all times Staff to stand and protect pupils when crossing Children should only cross the road when instructed to by a staff member Children should walk on the pavement and cross the road in pairs All staff to be in hi-vis jackets at all times	Staff and Pupils
<b>Lost or missing child</b>	Regular headcounts by staff members	Staff and

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	Pupils briefed about boundaries at all time Staff mobiles to be on and charged at all times Pupils briefed on what to do if they become separated from the group in pre-trip briefing A meeting point should be arranged	Pupils
<b>Simple Injury and Travel Sickness</b>	Staff and children should remain aware of their surroundings at all times and should take care moving around A First Aid kit should always be carried and easily accessible Staff should carry sick bags at all times	Staff and Pupils
<b>Behaviour</b>	All staff should demand exemplary behaviour at all times Pupils should move around in pairs	Staff and Pupils
<b>Lightning</b>	In the event of a lightning storm, try to take shelter indoors away from doors, windows and electrical appliances If you are outside, do not stand under a tree or taller object, rather drop to the ground to make yourself as small a target as possible Any staff hearing thunder should find shelter indoors immediately	Staff and Pupils

**EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

INCIDENT	MANAGEMENT
<b>Accident</b>	At all times, follow the guidance of Emergency Authorities and/or follow London Transport/London rail emergency procedures Brief other staff as to whether to abort or continue trip/event A suitable member of staff will travel with injured pupil(s) to hospital Remaining staff members will take note of hospital they have been taken to Notify headmaster and pupil's parents/guardians
<b>Missing Child</b>	Take a note of the time to start the incident clock Notify event staff to check CCTV Call headmaster and consider aborting trip/event When the incident clock reaches seven minutes, call the police The visit leader should stay at the site and all other staff and pupils return to school, where appropriate
<b>Illness</b>	Call school to notify parents Assign a staff member to stay with pupil If the incident is serious, call the headmaster to notify pupil's parents/guardians Remaining staff members will take note of hospital they have been taken to
<b>Fire/Act of Terrorism</b>	Stay calm and alert Note the nearest fire exit Follow the instructions of event organisers/relevant authorities at all times

Last updated: 31st August 2022

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## APPENDIX 3 - OHS Provider Form



### PROVIDER FORM

Providers that do not hold an LOIC Quality Badge and that are to be used by Orchard House School are required to complete and return this form in advance of the school making a commitment.

School:	Orchard House School	Visit Leader:	
Date(s):		Name of Provider:	

The provider or tour operator providing services to the establishment named above is asked to give careful consideration to the statements below and sign in the space at the end of the form to indicate that the standard of service will meet the conditions listed.

Please tick all specifications you can meet, indicate by a cross any you cannot meet, and write N/A against any specifications which do not apply to your provision.

**Health, Safety, and Emergency Policy**

- 1. The provider complies with relevant health and safety regulations, including the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and associated regulations for visits taking place in the UK, and has a health and safety policy and recorded risk assessments which are available for inspection.
- 2. Accident and emergency procedures are maintained and records are available for inspection.

**Vehicles**

- 3. All vehicles are roadworthy and meet the requirements of relevant regulations in the country in which they are being used.

**Staffing**

- 4. All reasonable steps are taken to check staff who have access to young people for relevant criminal history and suitability to work with young people.
- 5. There are adequate and regular opportunities for liaison between establishment staff and the provider's staff and there is sufficient flexibility to make changes to the programme if necessary and the reasons for such changes will be made known to establishment staff.
- 6. The provider has never been dismissed from any employment or had a contract ended

**Insurance**

- 7. The provider has public liability insurance for at least £5 million with a clause giving 'indemnity to principal'.

**Accommodation (if provided)**

- 8. UK accommodation is covered by a current fire certificate or advice has been sought from a fire officer and implemented, and a fire risk assessment has been completed.
- 9. If abroad, the accommodation complies with fire, health and safety regulations which apply in the country concerned.
- 10. There are appropriate security arrangements to prevent unauthorised persons entering the accommodation.
- 11. Separate male and female accommodation and washing facilities are provided and staff accommodation is close to participants' accommodation.



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**DECLARATION**

I have attached a copy of our relevant risk assessments and a copy of our public liability insurance certificate for at least £5 million.

I hereby certify that I am an authorised signatory to enter into this Agreement and to bind the said company, firm, person or corporation to the terms and conditions herein.

Signed		Date	
Name		Position	
Full name and address of company			
Tel		Email	