

Risk Assessment Policy

NB This information is included within the health and safety policy, but provided separately here should anyone require immediate access to Red Balloon practice regarding risk assessment.

Legislation and Guidance that informs this policy:

- Health and Safety at Work Act (1974)
- Health and Safety : Advice on Legal Duties and Powers (DfE 2013)

Other Red Balloon policies that should be read in conjunction with this one:

- Health and Safety
- Code of Conduct for all Red Balloon Staff
- First Aid

Statement of intent

Red Balloon aims to ensure that all practices, including the maintenance of property, are such that the risk of harm to any staff, student, visitor or member of the public is kept to the lowest possible level.

The purpose of risk assessment is always to ensure that potential risks are identified, considered and minimized, but it is inconceivable that risk can be entirely removed from all aspects of Red Balloon life, indeed there is a growing 'school of thought' that it is beneficial for students to manage some level of risk themselves during certain activities.

General directions from the updated guidance (upheld by Red Balloon)

- Children should be able to experience a wide range of activities. Health and safety measures should help them to do this safely, not stop them.
- It is important that children learn to understand and manage the risks that are a normal part of life.
- Common sense should be used in assessing and managing the risks of any activity.

- Health and safety procedures should always be proportionate to the risks of an activity.
- Staff should be given the training they need so they can keep themselves and children safe and manage risks effectively.

Specific responsibilities

- The headteacher of each centre holds the responsibility for ensuring that risk assessment practice is strong and complies with the requirements of the health and safety policy.
- The headteacher may be the identified person for health and safety and, therefore, for ensuring all risk assessments are performed and complied with, or may delegate that responsibility to an identified member of staff.
- A member of the trustee group will monitor the quality and 'suitability for purpose' of policy requirements on an annual basis.
- The organisation's director of operations (currently Geri Norris) will include a review of risk assessment practice within her internal inspection of health and safety practice.
- Employees must ensure that they comply with requirements to carry out and publish a risk assessment for any room or activity for which they are responsible.
- Students must ensure that they comply with all requirements identified within any risk assessment.

RB Practice in regard to risk assessments:

The headteacher will ensure that appropriate and effective risk assessments are carried out for the following 'areas':

- each room within the centre;
- entry and exit points to and from the centre;
- all activities;
- any work that takes place outside the centre;
- each student that is referred to the centre.

In ensuring appropriate and effective risk management practice is pursued, centres will take heed of the following advice in the DfE's 2013 guidance:

“Sensible management of risk does not mean that a separate written risk assessment is required for every activity.”

School employers should always take a common sense and proportionate approach, remembering that, in schools, risk assessment and risk management are tools to enable children to undertake activities safely, not to prevent activities from taking place.

Sensible risk management cannot remove risk altogether. Good risk management 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. Coordinators must 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 employer must record the significant findings of the assessment.

Centres need not carry out a risk assessment every time they undertake an activity that usually forms part of the school day, eg taking students to a frequently used local venue. Any risks attached to 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.

Risk assessments will:

- be completed for each student during their induction period, and updated as required;
- have been completed for all rooms / teaching areas and ‘trips, but will be reviewed annually - should any new accommodation become available, a risk assessment will be completed before it is made available for use;
- be dated and carry clear indication as to who completed the assessment.

As previously stated (page 2 of this policy) the person with ultimate responsibility for ensuring all elements of this policy are ‘met with’ is the coordinator, but s/he may devolve responsibility to the health and safety officer for the centre: the person actually completing the assessment will vary eg for room usage it will be

the most frequent user of that room, for a student it will be the person who will 'keywork' that student and for trips it will be the lead person for the activity.

NB A headteacher may elect to ask one member of staff to produce all 'final' risk assessments (based upon conversations with appropriate staff and students) or employ a person specifically for that purpose.

Policy updated Sept 2019 by Bob Sproson, Director of Education - for annual review.