



Guidance On Risk Assessment 2005



What is a Risk Assessment?

A risk assessment is the identification of potential harm which could occur to individuals and/or property. This is done in order that appropriate measures can be put in place to reduce any such risk to an acceptable level. The process of risk assessment is therefore about minimising not eliminating risk.

Why conduct a Risk Assessment?

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (NI) 2000 require that suitable and sufficient assessments of risk occurring in places of work are carried out.

As part of the role of the Board of Governors, as employers, there is a requirement to ensure that a safe environment is provided for all employees and site users (pupils/parents, etc.). In order that they can comply with this requirement there are times when it will be necessary to carry out a risk assessment of various situations. This may involve Health & Safety issues which relate to the building or site layout; it may also be that the risk is created because of an individual/individuals within the school community. In addition there will be a need to become involved in risk assessing some events to ensure that the Governors are confident that all appropriate measures are put in place to minimise any risks which may occur. This would, for example, be the case in relation to pupils involved in an off-site educational visit.

When do you need to carry out a Risk Assessment?

On a day to day basis we are all involved in risk assessment to ensure the safety and welfare of ourselves and others; this will continue to be the case within the school. The need to carry out a more formal written risk assessment will arise less frequently. This document is designed to assist schools in carrying out the assessment in relation to 3 sets of circumstances:

1. Where a significant Health & Safety risk has been identified in relation to the building/site which may require building works to be carried out.

The building is the responsibility of the Trustees and therefore it is for the Trustees to approve any application for building works through the Minor Works application process. Recently the Department of Education has requested that prior to consideration all Minor Works applications are to be **prioritised as Health & Safety issues**. They must be accompanied by a completed risk assessment, which identifies the risks and how these risks are currently being managed. CCMS will therefore require schools to submit a





completed risk assessment with their Minor Works application prior to processing.

2. Where a pupil's behaviour is posing a significant risk to themselves, others or to the fabric of the building.

The Board of Governors, as employers have a duty of care for all pupils within the school as well as ensuring that the work environment is safe for staff. It is therefore recommended that, where the behaviour of any pupil/pupils is significantly challenging, resulting in a high level of risk to the individual and/or to others, a risk assessment should be carried out. It will be particularly important to carry out an assessment where any assault occurs.

In all cases where a physical assault has occurred on a member of the teaching staff, a copy of the completed risk assessment should be sent to the Health and Safety Adviser at CCMS Headquarters along with a completed accident form.



In the case of non teaching staff and pupils the information should be sent to the relevant Education & Library Board.

3. Where a school wishes to participate in an educational visit.

Recently all school Governors/Principals will have received information on a new document "Educational Visits - Policy, Practice and Procedures" and a copy of this document should be available to all schools either as a CD-ROM or on the CCMS website (www.onlineccms.com). In order that the school can comply with this guidance there is a need for the school to have carried out a risk assessment of the visit. This risk assessment will be part of the completion of the planning checklist which must be completed by the school prior to seeking approval for the visit. In the case of CCMS schools the authority to approve such visits has been delegated by CCMS to the Board of Governors.

What does Risk Assessment involve?

Stage 1 – Identify hazards

A hazard is anything that has the potential to cause harm. Hazards can be identified through looking at the site, considering issues which may arise and by considering past experience/incidents. Only those hazards which are potentially significant need to be considered.

Stage 2 – Decide who/what might be at risk

In school those at risk can be divided into a number of categories; pupils, staff, other site users (e.g. parents) and property. The risks posed by hazards



may be very different for each of these groupings – it may be that the hazards impact on one or more of these categories.

Stage 3 – Evaluate the risk and consider whether current precautions are adequate or are further support measures required

Risk is the chance or likelihood that someone will be harmed to some extent by the hazard. In most cases the risk cannot be completely removed and therefore consideration will need to be given to a number of options;

- Avoid the activity
- Find another less risky alternative
- Make people fully aware of the potential risk
- Increase supervision/reduce contact with the risk
- Make those responsible for reducing the risk aware of its existence.

In evaluating the risk there is a need to consider both the severity of harm and the likelihood of the harm occurring. In assessing the severity we need to consider on a 5 point scale what the worst thing is that can happen (e.g. from no injury to death). In assessing the likelihood it will be useful to consider past experiences/events.

Severity (Judgement on realistically what is the worst thing that could happen)

Death Major Serious Minor Nil

Likelihood (Judgement about the chance or likelihood of an injury or ill health occurring)

Very likely Likely Quite possible Possible Not likely

The risk factor will be identified through the multiplication of severity x likelihood and will be a score from 1 – 25.

Risk Factor

25	Very High	Immediate cessation of the activity
16 – 24	High	Suspend activity until risk has been reduced through additional support measures
12 – 15	Medium	Initiate process of putting in place additional support measures
1 – 11	Low Risk	Current procedures are appropriate and no further action is required





Stage 4 - Record your findings

In all schools there is a need to have the findings of the risk assessment recorded which will show that;

- A proper assessment was carried out
- The assessment considered who might be affected
- Obvious significant hazards have been addressed
- All reasonable precautions have been taken
- Any remaining risk is low

Stage 5 - Review and revise the assessment

Over time situations change within the school; building modifications, different pupils/staff, and further incidents all impact on the risk assessment. As a result the risk assessment which was carried out may no longer be appropriate and may need to be reviewed to ensure that the hazards still exists and that the support measures are still effective.



APPENDIX I

School site Health & Safety review - Guidance on completing Risk Assessment Form (i)

The form should be completed by the school Governors/Principal and Trustee following the identification of Health & Safety issues which need to be addressed.

Section A: Include a summary of the issue/issues which exist (e.g. windows being broken, unsafe play area surface, lack of secure fencing, car parking issues).

Section B: Include details of who/what is at risk (pupils, staff, parents, property).

Section C: Details of who is involved in completing the assessment (Principal, Trustee, Governors, CCMS officer, etc.).

Section D: This section should include a breakdown of past incidents which have occurred which have highlighted the need for remedial action to be taken (e.g. Number of/dates of break-ins, number of pupils injured, traffic issues/incidents). This information will be important in assessing the severity and likelihood of risk.



Section E, F & G: Divide the hazards into separate sections relating to specific groups and property. It will not always be necessary to complete all sections depending on who/what is at risk.

Completion of each sub-section

Part 1: Detail each of the relevant hazards (e.g. pupils falling and being injured, parents being unable to gain access to the site causing traffic problems, windows being smashed etc.). Only significant hazards need to be noted.

Part 2 – 4: For each of the identified hazards determine the severity and likelihood of each and also the associated risk factor. For each potential hazard a score from 1 – 25 will be agreed (e.g. following a spate of break-ins during which property has been stolen the risk may be Likelihood: 5; Severity: 3; Risk Factor: 15).

Part 5: Where the risk factor is below 12 no further action will be necessary. For a score of 12 or higher further measures should be considered.

Part 6: List which hazards have scored 12 or higher.

Part 7: Identify existing precautions which reduce the risk of injury/damage (e.g. school gates are locked at night, pupils are escorted to buses by staff etc.).

Part 8: List additional actions which need to be taken (e.g. additional security lighting, changes to drop off/pick up procedures, new fencing, alarm system, etc.).

Part 9: Identify who is responsible for each of the changes and when they will be implemented (e.g. Principal, parents, ELB, DE).

Where the Department of Education is responsible for funding any of the recommended changes a Minor Works form should be completed and signed by the Trustee. The risk assessment form should accompany the application. Only works with a high risk factor will be given a priority status and it may take some time to action even those works which have been given a priority. It will therefore be important for the school Governors and Management to consider what other support measures can be put in place as an interim arrangement.





Form (i) Risk Assessment of Health & Safety – School Site Issues

(A) Identified health & safety issues covered by this assessment:

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(B) Persons/Property exposed to risk:

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(C) Those involved in the assessment/role:

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(D) Background context/Any History of Health & Safety incidents/events:

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Section E - Risk to Pupils & Staff

(1) Identified Hazards	(2) Severity 1-5	(3) Likelihood 1-5	(4) Risk Factor (Severity x likelihood)	(5) Further measures required (Yes/No)

(6) Hazards scoring 12 or more	(7) Existing Precautions	(8) Additional Actions	(9) Action By/When

Section F - Risk to other site users

(1) Identified Hazards	(2) Severity 1-5	(3) Likelihood 1-5	(4) Risk Factor (Severity x likelihood)	(5) Further measures required (Yes/No)

(6) Hazards scoring 12 or more	(7) Existing Precautions	(8) Additional Actions	(9) Action By/When

Section G - Risk to Property

(1) Identified Hazards	(2) Severity 1-5	(3) Likelihood 1-5	(4) Risk Factor (Severity x likelihood)	(5) Further measures required (Yes/No)

(6) Hazards scoring 12 or more	(7) Existing Precautions	(8) Additional Actions	(9) Action By/When



APPENDIX 2

Challenging Pupil Behaviour - Guidance on completing Risk Assessment Form (ii)

The process should be completed by a representative of the Board of Governors, the Principal, the pupil's parent and other relevant professionals who are working with the pupil.

Section A: Name of the pupil.

Section B: Include details of whom/what is at risk (pupils, staff, parents, property).

Section C: Details of who is involved in completing the assessment. The meeting should include all those who have appropriate knowledge of the pupil and their needs and those who can provide additional support. It may not always be possible to get all of those working with the pupil to attend - in some cases they may submit a report or agree with the Principal support which could be offered if it was deemed appropriate by the assessment group. For many of these pupils there is likely to be some social work support for the family, or indeed the pupil may be in care. Where one exists it is useful to have the family social worker present at the meeting.

Section D: This section should include a breakdown of past incidents which have occurred. It will also be important to outline any specific needs which the child has which have been identified e.g. medical needs, or educational needs which have been identified through the completion of the statement taking process or through the schools use of the Code of Practice. It will also be important to allow the parent an opportunity to discuss issues/needs which the pupil has outside of the school setting.

Section E, F and G: Divide the risks into separate sections relating to specific groups & property. It will not always be necessary to complete all sections depending on who/what is at risk.



Completion of each sub-section

Part 1: Detail each of the relevant risks (e.g. risk to educational progress, risk of physical assault, risk of running out of school etc.). Only significant risks need to be noted.

Part 2 – 4: For each of the identified risks determine the severity and likelihood of each risk and also the risk factor. For each potential risk a score from 1 – 25 will be agreed (e.g. following a series of physical assaults on other pupils the risk factor may be Likelihood: 5; Severity: 4; Risk Factor: 20).

Part 5: Where the risk factor is below 12 no further action will be necessary. For a score of 12 or higher further measures should be considered.

Part 6: List the risks which have scored 12 or higher.

Part 7: Identify existing precautions which reduce the risk (e.g. classroom assistant, close supervision at break times, removal from class after an incident to calm down, regular contact with parents, positive behaviour strategies, I.E.P's, etc.).

Part 8: List additional actions which need to be taken (additional one to one support, modified curriculum, referral to Ed. Psychology, request for formal assessment, reduced timetable etc.).

Part 9: Identify who is responsible for each of the changes and when they will be implemented (e.g. Principal, parents, teacher, ELB services).





Form (ii) Risk Assessment of Challenging Pupil Behaviour

(A) Pupil covered by this assessment:

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(B) Persons/Property exposed to risk:

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(C) Those involved in the assessment/role:

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(D) Background context/Any History of incidents/events/
medical information:

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Section E - Risk to Individual Pupil

(1) Identified Risk	(2) Severity 1-5	(3) Likelihood 1-5	(4) Risk Factor (Severity x likelihood)	(5) Further measures required (Yes/No)

(6) Risks scoring 12 or more	(7) Existing Precautions	(8) Additional Actions	(9) Action By/When

Section F - Risk to other Pupils/Staff

(1) Identified Risk	(2) Severity 1-5	(3) Likelihood 1-5	(4) Risk Factor (Severity x likelihood)	(5) Further measures required (Yes/No)

(6) Risks scoring 12 or more	(7) Existing Precautions	(8) Additional Actions	(9) Action By/When

Section G - Risk to Property

(1) Identified Risk	(2) Severity 1-5	(3) Likelihood 1-5	(4) Risk Factor (Severity x likelihood)	(5) Further measures required (Yes/No)

(6) Risks scoring 12 or more	(7) Existing Precautions	(8) Additional Actions	(9) Action By/When



APPENDIX 3

Educational Visits - Guidance on completing Risk Assessment Form (iii)

The process should be completed by the school Principal/trip co-ordinator/ Governors. It may be the case that for some trips, particularly those abroad, that a completed risk assessment is available from the agencies organising the trip. Some local venues may also have a completed risk assessment available on request e.g. outdoor pursuit centres. In such cases schools would need to consider if any additional risks existed which were not considered. This may be the case where an individual pupil with specific needs was to attend.

Section A: Details of trip covered by the assessment (date, venue, pupils attending).

Section B: Include details of whom/what is at risk (pupils, staff, and property).

Section C: Details of who is involved in completing the assessment and their role (Principal, co-ordinator etc).

Section D: This section should provide some information about the reasons for the trip and information regarding past experiences of similar trips to this or other venues. Where a trip has previously been undertaken to a location by this or other similar group and no incidents arose then the initial risk assessment should suffice. Consideration should be given to any changes which may have occurred at the location, to the specific needs of this group or to changes in the activities which will be undertaken during the visit.

Section E, F and G: divide the risks into separate sections relating to specific groups and property. It will not always be necessary to complete all sections depending on who/what is at risk. Section E will only be relevant where there are specific needs of an individual which need to be considered. (e.g. behavioural issues/medical needs etc.).

Completion of each sub-section

Part 1: Detail each of the relevant hazards which will vary depending on the type of trip. Only significant hazards need to be noted.

Part 2 – 4: For each of the identified hazards determine the severity and likelihood of each and the associated risk factor. For each potential hazard a score from 1 – 25 will be agreed (e.g. risk of fall and injury during a rock climbing activity where on the last similar trip it happened but not on two previous similar trips. The risk factor may be Severity: 4; Likelihood: 3; Risk Factor: 12).

Part 5: Where the risk factor is below 12 no further action will be necessary. For a score of 12 or higher further measures should be considered.

Part 6: List the risks which have scored 12 or higher.

Part 7: Identify existing precautions which reduce the risk (e.g. good supervision, clear instruction, and appropriate safety equipment).

Part 8: List additional actions which need to be taken (e.g. increased supervision, procedures for dealing with pupil who has fallen, first aid support etc.).

Part 9: Identify who is responsible for each of the changes and when they will be implemented (e.g. Principal, leader in charge, staff at venue). All identified measures must be agreed for implementation prior to the approval of the trip. The completed risk assessment form should accompany the planning checklist which is presented to the Board of Governors for the approval of the visit. The Board of Governors may have decided to delegate this responsibility to the Principal or to the Chair of Governors.

Form (iii) Risk Assessment of Educational Visits

(A) Trip covered by this assessment:

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(B) Persons/Property exposed to risk:

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(C) Those involved in the assessment/role:

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(D) Background context/reason for trip/previous history of trips/incidents:

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Section E - Risk to Individual Pupil

(1) Identified Hazards	(2) Severity 1-5	(3) Likelihood 1-5	(4) Risk Factor (Severity x likelihood)	(5) Further measures required (Yes/No)

(6) Hazards scoring 12 or more	(7) Existing Precautions	(8) Additional Actions	(9) Action By/When

Section F - Risk to the Group

(1) Identified Hazards	(2) Severity 1-5	(3) Likelihood 1-5	(4) Risk Factor (Severity x likelihood)	(5) Further measures required (Yes/No)

(6) Hazards scoring 12 or more	(7) Existing Precautions	(8) Additional Actions	(9) Action By/When

Section G - Risk to Property

(1) Identified Hazards	(2) Severity 1-5	(3) Likelihood 1-5	(4) Risk Factor (Severity x likelihood)	(5) Further measures required (Yes/No)

(6) Hazards scoring 12 or more	(7) Existing Precautions	(8) Additional Actions	(9) Action By/When



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