



Risk Assessment Policy

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1. Aims and scope

ReFocus will identify hazards, assess risks and implement proportionate controls to protect pupils, staff, visitors, contractors and others affected by its activities. Risk assessment supports informed professional judgement; it does not replace safeguarding, sound supervision, competent practice or emergency action.

- Risk assessments will be suitable and sufficient, completed by a competent person and communicated to those who must implement them.
- Controls will reduce risk so far as is reasonably practicable. An activity will not proceed where residual risk is intolerable or essential controls are absent.
- Assessments will be proportionate: routine low-risk activity may be covered by established procedures, while unusual or higher-risk activity requires specific written planning.
- Pupil assessments will be child-centred, strengths-based and informed by safeguarding, SEND, medical, equality and communication needs.
- Where ReFocus provides alternative provision, it will share proportionate assurance and material risk information with the commissioning school or local authority.

2. Legal framework

This policy has regard to the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, Equality Act 2010, relevant workplace safety regulations, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, the Prevent duty guidance and DfE health-and-safety and educational-visits guidance.

Independent School Standards

Paragraph 16 of Part 3 requires the proprietor to ensure that the welfare of pupils is safeguarded and promoted by drawing up and effectively implementing a written risk-assessment policy and taking appropriate action to reduce identified risks. From September 2026, the additional standards on restrictive interventions require relevant incidents, including use of force and seclusion, to be recorded and reported in accordance with the applicable requirements. This policy must therefore be read with the Behaviour Policy and restrictive-intervention (inc physical restraint) procedures.

Specific assessments

- The employer must assess risks to employees and others, including young workers and new or expectant mothers where notified or otherwise known.
- Specific duties apply where relevant to fire, asbestos, hazardous substances, display-screen equipment, manual handling, work at height, work equipment, electricity, gas, water hygiene, first aid and workplace stress.

- The Prevent duty requires an assessment of the risk of pupils being drawn into terrorism. Online-safety arrangements should be informed by that assessment and by an annual online-safety risk review.
- Safeguarding risk and needs assessments required by KCSIE, including following reports of sexual violence, are led by the DSL and do not replace professional assessments.

3. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Hazard	Anything with the potential to cause injury, ill health, loss or other harm.
Risk	The combination of how likely harm is and how serious its consequences could be.
Control measure	An action or arrangement that eliminates a hazard or reduces likelihood or severity.
Initial risk	Risk before further controls are applied.
Residual risk	Risk remaining after all agreed controls are operating.
Dynamic assessment	An ongoing assessment made as circumstances change. It supports, but does not replace, advance written assessment where one is required.
Competent person	Someone with sufficient knowledge, training, experience and authority for the activity and level of risk.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 Proprietor

- retains overall accountability as proprietor and, where applicable, employer;
- ensures sufficient competent advice, resources and oversight;
- approves this policy and receives assurance on significant risks, incidents and overdue actions; and
- ensures the Independent School Standards are met, including the September 2026 restrictive-intervention requirements.

4.2 Headteacher

- leads implementation and ensures responsibilities are clearly allocated;
- ensures significant and safeguarding risks are escalated and controlled;
- approves activities or placements where policy requires senior authorisation; and
- ensures commissioners receive agreed assurances and are promptly informed of material changes.

4.3 Designated leads

The site lead coordinates premises and site assessments. The designated pupil-risk lead coordinates entry and individual pupil assessments. The DSL leads safeguarding risk and needs assessments. The Educational Visits Coordinator, or Headteacher where none is appointed, coordinates visit planning. Named postholders are recorded in the school's responsibility schedule so this policy does not become inaccurate when personnel change.

4.4 Staff, volunteers and contractors

- cooperate with assessment, read and implement relevant controls, and work within their competence;
- report hazards, defects, near misses, incidents and changes promptly;
- stop or modify an activity where there is serious and imminent danger; and
- provide suitable assessments and evidence for contracted work or services.

4.5 Pupils and parents or carers

Pupils and parents or carers will be given accessible information about relevant controls and are expected to follow reasonable safety instructions and disclose material changes. They will be involved in individual planning where appropriate. This does not transfer the school's responsibilities to them.

5. Risk assessment and control process

1. Define the activity and identify hazards using observation, records, manufacturer guidance, professional advice, staff and pupil knowledge, and previous incidents or near misses.
2. Identify who may be harmed and how, including pupils or adults who may be more vulnerable because of age, disability, SEND, medical needs, pregnancy, language, trauma, lone working or inexperience.
3. Evaluate initial risk (examples of the types of risk assessment completed at ReFocus can be found in Appendix E). Consider both foreseeable likelihood and credible severity
4. Select controls and record significant findings
5. Authorise, communicate and implement. High or very-high residual risk requires Headteacher review; intolerable risk means the activity must not proceed.
6. Monitor and review at the stated date and sooner after material change, new information, an incident or near miss, a control failure, or concern raised by a pupil, parent, staff member, commissioner or professional.

5.1 Dynamic assessment and emergencies

Staff must remain alert to changing circumstances and may pause, modify or end an activity. Serious and imminent danger requires immediate protective action and emergency or safeguarding procedures. Any material dynamic decision must be recorded afterwards and used to update the written assessment.

5.2 Individual pupil risk and support planning

An entry assessment will be completed before or during the admissions procedure using information from the pupil, parent or carer, commissioning body and relevant professionals. Missing information will be pursued and uncertainty recorded. The plan will consider risk to and from the pupil, strengths, protective factors, triggers, communication, SEND, medical needs, reasonable adjustments, safeguarding and the least restrictive effective controls.

The plan is not a label, disciplinary record or substitute for a child-protection plan, EHC plan, medical plan, behaviour support plan or professional assessment. Terms such as “defiance” or “attitude” will not be used without describing observable behaviour, context and possible unmet need. The pupil’s and parent’s views will be recorded where safe and appropriate.

5.4 Educational visits and off-site activity

Routine visits may be managed through established procedures and individual information. Visits involving unusual, significant or changing risks require specific assessment, competent leadership and approval. Planning must cover supervision, safeguarding, SEND and medical needs, transport, external providers, emergency communication, consent where required, contingency and learning from incidents or near misses.

5.5 Driving pupils

Only an authorised driver may transport pupils on school business. Checks cover the appropriate licence and category, insurance including business use, MOT where required, vehicle roadworthiness, seatbelts or restraints, breakdown and emergency arrangements, and notification of relevant changes. Safeguarding checks depend on the person’s overall role and regulated-activity status; driving alone does not automatically create a separate enhanced DBS requirement.

Transporting a pupil alone is not automatically prohibited but must be specifically justified and risk assessed, with suitable communication, route, collection, consent and safeguarding controls. Information collected will be relevant, proportionate and securely retained.

6. Monitoring, recording and retention

- A central register will identify current assessments, owners, approval, review dates and overdue actions.
- Significant incidents, accidents and near misses will be investigated; statutory reports will be made under RIDDOR where applicable.
- Risk information will be shared on a need-to-know basis in accordance with safeguarding and data-protection law.
- Records will be retained under the school's retention schedule, taking account of safeguarding, employment, insurance, limitation and specialist requirements. A fixed three-year period is not applied to every record.
- The Headteacher reviews implementation at least annually and following significant legal or operational change.

7. Related policies

- Health and Safety Policy;
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- Behaviour Policy and restrictive-intervention procedures;
- Educational Visits procedures;
- First Aid Policy;
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy and Allergy Safety Policy;
- SEND Policy and Accessibility Plan;
- Online Safety Policy and Prevent risk assessment;
- Data Protection and Records Retention arrangements; and
- Staff Code of Conduct, Lone Working and Critical Incident procedures.

The following appendices contain examples of potential risk assessment for completion in a range of risk management scenarios outlined above

Appendix A: Risk assessment register

Use this as the live index. “Applicable?” should be recorded rather than assuming every specialist assessment applies to every site.

Site Name				
Assessment area	Applicable?	Owner	Current version/date	Next review
Whole-school health and safety	☐ Yes ☐ No			
Fire	☐ Yes ☐ No			
First-aid needs	☐ Yes ☐ No			
Premises and workplace	☐ Yes ☐ No			
Asbestos / asbestos management	☐ Yes ☐ No			
Water hygiene / legionella	☐ Yes ☐ No			
Gas and electrical safety	☐ Yes ☐ No			
COSHH / hazardous substances	☐ Yes ☐ No			
Work equipment and machinery	☐ Yes ☐ No			
Manual handling	☐ Yes ☐ No			
Work at height	☐ Yes ☐ No			
Display-screen equipment	☐ Yes ☐ No			
Young workers	☐ Yes ☐ No			
New or expectant mothers	☐ Yes ☐ No			
Lone working and personal safety	☐ Yes ☐ No			
Work-related stress	☐ Yes ☐ No			
Violence and aggression	☐ Yes ☐ No			
Contractors and visitors	☐ Yes ☐ No			
Educational visits / off-site activity	☐ Yes ☐ No			
Transport and staff driving	☐ Yes ☐ No			
Curriculum: workshop / garden / boxing / PE	☐ Yes ☐ No			
Food, medical and allergy safety	☐ Yes ☐ No			
Online safety and filtering/monitoring	☐ Yes ☐ No			
Prevent / radicalisation	☐ Yes ☐ No			
Safeguarding risk and needs	☐ Yes ☐ No			
Individual pupil risk and support	☐ Yes ☐ No			

Appendix B: Driver authorisation form

Complete before driving pupils on school business and review annually or sooner following a material change.

Driver name / role	
Driving licence number	
Licence categories / restrictions	
Licence check completed	Date: _____ Checked by: _____
Vehicle registration / make / model	
MOT	Expiry: _____ ☐ Not required
Insurance	Insurer: _____ Policy expiry: _____
Business use confirmed	☐ Yes Evidence checked by: _____ Date: _____
Vehicle and safety	☐ Roadworthy ☐ Seatbelts/restraints ☐ Breakdown arrangements
Driving changes	Any relevant points, disqualification, restrictions, collision or insurer action:

Driver declaration

- I hold the correct licence and insurance for the vehicle and intended use.
- I will notify ReFocus immediately of any relevant change to my licence, health entitlement to drive, insurance or vehicle condition.
- I will follow agreed safeguarding, collection, route, communication and emergency arrangements.
- I understand that authorisation may be withdrawn.

Driver signature / date	
Authorised by / date	
Conditions or review date	

Single-pupil transport assessment

Is lone transport proposed?	☐ No ☐ Yes – complete below
Reason and alternatives considered	
Safeguarding and communication controls	
Collection / handover / route arrangements	
Parent/carers and commissioner arrangements	
Approved by / review date	

Appendix C: General risk assessment form

Use Appendix E to score risk. Add further hazard-record sheets as required.

Activity / location / persons affected	
Assessment owner and role	
Assessment date / version	
Relevant guidance / other plans	
People requiring particular consideration	
Emergency and communication arrangements	
Authorisation required	☐ No ☐ Headteacher ☐ Proprietor ☐ Other: _____
Planned review date	
Earlier review triggers	Change, incident/near miss, control failure, new information or concern

Appendix C: General risk assessment — hazard records

Hazard record 1

Hazard and possible harm	
Who may be harmed / particular vulnerability	
Existing controls	
Initial score	Likelihood: ____ Severity: ____ Score (L × S): ____
Further controls / actions	
Owner and completion date	
Residual score	Likelihood: ____ Severity: ____ Score (L × S): ____
Completion / evidence	Completed by: _____ Date: _____

Overall decision

Overall residual risk	☐ Low ☐ Moderate ☐ High ☐ Very high
Decision	☐ Proceed ☐ Proceed with conditions ☐ Do not proceed
Assessor signature / date	
Senior approval where required	
Communicated to / date	
Post-activity learning / changes	

Appendix D: Individual pupil risk and support plan

Confidential. Complete collaboratively and share only with those who need it. This does not replace statutory or specialist plans.

Pupil / preferred name / pronouns	
Date of birth / year group	
Commissioner / home school / contact	
Parent or carer / contact	
Assessment lead / date / version	
Placement timetable / locations / transport	
Relevant plans	☐ EHC ☐ SEND support ☐ Medical ☐ Child protection ☐ Behaviour/support ☐ Other
Information received / gaps / actions	

Pupil-centred profile

Strengths, interests and protective factors	
Pupil's views: what helps / worries / feels unsafe	
Parent or carer views	
Communication and sensory needs	
SEND, disability and reasonable adjustments	
Medical, mental-health or allergy considerations	
Safeguarding / exploitation / online considerations	

Concern / foreseeable harm	Describe observable behaviour or circumstances, not a label.
Context, triggers and early signs	
Who may be harmed and how	Include risk to the pupil.
Protective factors and existing controls	
Initial score	Likelihood: ____ Severity: ____ Score: ____
Preventative support / reasonable adjustments	
Response if concern escalates	Include who to contact and least restrictive response.
Further actions / owner / date	
Residual score	Likelihood: ____ Severity: ____ Score: ____

Review trigger / date	
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Agreement and review

Overall decision / conditions	
Pupil involved	☐ Yes ☐ No – reason: _____
Parent/carer involved	☐ Yes ☐ No – reason: _____
Commissioner informed	☐ Yes Date: _____ ☐ Not applicable
Assessor / signature / date	
Senior approval where required	
Next scheduled review	
Immediate review triggers	Safeguarding concern, incident/near miss, significant change, new professional information, placement or control failure

Appendix E: Risk matrix

Score each hazard as likelihood × severity. Use professional judgement: the number supports, but does not replace, a clear description and effective controls.

Likelihood	Descriptor
1 – Rare	Not expected, but possible in exceptional circumstances.
2 – Unlikely	Could occur, but not anticipated in normal circumstances.
3 – Possible	Might occur at some time.
4 – Likely	Expected to occur in many circumstances.
5 – Almost certain	Expected to occur frequently or imminently.

Severity

Severity	Descriptor
1 – Minor	Minor injury or short-lived effect; basic first aid may be required.
2 – Moderate	Injury or ill health requiring treatment or short absence.
3 – Serious	Significant injury or ill health, safeguarding harm or extended absence.
4 – Major	Life-changing injury, major safeguarding harm or single fatality potential.
5 – Catastrophic	Multiple fatalities or catastrophic, widespread harm.

Score and action

L \ S	1	2	3	4	5
1	1	2	3	4	5
2	2	4	6	8	10
3	3	6	9	12	15
4	4	8	12	16	20
5	5	10	15	20	25
Score		Level		Required response	
1–4		Low		Maintain controls and review as planned.	
5–9		Moderate		Improve controls where reasonably practicable; named owner and review.	
10–15		High		Further controls and Headteacher review required before proceeding.	
16–25		Very high		Do not proceed or stop activity until risk is reduced and senior approval is recorded.	