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# The Mill Hill School Foundation

## Risk Assessment Policy



**Risk Assessment Policy**

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## Risk Assessment Policy

### 1. Introduction

The Court of Governors of the Mill Hill School Foundation is committed to promoting the safety and welfare of all in the Foundation community so that effective education can take place. We aim to provide a safe environment for staff, parents, pupils and visitors by ensuring that all our educational and support operations are delivered in a safe manner that complies with legislation and follows best practice.

Risks are inherent in everyday life and the Foundation recognises the need to identify them and adopt systems for minimising them. To achieve this we undertake risk assessments to assist in managing the health and safety of the Foundation. This Policy explains the Foundation's approach to managing risk and identifying appropriate measures to control risks that have been identified.

This policy has been reviewed in accordance with the statutory guidance set out in Part 3 – Paragraph 16. Welfare, health and safety of pupils, Handbook for the Inspection of Schools (Comment on the Regulatory Requirements) – (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2019 (ISSR) effective September 2019.

The guidance is applicable to all those with responsibility for undertaking risk assessments for activities which are under their control.

### 2. Related Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following other policies:

1	Health & Safety Policy: In particular clauses relating to "Risk Assessments" and "Individual Responsibility"
2	The Policy to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children who are Pupils at the Foundation
3	Fire Risk Management Policy
4	Educational Visits Policy
5	First Aid Policy
6	Supervision Policy for the respective School

### 3. Objectives

- To ensure that suitable and sufficient risk assessments are undertaken for activities where there is likely to be significant risk.
- That identified control measures are implemented to control risk so far as reasonably practicable.
- That those affected by school activities have received suitable information on what to do.
- That risk assessments are recorded and reviewed when appropriate ensuring that staff responsible for assessing risk have the training to understand and record when and how a risk assessment is completed.

## 4. Guidance

Whilst the ultimate responsibility for risk management overall, and therefore risk assessments, lies with the Governors, the day to day management of this has been delegated to the Director of Operations (DO), Heads and their Senior Management Team (SMT). However, this policy applies to all staff and others in the School community have a role to play and this policy is applicable to all staff, contractors and the wider school community and all have an obligation to assist in creating a safe working, teaching and boarding environment by reporting unsafe incidents, premises or equipment whether on the school premises, on remote locations or while planning for or attending off-site activities. The DO is responsible to the Chair of the Estates Committee for implementation and annual review of this policy.

This guidance is applicable to general risk assessments. Where specialist skills are required, eg asbestos, fire, water quality and hazardous substances, there is separate policy guidance in place. A risk assessment checklist is completed at the start of each academic year by Heads of Departments to assist them at local level.

Risk assessment training is provided for specific roles and will be provided on specific areas as appropriate where identified by the DO, Estate Manager, Domestic Bursar or Head of Department. All generic risk assessments are generally completed by the Estate Manager, Grounds Manager or Domestic Bursar according to their areas of responsibility, but where appropriate, outside contractors are used such as for legionella checks or asbestos assessments

## 5. What is Risk Assessment?

A risk assessment is the formal examination of a possible harm or hazard that could result from a particular activity or situation at the Foundation and which may affect staff, parents, pupils or visitors or the Foundation or its Schools themselves.

The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) advocate in their guide Five Steps to Risk Assessment the application of a hierarchy of measures which aim to eliminate or minimise risk:

- Try a less risky option (e.g. switch to using a less hazardous chemical)
- Prevent access to the hazard (e.g. by guarding)
- Organise the work to reduce exposure to the hazard; (e.g. put barriers between pedestrians and the traffic)
- Issue staff with Personal Protective Equipment (e.g. clothing, footwear, goggles etc)
- Provide welfare facilities e.g. washing facilities for removal of contamination and first aid

Risk assessments can be used to identify potential hazards to people (e.g. trip hazards) and property (e.g. a fire). They are used also to identify strategic hazards (e.g. damage to the Foundation's reputation), financial hazards (e.g. a decline in pupil numbers), compliance hazards (e.g. failing to follow safeguarding requirements) and environmental hazards (e.g. legionella). Apart from being a legal requirement, risk assessments therefore make good sense, focusing on prevention, rather than reacting when things go wrong.

A risk assessment will take into account:

- the hazard - which is something with the potential to cause harm (e.g. fire)
- the likelihood of the risk - which is an evaluation of the probability (or likelihood) of the hazard



- occurring (e.g. a chip pan will catch fire if left unattended)
- an assessment of risk - which is an assessment of the severity of the outcome of the hazard if it occurs (e.g. loss of life, destruction of property)
- the control measures – which are the measures and procedures to put in place in order to minimise the likelihood of the risk and the potential consequences of the hazard (e.g. staff training, fire alarms and insurance)

The risk assessment process will consist of the following 6 steps:

- what could go wrong
- who might be harmed
- assessment of existing control measures
- need for additional control measures
- signed and dated by the individual carrying out the risk assessment
- monitoring and review of the assessment to ensure risk is being managed effectively

Risk assessments are to be carried out by individual members of staff with specific responsibility for a particular event or activity, equipment or facility where there is potential for someone (staff, pupil or visitor) to be harmed. Harm may arise for a number of reasons including poor condition of equipment or facilities, introduction of new equipment, failure to comply with operating procedures, lack of training or changes to people, buildings or equipment. The school Health and Safety Advisor will be responsible for the maintenance of risk assessment records and for directing training where it is needed as appropriate.

## **6. Independent Review**

The Foundation has appointed a specialist health and safety advisor, Dr Keith Bowker, Oxford Radiation Protection Consultants (ORPC), who has the relevant training, qualifications and experience to undertake this role and conduct periodic, regular reviews. Where appropriate, he will seek input from the staff involved in the work activities being assessed and advise the school on providing a safe environment and assessing risks.

It is not solely the duty of the Foundation to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of the staff, pupils, parents, the public and other people who use the premises. All Staff have a duty to take reasonable care for themselves and other persons who may be affected by their actions and to support the Foundation in providing a safe environment by reporting accidents and identifying potential hazards. A number of key staff are IOSH trained and the Health School Health and Safety Advisor is NEBOSH qualified

Risk assessments will also be reviewed:

- when there are changes to the activity
- after a near miss or accident
- when there are changes to the type of people involved in the activity
- when there are changes in good practice
- when there are legislative changes
- annually if for no other reason

## **7. Strategic Risk**

The Mill Hill School Foundation is Company (Company No 03404450) and Charity (Charity No 1064758). Each year the Court of Governors examine the major risks faced by the Foundation to ensure systems are in place



to monitor and control these risks and to mitigate any impact that they may have on the Charity and its Schools in the future. A central risk register is maintained for the purposes of reviewing and monitoring risks across the Foundation and the register is reviewed on a regular basis by the Estate Committee.

The Court assesses the principal risks as being potential loss of reputation, declining school rolls and failure in safeguarding of students. It is recognised that systems can provide reasonable but not absolute assurance that major risks have been managed adequately.

Key controls applied in the Company and in turn the Charity include:

- An established organisational structure with clear lines for reporting
- Terms of reference and regular training for governing bodies and their executive committees
- Comprehensive strategic planning, budgeting and management reporting
- Formal written policies which are reviewed each year
- Monitoring of financial, investment and professional performance
- Vetting procedures as required by law for the protection of the vulnerable

## **8. Financial Risk**

The Foundation's Fraud Risk Assessment will be reviewed annually by Governors as part of the annual audit process. Our auditors test selected areas at risk of fraud have been assessed, existing controls identified, reviewed and improvement are suggested where appropriate. The Fraud Risk Register is reviewed annually by the Audit Committee.

## **9. Operational Risk – Specific Arrangements**

There are numerous activities carried out at the Foundation, each of which requires its own separate risk assessment. Such areas in which risk assessments are of particular importance are:

- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) activities
- Educational Visits and Trips
- The day-to-day supervision of pupils
- Fire safety
- Health and Safety
- Swimming Pool safety
- Buildings and footpaths

Other examples of the kinds of potential risk or hazard that have been identified and addressed by a risk assessment at the Foundation or one of its Schools are:

- sports training and matches
- sports and PE facilities, such as the Swimming Pool
- school facilities, such as classrooms and science laboratories
- school trips
- leaf mincer and bleeding canker infection
- ponds on the Foundation estate
- public coming onto the Foundation estate to use the Sports Hall facilities or trespassing from the rights of way
- traffic using the Mill Hill School Car Park

- slip and trip hazards

Other specific areas of risk include:

- **Maintenance and Grounds:** Risk assessments and training are required for every tool and item of equipment, as well as for manual handling, slips and trips, working at height, lone working, asbestos, control of contractors on site, electricity, gas, water, swimming pool maintenance and the control of substances hazardous to health (COSHH). Induction and refresher training covers risk assessments, safe working practices, communication and health and safety notices and protective equipment.
- **Office-based Administrative Staff:** Risk assessments are required in respect of Display Screen Equipment (DSE), lighting, noise, heat and cables for staff (primarily office-based) who spend the majority of their working day in front of a screen.
- **Medical Facilities:** The Medical Centre, located between MHS and Grimsdell School, represents particular risks associated with hygiene and infection control, storage of medicines and general safeguarding considerations when treating pupils, especially EYFS pupils. The Foundation Nurse Manager is responsible for ensuring appropriate risk assessments are maintained and controls are in place to safeguard pupils and staff, and control medicines.
- **Special Events:** A risk assessment is undertaken when a special event takes place at the Foundation. These risk assessments can be very detailed for major events, such as the Mill Hill Parents' Association Fireworks Party to routine events, such as Foundation Day.

The Foundation uses model or generic risk assessments for educational activities and visits. The Schools follow best practice advice and comply with the regulatory requirements regarding risk assessments for science and technology activities.

## 10. The Foundation Approach to the Management of Risk

The annual Report of the Governors includes a review of the significant risks facing the Foundation and the Charity and the controls employed to mitigate these risks which are recorded in the Foundation Risk Map. The Governors determine the assessment of main risk areas that the Foundation may face, such as compliance with the Foundation's charitable objectives, loss of fee income, financial controls and safe recruitment of staff, and introduced policies and procedures to monitor the controls established to mitigate those risks. The Governors undertake regular reviews of policy, procedures and controls. The Risk Map is reviewed annually.

The Foundation has a First Aid Policy and the Medical Centre has written procedures for all aspects of its operation, including care for illness, accidents and injuries, the GP and immunisation service, travel vaccinations, administration of medicines, planning for special dietary needs and allergies. Accident forms are held at the Medical Centre and at each of the Foundation Schools. When an accident occurs the Nurse or First Aider is responsible for ensuring that the accident report is completed and if appropriate passed to the DO for information and assessment and who will make any necessary reports under RIDDOR. All accidents reported to the DO and notifiable near misses will be reviewed by the Health and Safety Committee which meets each term, with a view to assessing whether any measures need to be taken to prevent recurrence. The Nurse Manager presents a Report on Accidents and Injuries throughout the Foundation to the Pastoral Committee and Estate Committee of the Court of Governors.

The Policy to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children who are Pupils at the School and The Recruitment, Selection and Disclosure Policy and Procedure, with regular safeguarding training for staff, form the core of our Child Protection risk management.

The Foundation's safe recruitment policies and procedures ensure that the school is not exposed to the risk of employing staff whether under a contract of employment, under a contract for services or otherwise than under a contract as set down by the DfE who are barred from working with children or who are not allowed to work in the UK. By compliance with the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education the Foundation extends this safeguarding regime to Governors, volunteers, contractors, agency and supply workers and the members of the families of staff aged over 16 years who are accommodated on site.

Risk assessments and training are undertaken for all significant risks with regard to catering and cleaning departments, including food safety, manual handling, slips and trips and the control of substances hazardous to health (COSHH); and maintenance and estates departments, including manual handling, working at height, maintenance and grounds equipment, swimming pool maintenance, use of pesticides and other substances hazardous to health (COSHH), protective equipment and safety notices.

The Foundation Security Policy provides a strategy for the effective delivery of a safe and secure environment which is a shared responsibility of all staff and to ensure that the Foundation has regard to consideration of newly arising threats which are addressed through risk management. Pupils are expected to be actively involved to protect themselves and others from risk, safeguard property and support the Foundation's security strategy to ensure that the Foundation has regard to consideration of newly arising threats which are addressed through risk management. Risk assessments cover identified major risks, including fire and security risks.

The Risk Assessment model used by the Foundation is principally that recommended by the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health. All risk assessments undertaken are regularly reviewed and updated if required.

The Foundation employs specialists who undertake risk assessments with regard to high-risk areas, such as fire safety, asbestos management, and high-risk events. The Foundation employs specialist health and safety consultants also who advise on workplace health and safety, and other specialists for other areas, including portable appliance testing, security, legionella testing, fire equipment and gas.

Pupils are normally involved only in low-risk activities. The Schools may undertake some medium risk activities with older pupils (e.g. sailing, skiing and CCF training) and when they do so the School will usually employ specialist qualified instructors. Pupils are always given a safety briefing before participating in these activities, are required to wear the appropriate protective equipment and to follow instructions. Any high-risk activities, such as shooting, will be allowed only under the control of specialist instructors.

In accordance with Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework and National Minimum Standards (NMS) for Boarding the Foundation ensures that it takes all reasonable steps to ensure that the staff and children are not exposed to risks and written risk assessments are undertaken when considered appropriate by the School. The written risk assessments are regularly reviewed by the School.

## **11. Review**

This Policy shall be reviewed every two years.

Last Review: March 2022

Next Review: March 2024

This Policy has been approved by the Estates Committee of the Court of Governors

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