



Section Eight

Safety & Suitability of Premises, Environment and Equipment

Risk Assessments

- Risk Assessment Policy and Procedure
- Requirements for Risk Assessments



Each term, a 5 step Risk Assessment will be conducted on the site used for Forest School sessions, whether using the school site or other designated site.

These steps are: as follows:

1. Identify the Hazards
2. Decide who might be harmed and how (particularly allergy sufferers)
3. Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions
4. Record findings and implement measures required
5. Review the Risk Assessment and update termly

Any considerations will be pointed out to adults and children beforehand to help manage risk. All adults involved will be given a copy of the completed Risk Assessment for that site, and are obligated to manage or report risks under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

Safety sweep

Before each session, the Forest School Leader will conduct a safety sweep to identify any hazards and reduce or remove them if possible. Occasionally, in order to encourage children's awareness of safety, the children will also walk the boundary of the site to identify any hazards or risks that they think may need to be taken into consideration.

A systematic approach to risk management and risk assessment for the activities and participants takes place in Forest School including:

- A four-level risk assessment: Location and nature of hazard; Who it might harm; Level of risk; controls in place and carried out; Details of any remedial work carried out and/or actions take
- Risk assessment records.
- Notes for rationale - a justification for determining the frequency of checking based on intensity, level and type of activity.
- System for delivery team communication of procedure and action to take.
- A system for follow up risk assessments and/or regular reviews are in place - clear records of monitoring of risk assessments; details of how risk assessments are reviewed (is it just by leader or with others in the delivery team); understanding of when next review is scheduled.
- A system for delivery team communication of procedure and action to take



- The Forest School site must be made safe and be easily accessible. A full risk assessment of the site to identify hazards and action needed to reduce risk to a safe level is essential prior to any sessions taking place (see appendix a).
- A safety sweep of the area must be made before each Forest School session. Look for windblown trees and litter.
- Different activities and Forest School groups will need risk assessments to be modified the risk assessment should include location of the site, grid reference, phone number of the nearest hospital. All adults should have access to this information, as it could be the leader that is injured.



Risk Assessment Policy and Procedure

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that hazards are identified, risks are assessed and removed or minimised to an acceptable level to create a safe environment in which children can thrive.

Children's Woodland Adventure will ensure that all areas, equipment, activities, resources and outings are safe for children. We encourage ways of working that ensure the safety of children, employees and all other persons who come onto the premises.

The health and safety officer responsible for the general implementation of this policy is: *(Insert name)*

The named person will undertake any relevant training to support their role.

All staff members have a responsibility to bring to the attention of the above-named person any concerns with regards to health and safety. The above-named person is responsible for recording any concerns raised and acting upon them.

We recognise that children need some level of risk in their activities and outings in order to ensure that they continue to develop, but these risks are assessed to ensure that they are appropriate to the age and stage of development of the child/ran.

All staff are responsible for the health safety of themselves, children and any other persons on the premises and may access relevant training.

All new staff members will be inducted into the settings health and safety policies and procedures including those for risk assessment within the first week of their employment.

Risk assessments will be conducted to assess the environment, identify hazards and minimise risks to ensure that our environment is safe and suitable for all children, employees and all other persons who come onto the premises.

Some written risk assessments relating to specific issues will be kept on site and will be accessible at all times to inform staff practice and to demonstrate how we are managing risks. Risk assessments will be



carried out regularly and will be appropriately recorded clearly stating who undertook the risk assessment, the date of the review and any action taken following a review or incident.

Daily checks will be carried out on the indoor and outdoor environment before children access these areas. COSHH legislation will be followed and COSHH assessments will be recorded.
(More information can be found at www.HSE.gov.uk)

This policy is implemented in conjunction with settings Health & Safety Policy
Any breaches of this policy are subject to the settings disciplinary procedure.

Risk Assessment Procedure

When conducting risk assessments staff will;

- Walk around the setting and identify potential hazards.
- Evaluate the level of risk, considering who might be harmed and how.
- Where it is helpful the risk assessment will be written in relation to specific issues to record any existing precautions and any action necessary to further minimise risk.
- Written risk assessments will record who undertook the assessment, the date of the assessment and the review date

This policy and procedure have been adopted by Pillarwood Farm Pre-school and Children's Woodland Adventures

Signed on behalf of the setting by:

..... Manager/Owner

Reviewed date: March 2024 Reviewed date: March 2025

Review due: March 2026



Requirements for Risk Assessments

Introduction

The Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage sets out legal requirements that all providers must meet. This includes requirements relating to risk assessments. Providers must have a policy and procedures for assessing risks and must carry out risk assessments in two circumstances. These are in relation to:

- the environment (paragraph 3.63 of the Statutory framework)
- outings (paragraph 3.64 of the Statutory framework).

This factsheet sets out our expectations relating to the policy and procedures and the identification, checking and recording of risks in these two areas.

Risk assessment policy and procedures

The Statutory framework requires providers to have a policy and procedures for assessing risks. You must have these in writing unless you are a child-minder (paragraph 3.3 of the statutory framework). There is no detail on what the policy and procedures must cover. We would normally expect them to cover how and when risk assessments are carried out, who is involved in assessing risks, what aspects they cover, what records are needed and how these must be kept. If you are a child-minder you must be able to explain these arrangements to us if you do not have your policy and procedures in writing.

Risk assessments relating to the environment

The legal requirement is for risk assessments that identify aspects of the environment that need to be checked on a regular basis, when and by whom those aspects will be checked and how risks will be removed and minimised. The Statutory framework states that it is for providers to judge when these risk assessments should be in writing. However, providers must also comply with the requirements of health and safety legislation (paragraph 3.53) and providers must consider how they meet **Requirements for risk assessments November 2012 No.120334 2** the requirements for risk assessments in relation to that legislation where five or more people work together.¹

¹ For more information on health and safety legislation, please go to the Health and Safety Executive website: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/index.htm>.



The Statutory framework also requires risk assessments to be reviewed regularly. If providers are also registered on the Childcare Register the requirement is for risk assessments to be reviewed annually. How you decide on what needs to be written, what needs to be checked and how often it is reviewed is very much down to you, but you may wish to take into account:

- the size of your provision, its layout and location (for example if there are stairs for children to negotiate, or an outdoor area that has rubbish thrown into it from passers-by)
- the ages of children attending and whether areas within the provision are used by children of different ages
- whether you involve children in assessing risks, including taking account of their height, developmental understanding and mobility
- whether the risk assessment is for your sole use at all times or whether other people use it as well (for example a community hall where risks may be introduced by other users)
- whether your staff group, including any volunteers, understand risks to children and how to manage them and can explain this to others
- the number of people who need to know if aspects have been checked, including part-time staff, volunteers or agency workers.

Risk assessments for outings

There is a legal requirement for you to carry out risk assessments for outings. The Statutory framework makes it clear that this should include an assessment of the ratios of adults to children needed for outings, and it must include an assessment of the risks and hazards that might arise for the children. We interpret an outing as being any occasion you leave the premises where you provide childcare with at least one child being cared for. The children do not necessarily have to return to the premises (for example their parents may collect them from the outing destination). If you are collecting children from elsewhere, such as school, before bringing them into the childcare setting, we do not interpret this as an outing. However, it is still good practice to assess and minimise any risks associated with such a journey. You do not have to carry out a risk assessment before every outing, providing there is one in place for that type of outing. Each type of outing will carry its own Requirements for risk assessments particular risks and you must assess the risks and hazards that may arise and the steps to be taken to remove, minimise and manage them.



As with risks to the environment, it is for you to judge whether these risk assessments should be in writing and how often they need to be reviewed and updated. How you decide on what needs to be written, what needs to be checked and how often it is reviewed is very much up to you, but you may wish to take into account:

- the type of outing and how regularly you carry it out - a regular trip to the local park or shops needs a risk assessment before you make such an outing for the first time, but thereafter you need only consider the risks for the outing and your measures to counteract them, such as your arrangements for first aid and how to contact the children's parents; a one-off outing, such as a trip to the beach for the day, will have different risks and will need its own risk assessment
- the adults accompanying the children and whether these are the same for each outing or change regularly
- the type of activity or activities involved, for example more adults may be needed to supervise a swimming activity than a walk round a nearby field
- the ages of the children on the outing and how children of different ages may change any associated risks
- the time of the day of the outing and whether this changes the risks, for example traffic levels during the rush hour.

Inspecting risk assessments

Inspectors will always consider whether the procedures you have in place are sufficient to reduce or eliminate risks, through discussions with the child-minder or in group settings with the manager and staff, and through a tour of the premises. Inspectors may ask to see your policy or any recorded assessments, especially where they identify risks associated with your premises, or where we have received information related to the safety of the premises that prompts an inspection. Child-minders do not need to have a written policy but must still be able to demonstrate to inspectors how they identify and manage the risks associated with their provision and any outings they undertake.

You are most likely to be judged as inadequate if you are not able to demonstrate that you understand and manage risks well, regardless of whether or not you record these. You cannot be judged as outstanding or good if you fail to meet the legal requirements for risk assessments. We will always raise an action, or take other enforcement action, where the legal requirements for risk assessments are not met.