



Risk Assessment Policy

Purpose of the policy

Wildwood Nature School believes that the health and safety of children is of paramount importance. We make our school a safe and healthy place for children, families, staff and volunteers by assessing and minimising the hazards and risks to enable the children to thrive in a healthy and safe environment. This policy outlines our processes and procedures for assessing risk.

What is risk assessment?

Risk assessment means taking note of aspects of your workplace and activities that could cause harm, either to yourself or to others, deciding what needs to be done to prevent that harm, making sure this is adhered to and is updated when necessary.

The law does not require that all risk is eliminated – but that ‘reasonable precaution’ is taken. This is particularly important when balancing the need for children to be able to take appropriate risks through physically challenging play. Children need the opportunity to work out what is not safe and what they should do when faced with a risk.

The risk assessment process

Wildwood Nature School uses risk assessment processes to ensure the health and safety of our children and staff. We follow these steps to assess risk:

1. Identification of hazard – where is it and what is it?
2. What is the risk - how could harm be caused by the hazard?
3. Who is at risk – for example staff, children, families, cooks, cleaners?
4. Assessment as to the level of risk as high, medium, low. This is both the risk of the likelihood of it happening, as well as the possible impact if it did.
5. What is the benefit of the activity? Does the benefit outweigh the level of risk?

6. Control measures to reduce/eliminate risk – what will you need to do – or ensure others will do – in order to reduce that risk?
7. Monitoring and review – How do you know if what you have said is working, or is thorough enough? If it is not working, it will need to be amended, or maybe there is a better solution.

Our risk assessment process covers adults and children and includes:

- checking for and noting hazards and risks in our school premises and in areas which we visit;
- assessing the level of risk and who might be affected;
- deciding which areas need attention; and
- taking action when required.

Risk assessments and review

Wildwood Nature School has carried out extensive risk benefit assessments (RBA) for our activities both within the school building and when doing Forest School activities in the woods (see our *Risk Benefit Assessments*). All members of staff responsible for children are fully briefed on the RBA for the activities they are leading and have been involved in the process of creating and reviewing the RBAs. Our written risk assessments are reviewed on a bi-annual basis by the head of school.

In the event of an accident, a Wildwood Nature School Incident Report Form (or notes on mobile to write down later) must be completed on the day of the incident and ideally within one hour. An automatic copy will be sent to the head of school. In the case of a near miss, details to be logged centrally, including: date, time, location, people involved, incident, resolution. Whenever an incident or near miss occurs, the RBA will be reviewed, and adjusted if necessary, as soon as possible after the incident.

In addition to this, daily site risk assessments are carried out both indoors and, in the forest, and any new risks highlighted to the head of school for action. Visual risk assessments are constantly carried out by staff, so risks are assessed on an on-going basis. Health and safety issues are checked daily before each session by the staff.

Legal framework

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

Health and Safety at Work Act (1996)

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, 1992

Further Guidance

- Five Steps to Risk Assessment (HSE 2006): www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf

Policy review

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