



## 4.4: Risk Assessment Policy & Procedure

Harpole Preschool has adopted the Preschool Learning Alliance (PLA) policy for Risk Assessment. The PLA ensure that their policies adhere to statutory guidance and legislative procedure and they provide the preschool with any updates. All policies and procedures are ratified by the Preschool Trustees on a rolling programme. The preschool staff, led by Sharon Matthews, ensure that their practice is in line with the policies and procedures outlined in the PLA guidance.

### Policy statement

Harpole Pre-school believe that the health and safety of children is of paramount importance. We, as far as possible, make our setting a safe and healthy place for children, parents, staff and volunteers by assessing and minimising the hazards and risks to enable the children to thrive in a healthy and safe environment.

### ***Risk assessment means:***

*Taking note of aspects of your workplace and activities that could cause harm, either to yourself or to others, and deciding what needs to be done to prevent that harm, making sure this is adhered to.*

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.

Health and safety risk assessments inform our procedures. Staff and the committee are involved in reviewing risk assessments and procedures – they are the ones with first-hand knowledge as to whether the control measures are effective – and they can give an informed view to help update procedures accordingly.

This policy is based on the five steps below:

- Identification of a risk: Where is it and what is it?

- Who is at risk: Childcare staff, children, parents, etc?
- Assessment as to whether the level of a risk is high, medium, low. This takes into account both the likelihood of it happening, as well as the possible impact if it did.
- Control measures to reduce/eliminate risk: What will you need to do, or ensure others will do, in order to reduce that risk?
- 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.

## **Procedures**

- Our supervisor undertakes training and ensures all staff and volunteers have adequate training in health and safety matters.
- Our risk assessment process covers adults and children and includes:
  - determining where it is helpful to make some written risk assessments in relation to specific issues, to inform staff practice, and to demonstrate how we are managing risks if asked by parents and/or carers and inspectors;
  - checking for and noting hazards and risks indoors and outside, in relation to our premises and activities;
  - assessing the level of risk and who might be affected;
  - deciding which areas need attention; and
  - developing an action plan that specifies the action required, the time-scales for action, the person responsible for the action and any funding required.
- We maintain lists of health and safety issues, which are checked daily before the session begins, as well as those that are checked on a weekly and termly basis when a full risk assessment is carried out.
- Our supervisor ensures that checks, such as electricity and gas safety checks, and any necessary work to the setting premises are carried out annually and records are kept through the Old School Hall committee.
- Our supervisor ensures that staff members carry out risk assessments that include relevant aspects of fire safety, food safety for all areas of the premises.
- Our supervisor manager ensures that staff members carry out risk assessments for work practice including:
  - changing children;
  - preparation and serving of food/drink for children;
  - children with allergies;
  - cooking activities with children;

- supervising outdoor play and indoor/outdoor climbing equipment;
  - assessment, use and storage of equipment for disabled children;
  - the use and storage of substances which may be hazardous to health, such as cleaning chemicals;
  - visitors to the setting who are bringing in equipment or animals as part of children's learning experiences; and
  - following any incidents involving threats against staff or volunteers.
- Our supervisor ensures that staff members carry out risk assessments for off-site activities if required, including:
    - children's outings;
    - forest schools;
    - farm visits;
    - school visits;
    - home visits; and
    - other off-site duties such as attending meetings, banking etc.

#### **Visits to farms – as and when applicable.**

- Before a visit to a farm a risk assessment is carried out - this may take account of safety factors listed in the farm's own risk assessment which should be viewed.
- We contact the venue in advance of the visit to ensure that there has been no recent outbreak of E.coli or other infections. If there has been an outbreak, we will review the visit and may decide to postpone it.
- We advise staff and volunteers who are, or may be, pregnant to avoid contact with ewes and to consult their GP before the visit.
- The Supervision of children on outings as trips, 4.3, policy and procedure is followed.
- Children wash their hands after contact with animals.
- Outdoor footwear worn to visit farms is cleaned of mud and debris and should not be worn indoors.

#### **Legal framework**

- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999)

#### **Further guidance**

- Five Steps to Risk Assessment (HSE 2011)

**Ratified on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2020**

**Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications**

- Managing Risk (2009)