Risk Assessment Policy

Purpose and scope

Eden Springs Girls Secondary is committed to providing a safe environment for pupils, staff, visitors and contractors. Risk assessment is used to identify hazards, judge the likelihood and seriousness of harm, and put proportionate controls in place. It should enable safe learning and participation, not create unnecessary restrictions.

This policy applies to school premises, grounds, classrooms, curriculum activities, events, educational visits, clubs and other activities organised or controlled by the school. It should be read alongside the school's Health and Safety, Safeguarding and Child Protection, Educational Visits, First Aid, Medical Conditions, Fire Safety, Security, Behaviour, Online Safety and relevant emergency procedures.

Legal and guidance framework

The school will follow applicable health and safety law and relevant guidance, including the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the Department for Education's health and safety advice for schools, relevant Health and Safety Executive guidance, and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026.

KCSIE 2026 is statutory safeguarding guidance. It does not replace the school's wider health and safety duties. This policy connects risk management with safeguarding so that any concern about a pupil's welfare identified during an assessment is acted on through the school's safeguarding procedures.

Responsibilities

Management / Proprietor

- Has overall responsibility for ensuring that suitable arrangements, competent support, resources and monitoring are in place for health and safety and safeguarding.
- Ensures significant risks are assessed, appropriate controls are implemented, and necessary actions are followed up.

Headteacher

- Has day-to-day responsibility for implementing this policy and ensuring staff know how to raise hazards and access current risk assessments.
- Ensures risk assessments are completed by people with suitable knowledge of the activity and risks, and that identified actions have an owner and completion date.
- Ensures safeguarding concerns arising from risk assessments are referred promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL.

DSL / Deputy DSL

- Leads the response to safeguarding concerns in accordance with the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures and KCSIE 2026.
- Advises on safeguarding elements of risk assessments where relevant, including risks relating to child-on-child abuse, vulnerable pupils, visitors, off-site activities or the wider context.

Staff and activity leaders

- Follow the controls relevant to their work, communicate them to pupils in an age-appropriate way, and report hazards, near misses, incidents or changes promptly.
- Do not undertake an activity if they reasonably believe it cannot be carried out safely; they should pause it where safe to do so and seek advice from the Headteacher or responsible lead.

Competent assessors

- May include the Headteacher, senior leaders, teachers, premises staff or other suitably experienced people. The assessor must understand the activity and seek specialist advice where the risks exceed their competence.

When a risk assessment is needed

Risk assessment should be proportionate to the actual risk. A separate written assessment is not automatically required for every routine classroom task where suitable school-wide controls already exist. A written assessment should be completed where significant risks need to be considered, where required by school procedures or law, or where an activity or circumstance introduces risks not adequately covered by existing arrangements.

Assessments may be needed for, for example:

- school premises, playgrounds, classrooms, equipment and maintenance work;
- curriculum activities, practical work, sports, performances, celebrations and school events;
- educational visits, transport, residential visits and activities away from school;
- fire, evacuation, lockdown, security incidents and other foreseeable emergencies;
- hazardous substances, manual handling, work at height, vehicle movements and specialist equipment;
- individual needs where a pupil's medical condition, disability, SEND or other circumstances create specific risks or require adjustments;
- safeguarding-related situations where a pupil's safety may be affected by the activity, setting, supervision, interactions or wider context.

How to complete an assessment

The assessor should consult relevant staff and, where appropriate, pupils, parents/carers, premises specialists or other professionals. The assessment should record:

- the activity, location, date, assessor and people who may be affected;
- the hazards and how harm could occur;
- existing controls and whether they are adequate;
- the level of risk and any further controls required;
- who will take each action and the deadline for completion;
- how the controls will be communicated, supervised and checked;
- the review date or the events that will trigger an earlier review.

Controls should follow a sensible hierarchy: remove the hazard where reasonably practicable; otherwise reduce the risk through safe systems, suitable equipment, supervision, training, access arrangements and clear instructions. Personal protective equipment should be used where appropriate but should not be the only control where stronger measures are reasonably practicable.

Review and update

The previous policy stated that assessments should be renewed no later than two years after the initial assessment. A fixed two-year interval is not, by itself, sufficient to keep every assessment safe or current. The school will set a review date appropriate to each risk and review the assessment sooner whenever:

- there is a significant change to the activity, premises, equipment, staffing or how the area is used;
- a new hazard is identified or an existing control is found to be ineffective;
- an accident, near miss, safeguarding concern or other incident indicates that controls may need to change;
- a pupil's needs or circumstances change, or new information is received;
- updated legal requirements, official guidance or professional advice affect the assessment.

Controls must be monitored between formal reviews. A review date does not mean staff should continue using an assessment they know to be out of date or unsuitable.

Safeguarding and KCSIE 2026

Risk assessments must take a pupil-centred approach and consider whether the activity, environment, supervision or arrangements could expose a pupil to harm. Safeguarding risk assessments support, but never replace, the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures.

- Where a risk assessment identifies a concern that a pupil may be experiencing abuse, neglect, exploitation, pupil-on-pupil abuse or another safeguarding risk, staff must report it to the DSL or Deputy DSL without delay, in line with the school's safeguarding procedures.
- If a pupil is in immediate danger or requires urgent protection, staff must take immediate action and contact emergency services where appropriate. Reporting to the DSL must not delay urgent action.
- Staff must not investigate a safeguarding concern themselves or promise a child secrecy. They should listen, take the concern seriously, record the pupil's words as accurately as possible, and pass on the information promptly.
- Safeguarding records should be factual, timely and stored securely. Record the concern, actions taken, decisions, rationale and outcomes in the school's approved safeguarding system, following the DSL's advice and school procedures.
- Where the concern relates to an adult working in the school, follow the school's procedures for allegations or low-level concerns and report it to the appropriate person. Staff must not assume that a health and safety control alone resolves a safeguarding concern.
- Relevant information may be shared with safeguarding partners where necessary and lawful to protect a pupil ; data protection must not be used as a reason to delay necessary safeguarding action.

Examples of safeguarding-related assessment topics include safe supervision and visibility, one-to-one situations, visitor and contractor access, changing or intimate-care arrangements, risks during trips or transport, and known risks arising from interactions between pupils. The DSL should be involved where a safeguarding element is identified.

Pupils with medical conditions, SEND or additional needs

Assessments should consider individual needs without making assumptions based solely on a diagnosis, disability or SEND status. Where relevant, the school should work with the pupil,

parents/carers and appropriate professionals to identify practical controls and reasonable adjustments. The aim is to support safe access to learning and activities, rather than automatically excluding a pupil from an opportunity.

Relevant information should be shared only with staff who need it to carry out their responsibilities. Personal or medical information must be handled securely and in accordance with school procedures.

Educational visits and events

The visit or event leader must ensure that risks are assessed before approval and that controls are suitable for the location, activity, transport, supervision arrangements, group needs, emergency response and any foreseeable changes. The assessment should be communicated to staff and other adults who need to act on it. Dynamic decisions may be needed on the day if conditions change; the activity should be adapted, postponed or stopped if the risks cannot be controlled adequately.

For higher-risk, residential or specialist activities, the school's educational visits procedures and any required competent advice or approval must be followed.

Recording, storage and communication

Risk assessments will be completed using the school's approved format, shared with staff by the school's usual communication system, and stored in the Risk Assessment Folder or approved electronic location. The current location of the folder and access arrangements must be made known to teaching, support and relevant premises staff.

Assessments should be available to the people who need them, including relevant staff and activity leaders. They should be displayed only where appropriate and should not expose confidential personal or safeguarding information. Where an assessment concerns an individual pupil, access must be restricted to those with a legitimate need to know.

Staff should explain relevant controls to pupils in clear, age-appropriate language—for example, safe use of scissors or tools, playground boundaries, evacuation instructions or expectations on a visit. Staff must also know how to report a new hazard or near miss.

Accidents, near misses and urgent hazards

Accidents, near misses, unsafe conditions and failures of control measures must be reported promptly to the Headteacher or designated health and safety lead and recorded using the school's accident/incident procedures. The school will consider whether the risk assessment should be reviewed and whether further action or external reporting is required. Serious incidents must be escalated immediately; applicable reporting duties, including RIDDOR where relevant, must be considered.

Where an immediate hazard presents a serious risk, staff should keep people away from the area or stop the activity where safe to do so, notify the responsible person and ensure urgent action is taken.

Infection prevention and communicable disease

The school will follow current public health advice and its relevant health, cleaning and first-aid procedures. Measures such as hand hygiene, appropriate cleaning, ventilation and staying away

from school when required by current advice should be applied where appropriate to the circumstances. Any infection-related assessment will be reviewed when public health advice or the nature of the risk changes. The previous policy's specific reference to a COVID-19 lockdown return assessment is replaced by this current, risk-based approach.

Training, monitoring and compliance

Staff will receive relevant health and safety induction and information on how to complete or follow risk assessments. Additional training or competent advice will be arranged where the task or risk requires it. The Headteacher or delegated lead will monitor completion of actions, review incidents and near misses, and check that assessments remain suitable.

The school will consult staff on practical health and safety matters through appropriate meetings and communication channels, including the staff 'buzz sessions' referred to in the existing arrangements.

Roles and arrangements summary

Policy commitment	Responsibility	Actions / arrangements
Prevent accidents and work-related ill health	Headteacher / SLT	Check safety equipment and maintenance arrangements; ensure risks are assessed and actions followed up; ensure staff induction.
Provide instructions, information and training	Headteacher	Ensure staff know how to access assessments, follow controls and report hazards; arrange suitable health and safety and fire safety training.
Consult staff and share safety information	Headteacher / SLT / all staff	Use staff meetings and 'buzz sessions'; invite staff to report hazards, near misses and improvements.
Emergency arrangements	Headteacher / Fire Safety Officer / relevant staff	Maintain emergency procedures and carry out fire drills in line with the school's fire safety arrangements; review after significant changes or incidents.
Safe use and storage of substances, equipment and machinery	Headteacher / SLT / relevant staff	Follow COSHH assessments, manufacturer instructions, training and relevant school procedures.
Safeguarding concerns identified through assessment	All staff; DSL / Deputy DSL lead safeguarding response	Report concerns without delay through safeguarding procedures; take urgent protective action where necessary.

Site information

Health and Safety law poster	Office
First aid box	First Aid Room
Accident book	Office

Approval and review

This policy should be reviewed at least annually and sooner if there is a significant incident, material change to school activities or premises, or relevant change in law or guidance. The Headteacher should ensure that the DSL and the person responsible for health and safety are consulted on relevant sections.