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**RISK ASSESSMENT POLICY**

**Introduction**

From birth we seek to support the child’s development of two strong psychological ‘legs’; a trust in the world and a trust in themselves. The child’s trust in the world comes from experiencing that the world is fundamentally a good, safe place. Trusting in themselves comes from being empowered to use the skills, reasoning and other faculties that she is developing day by day.

At The Montessori Place our approach to risk carefully balances these two factors.

1. Taking action to reduce or eliminate risks that serve no developmental benefit
2. Supporting the child to identify and respond appropriately to risks

Within this framework we seek to *enable* risk rather than simply *reduce* risk. The risk assessment process tool we use to do this. It is also a legal requirement that risks to health and safety should be managed wherever possible through risk assessments. Risk Assessments are therefore conducted on a regular basis and cover all identified risks to our pupils, our staff, our buildings, our grounds, in our daily routine and at all school events.

**What is Risk Assessment?**

A risk assessment is a tool for conducting a formal examination of the harm or hazard to people (or an organization) that could result from a particular activity or situation.

* A hazard is something with the potential to cause harm.
* A risk is an evaluation of the probability (or likelihood) of the hazard occurring.
* A risk assessment is the resulting assessment of the severity of the outcome.
* Risk control measures are the measures and procedures that are out in place in order to minimise the consequences of unfettered risk (e.g. staff training, clear work procedures, heat detectors, fire alarms, fire practices, gas and electrical shut down points and insurance).

**Who Conducts Risk Assessment?**

Risk Assessments are conducted by the Headteacher, or delegated by the Headteacher to teachers. Assessment will not be delegated to staff who are uncomfortable about carrying out the task, or who do not have the influence to ensure that their recommendations are implemented.

The Headteacher will be responsible for ensuring that suitable Risk Assessments are completed covering all processes and activities carried out by a competent person with adequate records (Please also refer to our Health & Safety Policy).

**Risk Assessments**

There are two main types of risk assessment, generic and specific.

* **Generic risk assessments** are completed for hazards or activities that are common throughout the school.
* **Specific risk assessments** are completed for particular tasks, procedures, equipment, locations, and educational visits, which have specific or significant risks.

The essential steps that are taken in order to comply with this policy are:

* Identify the hazards to health or safety arising from the activity, learning environment or setting.
* Decide who might be harmed and how.
* Evaluate the risks and decide whether existing precautions are adequate or more needs to be done.
* Record your findings.
* Review your assessment and revise it if necessary (prescribe remedial action, i.e. risk control measures).

Thorough Risk Assessment involves answers to such questions as the following:

* What hazards are we faced with?
* Who might be affected?
* How can the risks be reduced to an acceptable level?
* Can effective measures be implemented now?
* If not, what contingency plans will serve us best for the time being?
* Who May be Affected? Consider pupils, students, trainees and those who may not be directly involved with the activity but who may still be affected by the process. This may include cleaning or office staff, contractors or parents. Or when beyond the School, members of the public.

**Guidelines for Written Risk Assessment**

* Identify and record an activity, process or operation using a Risk Assessment Form, where there is potential for injury or damage.
* Consider whether it is essential for the activity to continue, given that without the hazard there is no risk.
* Identify the hazards within the activity, eg using machinery, confined spaces, working at height, electricity, manual handling, lone working etc.
* Determine the risks involved and what type of incident is anticipated, eg contact with moving/sharp equipment, asphyxiation, falls, electrocution, back injury, violence/abuse. Consider who and how many people will be affected, eg employees, visitors, customers, contractors.
* Estimate the risk level without the benefit of any control measures using the matrix below.
* High and medium risk levels will require control measures to reduce the risk level to as low as is reasonably practicable. This could be achieved by guarding, safety procedures/working practices, training, mechanical assistance, contracting out etc. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should only be considered as the last resort if alternative control measures cannot achieve a lower risk level.
* Reassess (quantify) the risk level with existing control measures in place to ensure that the risk is reduced – if it is not then further controls will be needed, see below.
* Some additional control measures may be required to reduce the risk level further (see Risk Control below).

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Negligible Hazard** | **Slight Risk to Property** | **Moderate Risk to Property / Slight Risk to Life** | **Moderate Risk to Life** | **Severe Risk to Life** |
| Unlikely to Occur | **Low** | **Low** | **Medium** | **Medium** | **Medium** |
| **Possible** | **Low** | **Medium** | **Medium** | **Medium** | **High** |
| **Likely to Occur** | **Medium** | **Medium** | **High** | **High** | **High** |

**Risk Control**

Decide what controls are necessary to reduce the risk to individuals. The steps to controlling the risks are as follows:

* Avoid the hazard – can the hazard be avoided or altered to reduce the likelihood or risk?
* Substitute or replace the hazard
* Procedural controls – can the procedure be altered to avoid or reduce the risk? Can the individual be removed/distanced from the risk? Can the activity be carried out at a time that would have a lesser impact on others?
* Child management – make sure that the staff are aware of each child’s needs.
* Setting management – such as the monitoring of exists and entrances.
* Additional equipment/staff – can a lifting device or an additional person be utilized to avoid or reduce the risk?
* Personal Protective Equipment – consider using gloves, over garments etc
* Emergency procedures – have contingencies in the event of things going wrong such as an accident, incident or fore.

The Headteacher monitors the control measures instigated to ensure that they are effective and implemented correctly.

**What areas require a Risk Assessment?**

There are numerous activities carried out at the School, each of which requires its own separate Risk Assessment. The most important of these cover:

* Fire safety and other security procedures
* Educational visits and trips.

Separate model policies cover each of the two areas mentioned above. However, Risk Assessments are also needed for many other areas, including:

*Educational*

Our aim is not to reduce all risks, but to enable developmentally appropriate activities that include a degree of risk-taking. The work the children and adolescents do can involve risks. Young children in the Infant Community use knives. Children in the Children’s House use matches on occasion. In the Elementary they may work with a scalpel and in the Young People’s Community they may use a saw. All teaching staff receive regular induction and refresher training in risk assessments tailored to their specific areas.

*Medical and First Aid*

The medical area has risk assessments for first aid and all other treatments and procedures. The accident forms are maintained in the medical area and the School first aider (Karen Pearce in Hove and Paul Pillai in Eason’s Green) is responsible for ensuring that accidents are duly recorded. Please refer to the First Aid Policy for further details.

*Child Protection*

Our Safeguarding Policy forms the core of our child protection risk management. Safer recruitment policies and procedures ensure that the school is not exposed to the risk of employing staff who are barred from working with children, and are not allowed to work in the UK. By extending this regime to the trustees and volunteers and by ensuring that everyone in our school community receives regular child protection training, we manage this risk to an acceptable level.

*Support Areas*

* *Catering and Cleaning*: Risk Assessments and training are required for every item of catering and cleaning equipment, as well as for manual handling, slips and trips and the control of substances hazardous to health (COSHH). Induction and refresher training covers risk assessments, protective equipment and safety notices.
* *Caretaking and Security*: Risk Assessments cover every room, laboratory, stairs, corridor and emergency exit in the entire school. Particular emphasis in training is given to minimising the risk of both fire and to security by adhering to good practice. Risk Assessments also cover manual handling, working at height, and asbestos. Induction and refresher training covers Risk Assessments, protective equipment and safety notices.
* *Maintenance:* Risk Assessments and training is 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 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.
* *Equipment Rooms*: Risk Assessments and training is required for every tool and piece of machinery, as well as for manual handling, slips and trips, working at height, lone working, use of pesticides, storage of flammables and COSHH. Induction and refresher training covers Risk Assessments, protective equipment and safety notices.
* *Office staff*: Risk Assessments are required for the display screen equipment and cables used by those staff (primarily office-based) who spend the majority of their working day in front of a screen.

*Access by Pupils*

Risk Assessments of all areas of the school reinforce the policy of ensuring that our pupils do not have unsupervised access to potentially dangerous areas. Doors to these areas are kept locked when not in use. Pupils are only allowed access when accompanied by a member of staff. Pupils do not have access to the Equipment Rooms, Maintenance, Catering equipment and Caretaking working areas in the school.

**Specialist Risk Assessment**

The school arranges for specialists to carry out the following risk assessments:

* Fire safety
* Asbestos
* Legionella
* Electrical safety
* Gas safety
* Work at high levels
* Work with lead.

**Reviews**

All Risk Assessments are reviewed and recorded, when major structural work is planned, or in the event of an accident. The Health and Safety Policy describes the arrangements for regular health and safety audits of the fabric of the school, its plant, machinery and equipment, together with its arrangements for catering and cleaning and for water sampling.

**Responsibilities of all Staff**

All members of staff are given a thorough induction into the school’s arrangements for Risk Assessments and health and safety (which is recorded). Specialist training is given to those whose work required it. However, staff are responsible for taking reasonable care of their own safety, together with that of pupils and visitors. They are responsible for cooperating with the Headteacher in order to enable the trustees to comply with their health and safety duties. Finally, all members of staff are responsible for reporting any risks or defects to the Headteacher.

Original copies of all completed and signed Risk Assessments related to the premises are kept in a file in the office.