



New Direction School



**Risk Assessment  
Policy**

Reviewed Date:	Reviewed By:	List of changes	Next Review
April 2026	Luke Collins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New standalone policy created from the Health and Safety Policy risk assessment section. Updated to reflect current New Direction roles, safeguarding links, Independent School Standards, DfE health and safety guidance, student risk assessments, equine provision, off-site activities and live review expectations.</li> </ul>	April 2027
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## 1. Aims

New Direction School is committed to providing a safe, supportive and well-managed environment for students, staff, visitors, contractors and others affected by the school's activities. This policy sets out how risks are identified, assessed, recorded, controlled, communicated and reviewed across the school, including the equine provision, off-site learning, transport and community-based activities.

The aims of this policy are to:

- ensure that risk assessment is embedded as a normal part of school leadership, planning, safeguarding and day-to-day practice;
- support compliance with health and safety legislation and the Independent School Standards;
- ensure proportionate control measures are in place to protect students, staff and others from harm;
- ensure risk assessments are living documents that are reviewed when circumstances change;
- support students to access learning, enrichment, therapeutic and equine activities safely, without unnecessary restriction;
- ensure that safeguarding, welfare, behaviour, medical, environmental and activity-based risks are considered together where they overlap;
- promote a culture in which staff are confident to stop, adapt or escalate activities where risk is not adequately controlled.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff, students, adult clients where applicable, visitors, volunteers, contractors and others who may be affected by the school's activities. It applies to activities on the school site, on the yard, during off-site visits, during work-related travel and during any school-arranged activity away from the premises.

This policy covers both planned and dynamic risk assessment. It should be read alongside individual student risk assessments, safeguarding records, behaviour support plans, medical care plans, educational visit risk assessments, fire risk assessments and any activity-specific or premises-specific risk assessments.

## 3. Legislation and guidance

This policy has been written with regard to the following legislation and guidance:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974;
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999;
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR);
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002;
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005;
- Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992;
- Work at Height Regulations 2005;
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998;
- Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012;
- Equality Act 2010;

- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, including Part 3, paragraphs 11, 12, 13, 14 and 16, and Part 5, paragraph 25;
- DfE Health and safety: responsibilities and duties for schools;
- DfE Independent School Standards guidance, April 2026;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026;
- UKHSA health protection guidance for children and young people’s settings, including education.

## 4. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Hazard	Anything with the potential to cause harm, including a substance, activity, environment, behaviour, equipment, animal, situation or condition.
Risk	The likelihood that harm will occur and the potential severity of that harm.
Control measure	An action, procedure, item of equipment, staffing arrangement, supervision arrangement or other measure used to remove or reduce risk.
Dynamic risk assessment	An ongoing, real-time judgement made by staff when circumstances change or an unexpected risk arises.

## 5. Roles and responsibilities

### 5.1 Proprietor

The Proprietor, Yvonne Evans, has overall responsibility for ensuring that the school has effective systems for managing risk and for ensuring that appropriate action is taken to reduce identified risks to students, staff and others.

The Proprietor will ensure that:

- there is a written risk assessment policy and procedure in place;
- risk assessment arrangements are effectively implemented and monitored;
- sufficient resources, training and competent advice are available to manage significant risks;
- senior leaders provide assurance that risks are being identified, controlled and reviewed;
- risk management supports the safeguarding and welfare of students.

### 5.2 Directors and senior leaders

The Directors, Luke Collins and Hannah Oliver, have delegated responsibility for the day-to-day implementation of this policy. Luke Collins is the Head of Education and Designated Safeguarding Lead. Hannah Oliver is the Head of Equine Provision. They will ensure that risk assessment arrangements are embedded in operational practice.

Senior leaders will:

- ensure that significant hazards are identified and suitable risk assessments are completed;
- ensure that staff are competent to complete and implement risk assessments relevant to their roles;
- ensure that risk assessments are accessible to staff who need them;
- ensure that control measures are realistic, proportionate and implemented in practice;
- review risk assessments after incidents, near misses, safeguarding concerns, changes in provision or changes in individual student need;
- ensure that individual student risk assessments are reviewed at least termly and sooner if required;
- ensure that high-risk activities, including equine activities, practical activities and off-site visits, are planned and supervised appropriately;
- escalate unresolved risks to the Proprietor.

### ***5.3 Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy DSLs***

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is Luke Collins. Deputy DSLs are Hannah Oliver, Emily Smith and Nikki Morris. Safeguarding-related risks must be managed in line with this policy and the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The DSL team will:

- advise on risks relating to safeguarding, welfare, exploitation, absconding, harmful behaviour, peer-on-peer abuse, unsafe home circumstances and contextual safeguarding;
- ensure safeguarding concerns are recorded on CPOMS and responded to in line with school procedures;
- liaise with local authorities and safeguarding partners where risk requires multi-agency planning;
- ensure relevant safeguarding information is reflected in student risk assessments, where appropriate and proportionate.

### ***5.4 Head of Student Welfare and Communication, Behaviour Coordinator and SENCO***

Nikki Morris, Head of Student Welfare and Communication, Colette Rhodes, Behaviour Coordinator, and Sarah Brown, SENCO, contribute to risk assessment where student welfare, behaviour, communication, SEND, reasonable adjustments or support needs affect risk.

They will support the development and review of individual student risk assessments, behaviour support plans, reasonable adjustments and communication strategies where these are needed to manage risk safely and proportionately.

### ***5.5 Staff***

All staff have a responsibility to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of students, colleagues and others who may be affected by their actions. Staff must follow risk assessments, safe systems of work, training and instructions.

Staff must:

- read and follow relevant risk assessments before undertaking activities;
- carry out dynamic risk assessments during activities and respond to changing circumstances;
- stop, adapt or postpone an activity if risk is not adequately controlled;

- report new hazards, near misses, accidents, safeguarding concerns or changes in student risk promptly;
- record safeguarding-related risk concerns on CPOMS and notify the DSL or Deputy DSL as required;
- contribute to reviews of risk assessments when asked to do so;
- avoid creating unnecessary risk through unsafe practice or failure to follow agreed procedures.

### **5.6 Students, parents and carers**

Students are expected, according to their age, understanding and individual needs, to follow staff instructions and engage safely with risk control measures. Parents and carers are expected to provide accurate and up-to-date information about medical, behavioural, welfare or other risks that may affect the safety of their child or others.

### **5.7 Contractors, visitors and volunteers**

Contractors, visitors and volunteers must follow school site procedures, safeguarding expectations and any relevant risk controls. Contractors must provide evidence of suitable risk assessments and method statements where required before work begins.

## **6. Principles of risk assessment and risk management**

Risk assessment at New Direction School is based on a proportionate and practical approach. The purpose is not to remove all risk, but to identify foreseeable risks and put sensible controls in place so that learning, development and enrichment can take place safely.

Risk assessments must:

- identify the significant hazards associated with an activity, environment, individual need or situation;
- consider who may be harmed and how;
- evaluate the likelihood and severity of harm;
- identify existing control measures and any additional controls needed;
- allocate responsibility for implementing controls;
- record residual risk after controls are applied;
- be communicated to relevant staff;
- be reviewed at appropriate intervals and when circumstances change.

Risk assessment must support inclusion. Where a risk is identified, leaders and staff should consider whether reasonable adjustments, additional supervision, altered timing, equipment, staffing, training or alternative arrangements can allow the student to participate safely.

## **7. When a risk assessment is required**

A written risk assessment is required where there is a foreseeable significant risk to the health, safety, safeguarding or welfare of students, staff or others. Written risk assessments may relate to individuals, activities, premises, equipment, substances, visits, transport, animals or specific events.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- individual student risks, including behaviour, medical needs, absconding, self-injury, aggression, vulnerability or safeguarding risk;
- equine activities and yard tasks;
- off-site visits, alternative provision, community learning and transport;

- practical lessons, cooking, food technology, tools, machinery and equipment;
- fire safety, asbestos, water hygiene, electrical safety, gas safety and premises risks;
- manual handling, working at height, lone working and violence at work;
- new or expectant mothers;
- infection prevention and control, including outbreaks;
- use of hazardous substances or cleaning chemicals;
- events, lettings, visitors, contractors or temporary changes to normal operations;
- return to school or return to work following illness, injury, suspension, exclusion or significant change in risk.

## 8. The risk assessment process

Risk assessments must follow the process below.

- Identify the activity, situation, environment, individual need or hazard to be assessed.
- Identify who could be harmed, including students, staff, visitors, contractors, adult clients and members of the public.
- Identify how harm could occur, including physical injury, illness, emotional harm, safeguarding harm, escalation of behaviour, environmental risk or harm arising from insufficient supervision.
- Evaluate the risk using the school's likelihood and severity matrix.
- Record existing control measures already in place.
- Decide whether additional controls are needed to reduce the risk to an acceptable level.
- Identify who is responsible for each action and the timescale for completion.
- Share the risk assessment with relevant staff and ensure controls are understood.
- Monitor whether the controls are working in practice.
- Review and update the assessment at the required interval or sooner if circumstances change.

Where a high risk cannot be reduced to a tolerable level, the activity must not proceed until further advice has been sought and additional controls have been put in place.

## 9. Risk rating matrix and required action

The following matrix should be used to support consistent risk ratings. Staff should use professional judgement and seek advice from senior leaders where risk is complex or uncertain.

	Trivial	Minor	Moderate	Major / Intolerable
Improbable	Low	Low	Medium	High
Possible	Low	Medium	High	High
Probable	Medium	Medium	High	High
Almost certain	Medium	High	High	High

Risk rating actions:

Risk rating	Required action
Low	Acceptable to proceed if existing controls are maintained and monitored.
Medium	Proceed only where controls are in place and understood. Consider further control measures where reasonably practicable. Senior staff should be informed where the risk relates to student welfare, behaviour or safeguarding.
High	Do not proceed until additional controls are implemented and the risk is reduced to a tolerable level. Senior leadership approval is required. Where safeguarding risk is involved, notify the DSL or Deputy DSL.

## 10. Individual student risk assessments

New Direction School maintains individual risk assessments for students where required. These are used to identify risks relating to health, safety, safeguarding, behaviour, communication, medical needs, SEND, transport, off-site learning and participation in school activities.

Individual student risk assessments will be:

- based on known information from the student, parents/carers, previous settings, local authorities, social care, health professionals and school observations;
- proportionate and focused on practical measures that reduce risk while supporting access to education;
- made available to staff who need the information to keep the student and others safe;
- reviewed at least termly and sooner after incidents, near misses, safeguarding concerns, significant behavioural changes, medical updates or changes to provision;
- linked, where relevant, to behaviour support plans, medical care plans, safeguarding plans, EHCP provision and reasonable adjustments;
- stored securely, with access limited to staff who require the information.

Student risk assessment information is recorded and accessed through the school's agreed systems, including Class Charts where applicable. Safeguarding concerns and actions are recorded on CPOMS. Arbor is used as the school's MIS for student data, attendance and behaviour tracking.

## 11. Safeguarding and welfare-related risk

Risk assessment is part of the school's wider safeguarding arrangements. Where a health, safety, behaviour or welfare concern may indicate a safeguarding risk, staff must follow the

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and report the concern to the DSL or a Deputy DSL without delay.

Examples of safeguarding-related risk may include:

- unexplained injuries or repeated accidents;
- concerns about neglect, domestic abuse, exploitation or unsafe home circumstances;
- risk of absconding, self-harm, harmful sexual behaviour, peer-on-peer abuse or serious aggression;
- unsafe online behaviour or risks arising from mobile devices and digital communication;
- risks linked to transport, community activity or unsupervised time;
- a student being missing from education or absent in a way that raises welfare concern;
- risks arising from insufficient supervision or inappropriate adult access to students.

Safeguarding concerns must be recorded on CPOMS. Risk assessment documents must not replace safeguarding records or statutory safeguarding procedures.

## **12. Behaviour-related risk assessment**

Behaviour-related risks must be assessed in a way that protects the safety and dignity of students and staff. Risk assessments should identify triggers, early warning signs, de-escalation strategies, supervision arrangements, environmental adjustments and post-incident review arrangements.

Behaviour risk assessment must be consistent with the school's Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, SEND arrangements and any individual behaviour support plan. Restrictive or physical intervention must only be used where lawful, necessary, reasonable and proportionate, and in line with the school's agreed procedures.

## **13. Equine provision and yard risk assessment**

The school's equine provision requires specific risk assessment due to the presence of horses, yard equipment, outdoor environments, weather conditions, manual handling, animal behaviour and infection control risks.

Risk assessments for equine activities will consider:

- student competence, confidence, behaviour, medical needs and supervision requirements;
- staff competence and whether staff are trained and authorised for the task;
- horse temperament, health, suitability and current condition;
- yard conditions, weather, ground surfaces, gates, fencing and movement around horses;
- use of PPE, including riding hats, suitable footwear and other required protective equipment;
- manual handling of feed, bedding, tack and equipment;
- infection control, handwashing, separation of food areas and management of sick animals;
- emergency arrangements, first aid access and communication with senior staff.

Students must be supervised appropriately when working on the yard or with horses. Activities must be adapted or stopped where risk increases due to weather, animal behaviour, student presentation, staffing levels or environmental conditions.

## **14. Off-site visits, transport and community-based learning**

Off-site visits, transport and community-based learning must be risk assessed in line with the Educational Visits Policy and any local procedures. The level of assessment must be

proportionate to the nature of the activity, the needs of the students and the environment being visited.

Risk assessments for off-site activities will consider:

- student needs, medical information, behaviour risks, safeguarding risks and supervision ratios;
- transport arrangements, vehicle safety, seatbelts, emergency contact details and driver suitability;
- first aid provision and access to emergency services;
- communication arrangements, including school mobile phones and emergency contacts;
- public access, water, roads, animals, weather, terrain and other environmental risks;
- arrangements for students who may become dysregulated, unwell, missing, injured or unwilling to participate;
- consent, information sharing and any reasonable adjustments required.

## **15. Dynamic risk assessment**

Dynamic risk assessment is the ongoing process of identifying and responding to risk during an activity. All staff are expected to use dynamic risk assessment when circumstances change or an unexpected hazard arises.

Staff should ask:

- What has changed?
- Who could be harmed and how?
- Is the current control measure still enough?
- Do I need to stop, pause, move, adapt, seek support or escalate?
- Does this need to be recorded or added to a formal risk assessment?
- Is there a safeguarding concern that must be reported to the DSL?

Staff have the authority to pause or stop an activity if they believe risk is not adequately controlled. Such decisions should be supported by senior leaders where they are made in good faith to protect safety and welfare.

## **16. Recording, storage and communication of risk assessments**

Risk assessments must be recorded in a clear and accessible format. They must identify the hazard, people at risk, existing controls, further action required, responsible person, completion date, residual risk rating and review date.

Risk assessments will be stored securely and made available to staff who need them. Staff must be informed of risk assessments relevant to their role and must have access to them before carrying out the activity or supporting the student.

Confidential student-specific information must be shared on a need-to-know basis. Safeguarding records must be maintained on CPOMS and must not be copied unnecessarily into general health and safety documents.

## 17. Review, monitoring and quality assurance

Risk assessments are living documents and must be reviewed regularly. The minimum review expectations are:

Risk assessment type	Minimum review expectation
Individual student risk assessments	At least termly and sooner following incidents, safeguarding concerns, medical updates, changes to need or changes to provision.
Equine and yard risk assessments	At least annually and sooner following incidents, changes to horses, equipment, staffing, activities, environment or procedures.
Off-site visit risk assessments	Before each visit or activity, unless a current generic assessment is suitable and has been reviewed for the specific group and context.
Premises and equipment risk assessments	At least annually and sooner following defects, incidents, building changes, equipment changes or contractor works.
COSHH and hazardous substances	When substances are introduced, changed or removed, and at least annually.
Fire risk assessment	Reviewed regularly by a competent person and whenever premises, use, occupancy or risk changes.
Policy review	At least annually or sooner following significant changes in law, guidance, provision or risk profile.

Senior leaders will monitor the effectiveness of risk assessment arrangements through incident review, safeguarding review, staff feedback, site checks, student risk assessment review, training records and policy review. Where controls are not working, they must be amended promptly.

## 18. Training and staff competence

Staff will receive information and training appropriate to their role. Training may include induction, health and safety awareness, safeguarding, behaviour management, first aid, fire safety, manual handling, COSHH, educational visits, equine safety and activity-specific procedures.

Staff asked to complete or review risk assessments must be competent to do so. Competence may be developed through training, experience, supervision and access to senior advice. New staff must be made aware of relevant risk assessments as part of induction.

## **19. Related policies and procedures**

This policy should be read alongside:

- Health and Safety Policy;
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy;
- SEND Policy and Accessibility arrangements;
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions / Administration of Medication Policy;
- First Aid procedures;
- Educational Visits Policy;
- Fire Safety and Emergency Evacuation procedures;
- Lone Working procedures;
- COSHH assessments and relevant safe systems of work;
- Recruitment and Safer Recruitment procedures;
- Data Protection Policy.

## Appendix 1. Student risk assessment checklist

This checklist should be used to support individual student risk assessments where relevant. It is not exhaustive.

- Medical conditions, allergies, medication, emergency medication and care plans;
- SEND, communication needs, sensory needs and reasonable adjustments;
- Known triggers, early warning signs and de-escalation strategies;
- Risk of absconding, self-injury, aggression, vulnerability or exploitation;
- Safeguarding concerns and information from CPOMS that staff need to know to keep the student safe;
- Transport, arrival, transition and departure risks;
- Supervision requirements during lessons, breaks, yard activities and off-site activities;
- Environmental adjustments, safe spaces and preferred communication strategies;
- Peer relationships, bullying risks, harmful sexual behaviour risks or separation needs;
- Equine, practical, food technology, PE or other activity-specific risks;
- Student voice, parent/carer information and external professional advice where appropriate;
- Review date, responsible person and arrangements for sharing with relevant staff.

## Appendix 2. Dynamic risk assessment prompt sheet

Staff should use the following prompt during activities when circumstances change:

Prompt	Action
Stop	Pause the activity if there is immediate risk or uncertainty.
Look	Identify what has changed and who may be affected.
Think	Consider likelihood, severity, safeguarding implications and whether current controls remain sufficient.
Control	Remove the hazard, increase supervision, change the environment, use PPE, adapt the activity, seek support or stop the activity.
Communicate	Tell relevant staff and students what is changing and why. Contact senior staff where required.
Record	Record incidents, near misses, safeguarding concerns or changes requiring formal risk assessment review.