



OVERSTONE PARK SCHOOL

Risk Assessment Policy

Reviewed and updated September 2026

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Policy	Risk Assessment Policy
Date of issue	September 2026
Review date	September 2027 (or sooner following significant change)
Coordinators	Mrs M Brown, Mrs D York, Mrs V Price, Mrs K Gorton
Approved by	The Proprietor
Supersedes	Risk Assessment Policy, August 2025

The previous version carried a date of August 2025 on the front sheet and a Principal's signature dated August 2026. Version control on a health and safety policy matters: where an incident is investigated, the school needs to be able to show which version was in force on a given date. A single issue date is used throughout this version.

1. Status and Scope

This policy sets out how Overstone Park School identifies hazards, assesses risk and puts control measures in place. It applies to all activities carried out by or on behalf of the school, on and off site, in and outside the normal school day, and to all pupils, staff, volunteers, contractors, hirers and visitors.

The school believes that risks to the health and safety of its pupils, staff, buildings, grounds, visitors and events must be controlled through regular and proportionate risk assessment, in order to provide a safe, secure and healthy environment in which children can learn.

This policy should be read alongside the Health and Safety Policy, Fire Safety Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Educational Visits Policy, First Aid Policy, Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, Online Safety Policy and Critical Incident and Lockdown Procedures.

2. Legislation and Guidance

The previous version of this policy cited only the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The following are also directly relevant and have been added:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, regulation 3 (the duty to make a suitable and sufficient assessment of risk)
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, in particular Part 3 (welfare, health and safety of pupils) and Part 5 (premises and accommodation)
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH)
- Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992
- Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, section 26 (the Prevent duty)
- Equality Act 2010
- Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026
- Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 ("Martyn's Law")

The following guidance is also relevant:

- Health and safety: responsibilities and duties for schools (Department for Education)
- Five steps to risk assessment and Sensible risk management in schools (Health and Safety Executive)
- Keeping children safe in education (Department for Education, September 2026)

- Working together to safeguard children (Department for Education, March 2026)
- Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales (Home Office)
- Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage

3. Regulatory Context

As an independent school, Overstone Park School must meet the Independent School Standards. Risk assessment is not simply good practice for this school; it is a registration requirement inspected by Ofsted. In particular, the standards require the proprietor to ensure that:

- the welfare, health and safety of pupils is safeguarded and promoted, having regard to current statutory safeguarding guidance
- appropriate arrangements are made for health and safety, and the requirements of fire safety legislation are met
- pupils are properly supervised, including before and after the school day and during off-site activities
- the premises and accommodation are maintained so that the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured

Inspectors will expect to see not only that risk assessments exist, but that they are current, specific to this school, understood by the staff who must act on them, and demonstrably acted upon. A file of generic assessments that staff have not read does not meet the standard.

4. Aims

- To establish and maintain a safe working and learning environment for all pupils, staff, volunteers and visitors.
- To identify hazards before they cause harm, and to control them proportionately.
- To meet the school's statutory obligations under health and safety, safeguarding and independent school standards legislation.
- To ensure that everyone understands their responsibility for health and safety.
- To ensure risk assessments are living documents that inform daily practice rather than paperwork held in a file.
- To provide training and up-to-date information to all those who assess or act on risk.

5. Principles

The school follows the Health and Safety Executive's established approach:

- identify the hazards
- decide who might be harmed and how
- evaluate the risks and decide on precautions
- record the significant findings and implement them
- review the assessment and update if necessary

Control measures are selected according to the hierarchy of control: eliminate the hazard where possible; if not, substitute something less hazardous; then apply engineering controls; then

administrative controls such as procedures, supervision and training; and only then personal protective equipment.

Risk assessment is proportionate. The purpose is to control real risks, not to eliminate all risk from childhood or to generate paperwork. Pupils benefit from challenge, adventure and practical experience, and the school will not withdraw a worthwhile activity where the risk can be sensibly managed.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

The Proprietor

The Proprietor has:

- ultimate responsibility for health and safety at the school
- appointed a member of staff to be responsible for health and safety
- delegated powers and responsibilities to the Principal to ensure all school personnel and stakeholders are aware of and comply with this policy
- responsibility for ensuring the school complies with all equalities legislation
- responsibility for ensuring funding is in place to implement the controls identified by risk assessment
- responsibility for ensuring this policy and all policies are maintained and updated regularly
- responsibility for ensuring policies required to be published are made available to parents
- responsibility for the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this policy
- responsibility for receiving and acting on termly health and safety reports, including outstanding actions

The Principal

- ensure all school personnel, pupils and parents are aware of and comply with this policy
- ensure risk assessments are in place for all activities and areas requiring them
- maintain a central register of risk assessments showing the assessor, date and next review date
- operate a cycle for reviewing risk assessments and ensure reviews happen on time
- ensure staff who carry out risk assessments are competent to do so
- ensure actions arising are assigned, resourced and completed
- seek specialist and professional advice where the risk is beyond the school's in-house competence
- report termly to the Proprietor on health, safety and risk
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy

The Risk Assessment Coordinator

- lead the development of this policy throughout the school
- work closely with the Principal, the Fire Safety Manager and the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- maintain the central register of risk assessments and prompt reviews as they fall due
- provide guidance, support and training to all staff on assessing and controlling risk
- provide training for staff on induction and when the need arises
- keep up to date with new developments, guidance and resources
- undertake or quality-assure risk assessments as required

- monitor the quality and consistency of risk assessments across the school
- report to the Principal on the completeness and currency of the risk assessment register

The Designated Safeguarding Lead

Some risks to pupils are safeguarding risks rather than physical hazards, and the Designated Safeguarding Lead leads on these. This includes the school's Prevent risk assessment, risk assessments relating to individual pupils where there are concerns about their safety or the safety of others, assessments relating to child-on-child abuse, and the risk assessment underpinning the school's filtering and monitoring arrangements. These sit within the same register and review cycle as all other risk assessments.

All School Personnel

- comply with this policy and with all risk assessments relevant to their work
- read the risk assessments for the activities they lead or support before undertaking them
- implement the control measures identified
- assist in writing risk assessments for their own areas of work where required
- bring relevant risk assessments to the attention of volunteers, supply staff, visitors and hirers
- report any identified hazard, defect or near miss promptly and without waiting for a formal review
- stop an activity where they believe the risk is not adequately controlled, and report immediately
- report any concerns they have about any aspect of the school community

Pupils

- follow safety instructions given by staff
- use equipment only as instructed and for its intended purpose
- report hazards, breakages and accidents to a member of staff
- learn, at a level appropriate to their age, how to assess and manage risk for themselves

Parents and Carers

- be aware of and comply with this policy
- provide the school with full and current information about their child's medical conditions, allergies and any other need affecting their safety
- inform the school promptly of any change in that information
- comply with health and safety guidance while on the school site or attending school events

7. Risk Assessments Maintained by the School

The school maintains, as a minimum, the following risk assessments. This list forms the basis of the central register.

Area	Lead	Minimum review
General premises and grounds	Site Manager	Annually
Fire (see Fire Safety Policy)	Fire Safety Manager	Annually
Site security and access control	Site Manager	Annually

Area	Lead	Minimum review
COSHH — cleaning, science, art, DT, grounds	Coordinator	Annually
Science, design technology, art and food	Subject leads	Annually
Physical education, games and swimming pool	Director of Sport	Annually
Educational visits and off-site activities	Visit leader / EVC	Per visit
Early Years Foundation Stage provision	EYFS lead	Annually and per activity
Individual pupils: medical, allergy, mobility, SEND	SENDCo / First Aid lead	Annually and on change
Individual pupils: behaviour and safeguarding	DSL	Termly and on change
Prevent duty risk assessment	DSL	Annually
Online safety, filtering and monitoring	DSL and IT lead	Annually
New and expectant mothers	Principal	On notification and on change
Display screen equipment	Coordinator	On appointment and on change
Manual handling	Coordinator	Annually
Lone working and out-of-hours site use	Site Manager	Annually
Contractors and works on site	Site Manager	Per contract
School events, productions and lettings	Event lead	Per event
Transport and minibus use	Principal	Annually
Catering and food hygiene	Catering lead	Annually

8. Conducting a Risk Assessment

Risk assessments may be carried out by the Principal, members of the senior leadership team, heads of department, subject or activity leads, the Site Manager, or other persons with the necessary competence for the activity being assessed. Competence means having sufficient knowledge of the activity, the hazards involved and the controls available; where the school does not hold that competence internally, external specialist advice is obtained.

Every risk assessment must identify:

- the activity, area or situation being assessed
- the hazards present
- who might be harmed and how, including pupils, staff, visitors, contractors and any group at particular risk such as young children, pupils with SEND, or new and expectant mothers
- the control measures already in place
- the level of residual risk with those controls applied
- any further action required, with a named person responsible and a target date

- the name of the assessor, the date of assessment and the date of next review

Risk is evaluated by considering the likelihood of harm occurring against the severity of the harm that would result. The school uses the following scoring, on a five-point scale for each:

Score	Rating	Action required
1–4	Low	Monitor. No further action required beyond existing controls.
5–10	Medium	Additional controls to be considered and implemented where reasonably practicable. Named owner and target date required.
12–16	High	Activity may not proceed until further controls are in place. Principal must be informed.
20–25	Very high	Activity must not proceed. Immediate referral to the Principal and Proprietor. Specialist advice required.

All risk assessments are recorded on the school's standard form. Assessments completed on an external provider's form are accepted for that provider's activity, but the school's own assessment of the pupils' participation is still required.

9. Frequency and Review

Risk assessments are reviewed at least annually. Checks on equipment and premises take place more frequently, as set out in the Health and Safety Policy and the Fire Safety Policy testing schedule.

A risk assessment must be reviewed before its scheduled date whenever:

- there has been an accident, incident, near miss or dangerous occurrence connected to the activity
- the activity, equipment, location, staffing or group size changes
- a pupil or member of staff joins whose needs are not covered by the existing assessment
- building work or a change of layout affects the area
- new legislation, guidance or professional advice is issued
- a member of staff raises a concern that the controls are not working in practice

Reviews are recorded even where no change is made, so that the review history is visible on the face of the document.

10. Communication and Access

A risk assessment only works if the people carrying out the activity know what it says. Risk assessments are made available through:

- the staff handbook and the staff shared area
- departmental and activity files held where the activity takes place
- the staffroom folder and relevant notice boards
- briefings at staff meetings and INSET
- induction for new staff, supply staff, volunteers and regular contractors
- pre-visit briefings for educational visits

- display in the relevant areas of the school building, where a summary is appropriate

Staff are required to confirm that they have read the risk assessments relevant to their role, and this confirmation is recorded. Pupils are made aware of relevant safety requirements at a level appropriate to their age and understanding.

11. Newly Identified Hazards, Accidents and Near Misses

Any member of the school community who identifies a new hazard must report it immediately to the Site Manager or the Principal, without waiting for a scheduled review. Where the risk is immediate, the activity or area is suspended until controls are in place.

The following then takes place:

- the hazard is recorded in the hazard log
- interim control measures are put in place at once
- a full risk assessment is undertaken or an existing one revised
- all affected school personnel are notified of the change
- the outcome is reported to the Principal and, where significant, to the Proprietor

All accidents are recorded on the school's accident report form. Accidents, occupational diseases and dangerous occurrences meeting the RIDDOR thresholds are reported to the Health and Safety Executive within the statutory timescales. Near misses are recorded and reviewed, because they identify failures in control before anyone is harmed.

12. Monitoring, Audit and Reporting

The Coordinator monitors the central register monthly to confirm that assessments are current and that actions arising are being completed. The Principal reports termly to the Proprietor on:

- accidents, incidents, near misses and any RIDDOR reports
- risk assessments overdue for review
- outstanding actions, with reasons for any delay
- any area where the school lacks the competence or resource to control an identified risk

An annual health and safety audit is undertaken, covering premises, procedures, records and training.

13. Emerging Duties

Martyn's Law

The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 requires qualifying premises, including schools, to have documented procedures for responding to a terrorist incident and to train staff in them. Duties are expected to become enforceable in 2027 following an implementation period, with the Security Industry Authority as regulator, and education settings fall within the standard tier. The school will incorporate a counter-terrorism preparedness assessment into this register during the implementation period, and will confirm the applicable requirements and compliance date from Home Office guidance rather than relying on this summary.

Allergy safety

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 includes provisions on allergy safety in schools, and Ofsted has updated its inspection guidance to reflect new requirements in this area. The school maintains an individual healthcare plan and risk assessment for every pupil with a diagnosed allergy, holds spare adrenaline auto-injectors in line with current guidance, trains staff in recognition and response, and assesses allergen risk in catering, food technology, science, art and off-site activities. The Principal will confirm the commencement dates of the statutory provisions and adjust arrangements accordingly.

14. Training

All school personnel receive training on this policy at induction and periodic refresher training thereafter. Those who write risk assessments receive specific training in doing so. Additional training is provided for roles carrying particular responsibility, including the Site Manager, the Educational Visits Coordinator, first aiders, and staff supervising higher-risk activities such as science practicals, design technology, swimming and off-site adventurous activities. All training is recorded.

The school ensures all personnel have equal access to training, career development and promotion.

15. Equality Impact Assessment

Under the Equality Act 2010 the school has a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. This policy has been equality impact assessed. Risk assessment is used to enable participation rather than to restrict it: where a pupil's disability or medical condition presents a risk, the school's starting point is to identify the reasonable adjustments that allow them to take part safely.

16. Review

The practical application of this policy is reviewed annually, or sooner if the need arises, by the Coordinator and the Principal, and approved by the Proprietor.

Signed (Principal):	Mrs M F Brown	Date:	September 2026
Signed (Proprietor):		Date:	
Next review due:	September 2027	Reviewed by:	Principal and Proprietor