

Risk Assessment for Children with Physical and Medical Needs

Guidance for schools

Why do you need to carry out a risk assessment?

- You need one because you have a duty of care for the health and safety of those within your care. A risk assessment will help school to plan and make suitable arrangements to make sure a pupil's needs are being met safely.
- There are legal reasons for having a risk assessment. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 requires a risk assessment to be carried out for work activities.
- If there is an accident involving a pupil, the school and where appropriate Bradford Council will need to show that it has taken all 'reasonable steps' to prevent harm. A copy of the Risk Assessment will need to be kept on file for reference.
- As part of the Ofsted Inspection Framework (2012), Ofsted inspectors consider a range of evidence to judge the safety of particular groups of children, including those with a disability. They are likely to ask to see your Risk Assessments.

When do you carry out a risk assessment?

- If possible, it is advisable to establish policies and safety procedures in advance for a new pupil.
- For a pupil with physical or medical needs, you should make a risk assessment as soon as possible. The assessment will need to be reviewed on a regular basis and updated in response to any significant change or in the event of an incident or as the pupil moves to a new year group.

How do you carry out a risk assessment?

You need to:

- Identify potential hazards in the environment or activities.
- Consider how those hazards will affect the pupil concerned and others who may be affected (directly and indirectly).
- Evaluate the potential risks and look at existing arrangements. Are they adequate or could more be done?
- Record and inform others of the significant findings of the assessment.
- Review the assessment regularly or following changes or if it is believed to be no longer valid.

It is helpful to think through a typical school day that includes arrival and departure. You can walk round the school to look for potential hazards. If possible, involve pupil / parents/carer in the assessment.

Think about:

- Arrival and departure arrangements: e.g. identify adult and procedure, transport transfer, extreme weather conditions.
- School entrance: e.g. always uses most accessible entrance.

- Mobility around school: e.g. corridors, cloakrooms, upper and floor levels etc.
- Access to the curriculum (especially practical subjects and PE)
- Interacting with peers and effect of pupil on others.
- Possible absence of staff or key workers.
- Supervision ratio and methods e.g. .Provision Map
- Equipment (purchase, storage, use, maintenance, disposal)
- Toileting- see Contenance Guidance on Bradford Schools Online (BSO), Physical and Medical Team, Useful links. <https://bso.bradford.gov.uk>
- Lifting the pupil – specific Manual Handling planned with relevant health professionals.
- Illness events- e.g. Norovirus, Flu, Chickenpox, common colds etc. (for those with reduced immune systems.)
- Medication or Medical procedures. Care plans will be needed.
- Outdoor curriculum.
- Physical features of the school that may affect the pupil, climate, heating, lighting etc.
- Out of school clubs and breakfast clubs.
- Swimming lessons.- please refer to BSO for guidance under the Physical and Medical Team Useful links.
- School trips – please refer to BSO for guidance under the Physical and Medical Team Useful links.

It is strongly advised that only adults should push pupils in wheelchairs around school site or on school trips.

- Fire drill and emergency evacuation of the premises. Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan, (PEEPS) needed?
Schools can develop a range of emergency evacuation plans from which pupils can select their preferred method of escape. If there are no existing suitable plans, they should have a PEEP drawn up. This must be discussed and agreed with the Responsible person on site and if necessary referred to the Fire Safety Officer .Copies of PEEPs should be part of the Fire Risk Assessment and Emergency Arrangements documentation.

What next?

- Having identified potential hazards, who is affected, considered the consequences and possible solutions, you may need to discuss the issues with other professionals before deciding on the most practical solutions.
- The Risk Assessment may identify training needs and potential hazards for staff and helpers. Steps must be taken to protect staff and pupils from injury or exposure to excessive risk.
- Any person involved in lifting must receive manual handling training (contact Physical and Medical Team to arrange Manual handling Training)
- If a hoist is used for lifting pupils, staff must have training in its use. Training can be done by the Physical and Medical Team as part of manual handling training. Staff must adhere to the safe system of working with regard to using a hoist safely.
- Specific lifting advice should be sought from a suitably trained person (usually manual handling trainer) and put together in an individual manual

handling plan. This should be updated with any changes in the child's ability or physical/ medical condition.

- Once suitable arrangements have been agreed, share the Risk Assessment with parents/carers and pupil and also with relevant staff. After an initial period, review the assessment to check that the arrangements are working and then review regularly, perhaps as part of the Annual review or IEP review.

Educational Visits – Please refer to Physical and Medical Team page on Bradford Schools Online.

Personnel Issues

- The job description of Support Assistants needs to reflect all aspects of the duties required e.g. intimate care, manual handling etc. Staff should be suitably trained to carry out their duties in reasonable safety.
- It is important that arrangements include a back-up plan in case the assistant is absent.
- It is not acceptable to send a pupil home if the support assistant is absent. This could be a contravention of the Equality Act 2010. Therefore contingency plans need to be in place.

Accident Incidents and Insurance Claims

- If, despite all your planning and precautions there is an accident or incident, make sure that you complete the appropriate incident forms and the correct reporting protocols regarding Reportable Injuries Diseases Dangerous Occurrences Regulations(RIDDOR) reportable incidents is adhered to .Ensure a suitable investigation is carried out and where appropriate, take actions to prevent reoccurrence.
- In the event of an insurance claim, the school will be asked to show that they have acted reasonably .Your detailed Risk Assessment, working plans, safe systems of work, training records, reporting procedures and reviewing processes will help to identify that the school acted in a safe manner.

With acknowledgement to Northamptonshire County Council (Children and Young People's Service).

Physical and Medical Team