

United Learning

Risk Management (HS) Code of Practice

1. Scope

- 1.1 This Code of Practice forms part of the health and safety arrangements detailed in the ‘United Learning Group Health and Safety Policy’. It provides further details on the measures required to meet statutory and group requirements in relation to risk management.

2. Definitions

- Hazard – anything with the potential to cause harm be it physical, ill-health, or property damage, e.g. spilt oil
- Hazardous Event – the coming together of a hazard and a person e.g. a person slipping on the oil
- Likelihood – the probability that the hazardous event will occur e.g. greater likelihood in a corridor than on the roof
- Severity – the most probable outcome of the hazardous event occurring, e.g. injury requiring first aid. Note that while ‘death’ is feasible for any event, it is the most probable outcome that should be considered.
- Risk – The overall product of Likelihood and Severity, sometimes expressed numerically.

3. Why Carry Out Risk Assessments?

- 3.1 The requirement for risk assessment is detailed in Regulation 3 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

‘Every Employer shall make a suitable and sufficient assessment of:

a) The risks to the health and safety of his employees to which they are exposed whilst they are at work.

b) The risks to the health and safety of persons not in his employment arising out of or in connection with the conduct by him or his undertaking;

- 3.2 The Regulations require risk assessment of all work related activities. All reasonably foreseeable risks should be assessed as should other specific risks which are identified by other regulations, e.g. the risk of fire. The significant findings of these assessments should be committed to writing.

- 3.3 Proper risk assessment can help all schools in setting their action priorities. It also assists with decision making and balancing risk, benefit, and cost. ‘Risk’ as a term can be used to relate to a multitude of work areas, e.g. financial, educational, reputational, however, in this document, it is used only in the context of health and safety.



4. The Risk Assessment Process

- 4.1 United Learning advocates the HSE process of *'Five Steps to Risk Assessment'*, which is as follows:

Step 1 - Identify the hazards

Step 2 - Decide who might be harmed and how

Step 3 - Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions

Step 4 - Record the findings and implement them

Step 5 - Review the risk assessment and update if necessary

- 4.2 However, to assist schools with this process and to ensure the nuances of the teaching and learning process are considered, a preceding and subsequent step may be beneficial.

Step 0 - Identify the activity to be assessed and consider if items can be grouped together, e.g. hand-tool use, running sports, low-level/weight manual handling operations, rather than writing a risk assessment for each individual piece of equipment or task.

Step 6 - For any activity involving students/pupils, ensure that the relevant risk assessment is reviewed, localised, and personalised, based on the additional dynamics the particular group of children presents. In some cases, e.g. science this can be as simple as annotating the lesson plan as the main risk assessment details will be on other materials such as CLEAPSS Hazcards, method statements.

- 4.3 All schools should commit to a process of proactive risk assessment and use the information obtained from this process in the development of local risk registers, i.e. a log of activities for which the residual risk remains high.
- 4.4 All activities should be assessed by those who control them prior to the activity taking place. The principles of prevention detailed below should be considered in the development of each Site's approach to risk management.
- 4.5 Risk assessments and procedures should be kept up-to-date and therefore should be reviewed regularly and formally at least every two years.
- 4.6 The review and update process should not result in the preceding risk assessment being lost or overwritten. It is essential that an audit trail is preserved in line with the [Group Records Management and Retention Policy](#) so that in the event of an incident occurring, the historical approach to risk management can be demonstrated and evidenced.
- 4.7 The general principles of prevention (detailed below) should be followed when implementing preventive and protective measures.
- a) avoiding risks
 - b) evaluating the risks which cannot be avoided
 - c) combating the risks at source



- d) adapting the work to the individual, especially as regards the design of workplaces, the choice of work equipment and the choice of working and production methods, with a view, in particular, to alleviating monotonous work and work at a predetermined work-rate and to reducing their effect on health
- e) adapting to technical progress
- f) replacing the dangerous by the non-dangerous or the less dangerous
- g) developing a coherent overall prevention policy which covers technology, organisation of work, working conditions, social relationships and the influence of factors relating to the working environment
- h) giving collective protective measures priority over individual protective measures, and
- i) giving appropriate instructions to employees

4.8 United Learning does not require risk assessments to be produced in a specific format and some departments have template assessments provided by third parties e.g. CLEAPSS for science and design and technology. It should be noted, however, that where generic/template assessments are used these need to be customised to make them specific to the 'department(s)' concerned. **If customisation is not carried out the law says that there is no risk assessment in place.**

4.9 To assist with the risk assessment process, a list of typical risk assessments likely to be required is available in the [A-Z Section](#) of United Hub.

5. Risk Assessment – a 'verb' not a 'noun'

5.1 While the term risk assessment is commonplace, it is helpful to remember that it is a process, not a product.

Risk Assessment as a Process	Risk assessment as a Product
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verb • Systematic thinking process • Research, conclusions, decisions • An ongoing process • Involves those to whom it relates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noun • Mountain of paper • Tick box exercises • Done once • Carried out in isolation

5.2 It is for these reasons that template risk assessments have not been produced centrally as doing so reinforces the error of risk assessments being a product rather than a process and their use can result in risk assessments not meeting the requirements of a suitable and sufficient assessment.



6. Who should carry out Risk Assessments?

- 6.1 In line with United Learning's devolved autonomy that schools have, risk assessments are the responsibility of whoever is in control of the work activity in question; normally the line manager or head of department. This may be delegated locally and where this is the case it should be detailed in the department's local management arrangements.

7. Classroom Risk Assessments

- 7.1 Also known as 'space surveys', these need to be carried out at least annually and should be carried out by the member of teaching staff that most frequently uses this space. A template is available in [the A-Z section](#) of United Hub.
- 7.2 Classroom risk assessments are not required for laboratories or workshops where these departments utilise the periodic check documentation produced by CLEAPSS.

8. Priority Risk Areas in Education

- 8.1 HSE have identified the following priority risk areas in the education sector. That is, these are the activities that give rise to the most significant adverse events. schools should prioritise their efforts into these topic areas and reducing the risks as far as reasonably practicable.
- Work at height
 - Slips and trips
 - On-site vehicle movements
 - Asbestos management
 - Construction and maintenance
 - Manual handling
 - Legionella
 - Stress
 - Educational visits

9. Qualitative vs. Quantitative Risk Assessments

- 9.1 Qualitative Risk Assessment is a straightforward process based on judgement and requiring no specialist skills or complicated techniques. A subjective assessment is made on whether the residual risk, once all controls are applied, is acceptable.
- 9.2 Quantitative Risk Assessment involves a numerical estimate being made of the likelihood (L) and severity (S) of a hazardous event occurring. The resulting product ($L \times S = R$) is the probability that a defined harm will result from the occurrence of a particular event. This approach facilitates the ranking of risks to support a programmed risk improvement programme.



- 9.3 There are pros and cons for the use of either approach and schools are free to utilise whichever approach works best for them, which could involve a combination of both approaches across all Site operations.

10. Defining 'Suitable and Sufficient'

- 10.1 To meet the regulatory requirements, all risk assessments should be suitable and sufficient. Whilst this is a complex legal concept, a risk assessment that is suitable and sufficient should broadly be able to show that:
- a proper check was made
 - those to whom the assessment applies were consulted during its development
 - all the obvious significant risks have been dealt with
 - the precautions are reasonable, and the remaining risk is low
- 10.2 The level of detail in a risk assessment should be proportionate to the risks and appropriate to the nature of the work. Insignificant risks can usually be ignored, as can risks arising from routine activities associated with life in general, e.g. making a hot drink, unless the work activity compounds or significantly alters those risks in some way.

11. Manual Handling and Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

- 11.1 Manual handling and COSHH assessments have their own approaches and requirements for risk assessment. Refer to their respective codes of practice for further information.

12. Educational Visits

- 12.1 Risk assessments are required for all educational visits, however, the typical approach detailed above can often overlook the *benefits* of the educational visit itself; only identifying the hazards. For this reason, United Learning advocates the OEAP approach of Risk-Benefit assessment for educational visits. Further details are provided in the group's educational visits code of practice.

13. Summary of Requirements

- All foreseeable risks to be assessed by the person(s) in control of the activity
- Records of all risk assessments to be made and retained

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