41. RISK ASSESSMENT

Policy statement

Risk assessment is carried out to ensure the safety of children, staff, parents, carers, and visitors. Individuals in the workplace are responsible for the health and safety of premises, equipment, and working practices. We have a 'corporate responsibility' and 'duty of care' to those who work in, and receive a service from, our provision. Individuals are also responsible for ensuring their own and others safety.

- A generic risk assessment form is completed for each area of work, and the areas of the building that are identified in these procedures.
- An access audit is completed to ensure inclusion and the health and safety of all visitors, staff, and children. The relevant procedure is modified if required to match the assessment.
- A prioritised place risk assessment is completed for offering prioritised places during a national pandemic (such as COVID–19). A separate form is completed for each child who is prioritised because they are vulnerable, or meet any other criteria stipulated by the Government at the time. A risk assessment is also completed for each individual group/room as appropriate. If the risk assessment indicates a high risk if the place is offered, that cannot be minimised, the offer of the place may be withdrawn at the discretion of the manager or Registered Provider/Owner.

Risk assessment means:

Taking note of aspects of your workplace and activities that could cause harm, either to yourself or to others, and deciding what needs to be done to prevent that harm, making sure this is adhered to and is updated when necessary.

The law does not require that all risk be eliminated, but that 'reasonable precaution' is taken. This is important when balancing the need for children to take appropriate risks through physically challenging play. Children need opportunities to work out what is not safe and what to do when faced with a risk.

This policy is based on the five steps of risk assessment:

- Identification of a risk: Where is it and what is it?
- Who is at risk: Childcare staff, children, parents/carers?
- Assessment as to whether the level of a risk is high, medium or low. This takes into account both the likelihood of it happening, as well as the possible impact if it did.
- Control measures to reduce/eliminate risk: What will you need to do, or ensure others will do, in order to reduce that risk?

- Monitoring and review: How do you know if what you have said is working, or is thorough enough? If it is not working, it will need to be amended, or maybe there is a better solution.

Daily safety sweeps and checks indoors and outdoors

- Safety sweeps are conducted when setting up for the day prior to children arriving or closing in the evening. Sometimes a safety sweep will identify a risk that requires a formal risk assessment on form. For example, if a window latch is becoming stiff and a member of staff has to stand on a chair in order to reach it to ensure it has closed properly.

Health and safety risk assessments

Health and safety risk assessments inform procedures. Staff, parents, and carers should be involved in reviewing risk assessments and procedures, as they are the ones with first-hand knowledge as to whether the control measures are effective, and they can give an informed view to help update procedures accordingly.

- The setting manager undertakes training and ensures staff have adequate training in health and safety matters. The manager also ensures that checks/work to premises are carried out and records are kept.
  - Gas safety by a Gas Safe registered gas/heating engineer.
  - Electricity safety by a qualified electrician.
  - Fire precautions to check that all fire-fighting equipment and alarms are in working order.
  - Hot air heating systems/air conditioning systems cleaned and checked.
  - Deep clean is carried out in kitchen.
- The manager ensures that members of staff carry out risk assessments that include relevant aspects of fire safety, food safety, in each of the following areas of the premises:
  - Entrance and exits.
  - Outdoor areas.
  - Passageways, stairways and connecting areas.
  - Group rooms.
  - Sleep areas.
  - Main kitchen.
  - Staff/parent's room.
  - Rooms used by others or for other purposes.

- Our manager ensures that staff members carry out risk assessments for off-site activities, if required, including:
  - children's outings;
  - Forest School;
  - pick-up/drop-off to a local primary school; and
  - other off-site duties such as attending meetings, banking etc.
- The manager ensures members of staff members carry out risk assessments for work practice including:
  - changing children, and the intimate care of young children and older children;
  - arrivals and departures;
  - preparation of food and drink for children;
  - children with allergies and special dietary needs or preferences;
  - serving food in group rooms;
  - cooking activities with children;
  - supervising outdoor play and indoor/outdoor climbing equipment;
  - settling young children to sleep;
  - assessment, use and storage of equipment for disabled children;
  - the use and storage of substances which may be hazardous to health, such as cleaning chemicals;
  - visitors to ASK who are bringing equipment or animals as part of the children's learning experiences, for example 'fire engines';
  - following any incidents involving threats against staff or volunteers; and
  - following any accident or incident involving staff or children.

The manager liaises with Crime Prevention Officers as appropriate to ensure security arrangements for premises and personnel are appropriate.

We take precautions to reduce the risks of exposure to Legionella (Legionnaires disease). The manager ensures that all members of staff are familiar with the HSE guidance and that a risk assessment from the landlord, relevant to the premises, has been seen.

Further guidance: Legionnaires' Disease – A Brief Guide for Dutyholders (HSE 2012)
www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg458.pdf

Outdoors

- All gates and fences are childproof, safe, and secure.
- Areas are checked daily to make sure animal droppings, litter, glass etc. is removed. Staff wear rubber gloves to do this.
- Bushes or overhanging trees are checked to ensure they do not bear poisonous berries.
- Stinging nettles and brambles are removed if they pose a risk to younger children.
- Safety mats are provided under climbing equipment, even when on grass
- Wooden equipment is maintained safely, put away daily and not used if broken.
- Wooden equipment is sanded and varnished as required.
- Broken climbing equipment or outdoor toys are removed and reported to the setting manager.
- Children are always supervised within ratios outside.
- Children are suitably attired for the weather conditions and type of outdoor activities.
- Sun cream (if parents have given permission) is applied and hats are worn during the summer months.
- Outdoor play is avoided in extreme heat between noon and 3pm.
- Children who have no adequate means of sun protection, such as hat, long sleeves and trousers or sun cream, will not be able to play outdoors in un-shaded areas.
- Children are supervised on climbing equipment, especially younger children.
- Water play is not left out but is cleared, cleaned and stored after each use.
- Receptacles are left upturned to prevent collection of rainwater, this is important in areas where there are vermin to prevent urine/faeces contaminating the water.
- Sightings of vermin are recorded and reported to the manager who reports to the Environmental Health's Pest Control Department.
- Outdoor areas that have flooded are not used until cleaned down and restored. Grassed areas are not played on for at least one week after the floodwater has gone.
- If paddling pools are used, a risk assessment is conducted and consideration given to the needs of disabled children or those less ambulant.

Drones

If there are concerns about a 'drone' being flown over the outdoor area, that may compromise children's safety or privacy, the setting manager will contact the police on 101.

- Children will be brought inside immediately.
- Parents/carers will be informed that a drone has been spotted flying over the outdoor area and will be advised fully of the actions taken by the setting.
- The police will have their own procedures to follow and will act accordingly.
- If at any point following the incident, photographs taken by a drone emerge on social media that could identify the nursery or individual children, these are reported to the police.
- A record is completed in the Notifiable Incident Record unless there is reason to believe that the incident might have safeguarding implications, for example:
- the drone has hovered specifically over the outdoor area for any length of time
    - there is a likelihood that images of the children have been recorded
    - is spotted on more than one occasion
    - if the Police believe there is cause for concern

Where this is the case, 02. Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults procedures are followed.

This policy was adopted by:	ASK Kindergarten & Clubs
On:	May 12, 2026
Date to be reviewed:	May 12, 2027
Signatory:	Mark Stewart
Role of Signatory:	Owner & Ofsted Registered Provider