

8.4 Risk assessment

Policy statement

We believe that the health and safety of children is of paramount importance and take all forms of Health and Safety Seriously. Our sessions may include activities that are considered higher risk than usual for children (such as tree climbing and campfire cooking). We recognise that taking risks are an important part of learning and developing and we want to provide a safe and supportive environment in which children can learn about risks, challenges and personal safety. This is also supported by OFSTED and the Health and Safety Executive. Nevertheless, a balance needs to be struck between ensuring children's safety from serious injury, yet enabling stimulating and effective play opportunities which will include an element of risk (Banes Play Policy; 1999) In order to do this, we must make a judgement as to the level of risk an activity holds and compare this to the benefits for that child's development in participating in that activity. A Risk Benefit Assessment is an effective way to make these judgements.

We seek to minimise risk by following appropriate procedures and carrying out risk assessments for all activities and covering key hazards that children may come into contact with during a session.

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.

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

Health and safety risk assessments inform procedures. Staff and parents should be involved in reviewing risk assessments and procedures – 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.

This policy is based on the five steps below:

- Identification of a risk: Where is it and what is it?
- Who is at risk: Childcare staff, children, parents, cooks, cleaners etc?
- Assessment as to whether the level of a risk is high, medium, 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.

Procedures

- Our Manager undertakes training and ensures our staff and volunteers have adequate training in health and safety matters.
- Our risk assessment process covers adults and children and includes:
 - determining where it is helpful to make some written risk assessments in relation to specific issues, to inform staff practice, and to demonstrate how we are managing risks if asked by parents and/or carers and inspectors;
 - checking for and noting hazards and risks indoors and outside, in relation to our premises and activities;
 - assessing the level of risk and who might be affected;
 - deciding which areas need attention; and
 - developing an action plan that specifies the action required, the time-scales for action, the person responsible for the action and any funding required.
- We maintain lists of health and safety issues, which are checked daily before the session begins, as well as those that are checked on a weekly and termly basis when a full risk assessment is carried out.
- Our manager ensures that checks, such as electricity safety checks, and any necessary work to the setting premises are carried out annually and records are kept.
- Our manager ensures that staff members carry out risk assessments that include relevant aspects of fire safety, food safety for all areas of the premises.
- Our manager ensures that staff members carry out risk assessments for work practice including:
 - changing children;
 - preparation and serving of food/drink for children;
 - children with allergies;
 - cooking activities with children;
 - supervising outdoor play and indoor/outdoor climbing equipment;
 - 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 the setting who are bring equipment or animals as part of children's learning experiences; and
 - following any incidents involving threats against staff or volunteers.
- A risk benefit analysis and risk assessment will be completed prior to each activity and more specifically to the woodland environment itself. These will be regularly reviewed and amended as required.
- Although risk assessments are to be completed by the Kindergarten Manager, there may be occasions when other member of staff is to complete a risk assessment.
- We take precautions to reduce the risks of exposure to Legionella (Legionnaires disease). Our manager will ensure that we are familiar with the HSE guidance and risk assess accordingly
- Unforeseen circumstances of changing weather conditions can create new risks and challenges, such as fallen branches and litter. These will need to be assessed dynamically. The manager and other staff members may therefore need to alter previously arranged activities.
- Not all risk assessments need to be written down. Staff will decide, in consultation with the manager, which risk assessments need to be formally recorded.

- Each member of staff / volunteers will follow the Kindergarten's Health and Safety policy and is responsible for:
 - Maintaining a safe environment
 - Taking reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and others attending the Kindergarten
 - Reporting all accidents and incidents which have caused injury or damage or may do so in the future
 - Undertaking relevant health and safety training when required to do so by the manager.
- Any member of staff who disregards safety instructions or recognised safe practices will be subject to disciplinary procedures.

Legal framework

- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999)

Further guidance

- Five Steps to Risk Assessment (HSE 2011)
- Legionnaires' Disease – A Brief Guide for Dutyholders (HSE 2012) www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg458.pdf

This policy was adopted by	Hidden Valley Bushcraft	<i>(name of provider)</i>
On	23/08/2017	<i>(date)</i>
Date reviewed	20/10/2019	
Date to be reviewed	20/10/2020	<i>(date)</i>
Signed on behalf of the provider	<i>L Goldsmith</i>	
Name of signatory	Louise Goldsmith	
Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)	Owner	

Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications

- Managing Risk (2009)