



Downe House

## RISK ASSESSMENT POLICY

### 1.0 Purpose

The Governors of Downe House are fully committed to promoting the safety and welfare of all in our community in order that effective education can take place. Their highest priority lies in ensuring that all the operations within the school environment, both educational and support, are delivered in a safe manner that complies fully not just with the law; but with best practice. Risks are inherent in everyday life. We need to identify them and to adopt systems for minimising them.

Each member of staff is responsible for completing activity specific Risk Assessments for each of the activities for which they are in charge. These are completed through the Merlin system for our educational activities and visits. In addition to these bespoke Risk Assessments the school operates a "Model" system where staff complete annual training on the everyday risks inherent in holding classes or meetings within the school premises. Events such as these do not have bespoke Risk Assessments.

Downe House subscribes to the CLEAPSS Advisory Service that provides model risk assessments for our lessons in Science and Design and Technology, as well as providing professional training courses for both teachers and technicians who work in Science and D&T. All teaching staff and technicians receive regular induction and refresher training in risk assessments tailored to their specific areas.

The school receives an annual audit of their Health and Safety Processes from an external party. This audit is reviewed by the Governing Body and Director of Estates Property and Services.

### 2.0 WHAT IS A RISK ASSESSMENT?

A risk assessment is a tool for conducting a formal examination of the harm or hazard to people (or an organisation) that could result from a particular activity or situation:

- A hazard is something with the potential to cause harm (e.g. fire).
- A risk is an evaluation of the probability of the hazard occurring (e.g. a chip pan will catch fire if left unattended).
- A risk assessment is the resulting assessment of the severity of the outcome (e.g. loss of life, destruction of property).
- Risk control measures are the measures and procedures that are put in place in order to minimise the consequences of unfettered risk (e.g. staff training, clear work procedures, heat detectors, fire alarms, fire practices, gas and electrical shut down points and insurance).

Accidents and injuries can ruin lives, damage reputations and cost money. Risk Assessments therefore make good sense and need to focus on prevention and risk awareness, rather than used as a reactionary tool when things go wrong.

### 3.0 WHAT AREAS REQUIRE RISK ASSESSMENTS?

There are numerous activities carried out in Downe House, each of which requires a separate risk assessment. The most important of these cover:

- Fire safety, procedures and risk assessments
- Educational visits and trips.

Risk assessments are also needed for many other areas, including:

- Educational
- Science experiments
- Design and Technology
- Food Technology
- Each sport and PE activity
- Duke of Edinburgh award
- Art (including the clay and print studios)
- Music (including minimising the risk of hearing loss to staff)
- Drama (including the theatre back stage, stage, props room and lighting box)
- Dance

#### **4.0 Pastoral**

The focus of our pastoral aims (please refer to the Strategic Development Plan) is to ensure that every pupil leaves as a confident, articulate young adult capable of keeping herself safe on the streets, in the home and in all situations. Our PSHE programmes and Assemblies are directed towards promoting an increasing understanding as the pupil develops, of the risks that exist in both the real and the electronic worlds, and on sensible precautions that should be taken. Our Science lessons encourage students to conduct their own safety-related research into the potential hazards of chemicals, gas, electricity and flammable materials.

#### **5.0 Medical and First Aid**

The Medical Centre has risk assessments for first aid and all other treatments and procedures. The accident forms are maintained in the Medical Centre and the School Nurse is responsible for ensuring that accident reports are passed to the Director of Estates, Property and Services and also to the Deputy Director of Estates, Property and Services. The School's separate Medical policy explains the procedures that we would follow in the event of a medical emergency. The Director of Estates, Property and Services is responsible for reporting any notifiable accident that occurs on School premises to a pupil, member of staff, parent, visitor or contractor to the HSE in accordance with the Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations (RIDDOR).

#### **6.0 Unsupervised Access by Pupils**

We ensure that pupils understand why they do not have unsupervised access to potentially dangerous areas, such as the swimming pool, the science laboratories, the design technology rooms, etc. Doors to these areas are kept locked at all times when not in use. All flammables are kept securely locked. Pupils do not have access to the Grounds, Maintenance, Catering and Caretaking areas of the School.

#### **7.0 Safeguarding and Child Protection**

Our Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and training for all staff form the core of our safeguarding and child protection risk management. Safer Recruitment and Selection policy and procedures ensure that the School is not exposed to the risk of employing staff who are barred from working with children, and are not allowed to work in the UK. By extending this regime to Governors, volunteers and the adult members of the households of staff who are accommodated on site, and by ensuring that everyone in our community receives regular safeguarding and child protection training, we manage this risk to an acceptable level.

#### **8.0 Support Areas**

- Catering and Cleaning: risk assessments and training is required for every item of catering and cleaning equipment, as well as for manual handling, slips and trips and the control of substances hazardous to health (COSHH). Induction and refresher training covers risk assessments, protective equipment and safety notices.
- Caretaking and Security: risk assessments cover every room, laboratory, stairs, corridor and emergency exit in the entire school, [including boarding houses]. Particular emphasis in training is

given to minimising the risk of both fire and to security by adhering to good practice. Risk assessments also cover manual handling, working at heights, and asbestos. Induction and refresher training covers risk assessments, protective equipment and safety notices.

- Maintenance: risk assessments and training is required for every tool and item of equipment, as well as for manual handling, slips and trips, working at height, lone working, asbestos, control of contractors on site, electricity, gas, water, swimming pool maintenance and the control of substances hazardous to health (COSHH). Induction and refresher training covers risk assessments, safe working practices, communication and health and safety notices and protective equipment.
- Grounds: risk assessments and training is required for every tool and piece of machinery, as well as for manual handling, slips and trips, working at height, lone working, use of pesticides, storage of flammables and COSHH. Induction and refresher training covers risk assessments, protective equipment and safety notices.
- Office staff: risk assessments are required for the display screen equipment and cables used by those staff (primarily office-based) who spend the majority of their working day in front of a screen.

Departments are responsible for retaining copies of all relevant risk assessments and relating paperwork within their department Health and Safety file.

## **9.0 CONDUCTING A RISK ASSESSMENT**

There are several possible techniques; but at Downe House we use the model recommended by the HSE in its publication "Five Steps to Risk Assessment". This is outlined in the Safeguarding and Promoting Health and Safety of Pupils on Activities policy. Activities involving pupils are normally low risk. We undertake a few medium risk activities with older pupils, such as riding, canoeing skiing and orienteering; but only using specialist/qualified instructors. Pupils are always given a safety briefing before participating in these activities, and are expected to wear protective equipment, such as mouth-guards, and to follow instructions. We will always employ specialists to high risk tasks. Support staff may only carry out medium rated activities if they have been properly trained and work in pairs. All members of staff and pupils are expected to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) for tasks that have been assessed as requiring its usage.

The schools Health and Safety Manual describes the arrangements for regular health and safety audits within the School, this includes the production and use of risk assessments.

All members of staff receive annual Risk Assessment and general Health and Safety training. Specialist training is given to those whose work requires it. However, staff are responsible for taking reasonable care of their own safety, together with that of pupils and visitors. They are responsible for cooperating with the Headmistress, the Bursar and other members of the LT in order to enable the Governors to comply with their health and safety duties. Finally, all members of staff are responsible for reporting any risks or defects to the Director of Estates, Property and Services.

Where a risk assessment involves activities that are to be undertaken by pupils, it is the policy of the school to ensure that a responsible person, in accordance with the Health and Safety Policy, completes the risk assessments. Those completing a risk assessment should ensure they have read and understood the Health and Safety Policy, specifically Clause 22.4.

All Housemistresses/Heads of Department are responsible for producing risk assessments covering their areas of responsibility, and training and guidance will be made available to help with this where necessary. Whenever risk assessments' are completed, the supervision of the pupils is to be taken into account. The person who completes the risk assessment is deemed to be responsible for the areas assessed and for the supervision of the pupils in these areas. Where this is not the case, the risk assessment will highlight the person/persons responsible for pupil supervision.

**Revision History:**

<b>Revision</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Description of changes</b>	<b>Requested By</b>
1	September 2015	Reviewed	Alasdair Heath
2	September 2016	Reviewed	Alasdair Heath
3	February 2017	Updated reference to H&S Policy – highlighted in red	Alasdair Heath

This policy makes reference to the following School policies, copies of which can be located on Merlin in the ‘My Policies’ section:

Medical (Reviewer: BD)

Safeguarding and Child Protection (Reviewer: BD)

Safeguarding and Promoting the Health and Safety of Pupils on Activities (Reviewer: BD)

Safer Recruitment and Selection (Reviewer: DHR)

**Review Leader:** Director of Estates, Property and Services  
**Reviewed:** February 2017  
**Next Review:** September 2017