

# SAFEGUARDING & WELFARE REQUIREMENT: SAFETY & SUITABILITY OF PREMISES, ENVIRONMENT & EQUIPMENT

## 8.4 Risk Assessment



### Policy Statement

At St John's Playtime Pre-school, we believe that the health and safety of children is of paramount importance. We make our setting a safe and healthy place for children, parents, staff and volunteers by assessing and minimising the hazards and risks to enable the children to thrive in a healthy and safe environment.

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 Early Years Alliance risk assessment processes, which follow five steps as follows:

1. Identification of a risk: Where is it and what is it?
2. Who is at risk: Childcare staff, children, parents, volunteers etc?
3. 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.
4. Control measures to reduce/eliminate risk: What will you need to do, or ensure others will do, in order to reduce that risk?
5. 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.

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

- Generic risk assessment form is completed for each area of work, and the areas of the building that are identified in these procedures
- 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.
- 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. 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 setting manager.

## **Procedures**

- Our Health and Safety Representatives undertake training and ensure our staff and volunteers have adequate training in health and safety matters.
- Health and safety risk assessments inform procedures. Staff and parents 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.
- 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.

- Where more than five staff and volunteers are employed, the risk assessment is written and is reviewed regularly.
- 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 and gas safety checks, and any necessary work to our setting premises are carried out annually and records are kept. **(These arrange by the Church)**
- 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;
  - putting 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 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.
- Our Manager ensures that staff members carry out risk assessments for off-site activities if required, including:
  - children's outings (including use of public transport);
  - forest school and beach school;
  - home visits; and
  - other off-site duties such as attending meetings, banking etc.
- We take precautions to reduce the risks of exposure to Legionella (Legionnaires disease). Our Manager ensures that we are familiar with the HSE guidance and risk assess accordingly/have seen the risk assessment relevant to the premises from the landlord.

### **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](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg458.pdf)

**This policy was adopted at a meeting held by St John's Playtime Pre-school committee on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2009.**

**This policy was reviewed & updated on: May 2024**

**This policy will be reviewed again on: May 2025**

**Signed on behalf of the Management committee and provider:**

**Name of Signatory: Julia Rael**



**Role of Signatory: Committee Chairperson**