



Early Years Risk Assessment for Reception classrooms and outdoor area 2021-2022

Across the Early Years environment, we aim to offer a wide range of exciting and engaging learning opportunities to help develop children’s foundation skills. In any situation where there are several children working and playing together there are risks but there are also benefits. We take the health and safety of children very seriously and assess each situation by considering the potential risks and the benefits and then through discussion we can decide if the risks can be managed appropriately and that the benefits are valid, reasonable, and productive in moving children’s learning forward.

The following risk assessments cover the main areas of the indoor and outdoor environment. The general checklist covers our daily considerations before opening the environment to parents and children.

First aid and safeguarding are covered in our Early Years and whole school policies and are available on our school website.

Trips are covered separately using whole school risk assessment forms and are agreed on a trip-by-trip basis by the headteacher.

All risk assessments are reviewed yearly to ensure they are up-to-date and relevant however, an assessment will be made immediately if there is an incident, or an area of the environment is adapted or changed in any significant way.

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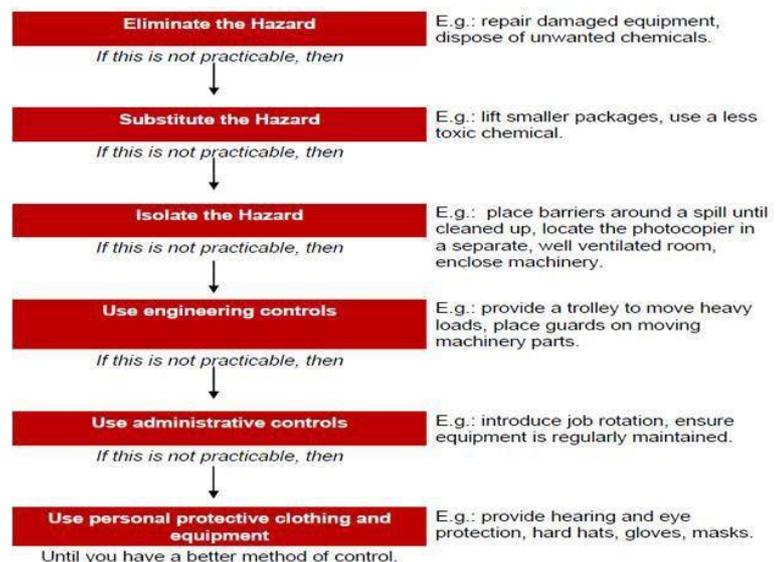
KEY –

L = Likelihood

C = Consequence

R = Risk to persons

		Consequence				
		Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
Likelihood	Almost certain	Moderate	High	High	Extreme	Extreme
	Likely	Moderate	Moderate	High	Extreme	Extreme
	Possible	Low	Moderate	High	High	Extreme
	Unlikely	Low	Low	Moderate	High	High
	Rare	Low	Low	Low	Moderate	High



Daily Checklist

Item	Details
OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT	
1	Walk around the free-flow area and check for any rubbish blown in/dropped or any animal faeces. Clear away any mess.
2	Consider the outside temperature and check the surface to assess if it is too slippy to be played on.
3	Check the free-standing climbing equipment for damage and dirt. Remove or clean where necessary.
4	If there has been heavy rain, check crates, tough spots, tables/chairs, and large containers and drain where necessary.
5	Unlock and peg back shed doors securely.
6	Check both gates are locked securely.
7	Remove both storage bench lids and store safely.
8	Check mud kitchen, soil, and sand trays for any contamination.
INDOOR ENVIRONMENT	
1	Check the classroom areas and restrooms are clean and there is sufficient toilet paper and soap.
2	Check indoor furniture and equipment is safe.
4	Check snack is washed thoroughly and that there are fresh straws for snack.
5	Check toys and remove any broken or damaged ones.
6	Routinely check chairs and tables for damage.
7	Check classroom rug for any curled areas.

Activity/Hazard	Benefit	Risks	Risk Assessment (use Matrix)			Elimination/ Control methods	Who/When
			L	C	R		
Malleable activities	Physical development as well as motor skills practice.	Possible allergic reactions to materials. Consumption of materials.	POSSIBLE	MINOR	MODERATE	Check all information on allergies and avoid allergens. Make sure all other materials are sensitive and are diluted according to the instructions. Children follow the no consumption rule in this area.	Staff in conjunction with parents
Toy boxes	Add stimulus to play increasing vocabulary, interaction, and communication.	Falling toys, heavy boxes being moved unsafely, trapped fingers or drops on toes.	POSSIBLE	MODERATE	HIGH	Ensure boxes and baskets are not overloaded. Provide low storage for boxes. Adults to oversee manual handling and model safe techniques.	Staff and children
Slips and trips		Children trip or slip on the toys left on the floor	POSSIBLE	MINOR	MODERATE	Set expectations about how much can be out at any one time and encourage children to tidy up what they are no longer playing with to keep the environment safe. Any spills on floor to be mopped up straight away. Any objects on floor that could be a trip hazard to be picked up.	Staff and children
Scissors, hole punches	Promotes the children's motor skills and creative play	Children cut themselves or others	POSSIBLE	MODERATION	HIGH	Talk to the children about the use of scissors, e.g. for paper and card. The scissors must be used to cut. Make it clear to the children that you don't use the scissors to cut hair or each other's clothes. Model to the children how to use scissors and walk with them safely. Model how to use the hole punches.	Staff and children
Open shelves	Encourage independence and self-selection of resources	Children climb the shelves or hang off it, causing the shelves to fall	POSSIBLE	MODERATE	HIGH	Talk to the children about the open shelves and how to use them safely. Encourage the children to find an adult if a child is using the shelves incorrectly.	Staff and children

Mud Kitchen and Garden area

Activity/Hazard	Benefit	Risks	Risk Assessment (use Matrix)			Elimination/ Control methods	Who/When
			L	C	R		
Contact with soil	Exposure to beneficial bacteria to build a healthy immune system. Sensorial open-ended materials. Normal childhood experience.	Ingesting soil	UNLIKELY	MINOR	LOW	Provide hand washing facilities during and after play. Establish good handwashing routines. Children encouraged to follow a no consumption routine in this area.	Staff at the beginning of each session
Soil contamination	Children can be involved in checking the area before play creating a sense of ownership and raising awareness of potential hazards.	Ingesting/ absorbing contaminated soil	UNLIKELY	MINOR	LOW	Soil should be checked for contaminants daily, before play - this is part of the daily checklist. Children follow the no consumption rule in this area. Not using manure or any chemicals on the garden or surrounding areas.	Staff Part of daily checklist
Washing up hands	Children learn good hygiene practices.	Wet areas Slips and trips	POSSIBLE	MODERATE	HIGH	Provide washing facilities and at times of extreme mud, provide rinsing facilities outside. Staff to monitor floor areas for water and mop up when necessary.	Staff to monitor
Washing up utensils, equipment	Involving the children in the cleaning and tidying creates a sense of ownership. Can help with fine and gross motor skills.	Manual handling. Moving pots and pans.	POSSIBLE	MINOR	LOW	Ensure buckets and baskets are not overloaded. Provide low storage for pots and pans. Adults to oversee manual handling and model safe techniques.	Staff to monitor
Water	Adds a new dimension to the play, changing the states of materials so children can mix, tip, pour and stir to create potions, stews, and soups. Covers aspects of maths, and science.	Drowning Slips Stagnant water consumption	RARE	CATASTROPHIC	HIGH	Water containers are supervised and not filled deeply. Water containers are emptied at the end of the day. Water containers are regularly checked to ensure they are clean and free from contamination. Children encouraged to follow no consumption rule in this area. Children are made aware of the hazards of water.	Staff to monitor

Gravel, pebbles, woodchip or other pieces of natural material	Fine and gross motor skills are developed when lifting, mixing, stirring, and pouring The connection to nature	Choking	UNLIKELY	MODERATE	MODERATE	Any children who are likely to explore putting things into their mouths are identified and given greater supervision in this area	Staff
Using plants and other foraged natural materials	Connection to nature. Creative stimulus. Sensorial. Open ended materials.	Ingesting or absorption of poisonous plants Allergies	UNLIKELY	MODERATE	MODERATE	Raise the risk of eating plants. Plants within the play area are chosen carefully. Adults to remove hazardous plants. Children encouraged to follow a no consumption rule in this area. Children encouraged to wash their hands after play.	Staff

Climbing Equipment

Climbing Blocks	Opportunity to adapt and change the climbing challenges. Equipment that can provide role play props.	Falling from equipment, slips and trips, trapped fingers	POSSIBLE	MINOR	MODERATE	Children to be made aware of the risks of trapped fingers. Shown how to move and position blocks safely. Blocks to be checked by staff each day for dirt and cracks, no access to blocks for climbing in wet weather.	Staff
Netball and basketball hoops	Children practice their aiming and throwing skills.	Posts are blown over or knocked over by children.	POSSIBLE	MODERATE	HIGH	Posts are positioned on a flat and secure surface. Children are spoken to about safety. Screws and bases are checked regularly.	Staffs

Crates and planks and tyres	Children develop their motor skills and balance	Slips, trips or falls. Knocks from falling or moving blocks.	POSSIBLE	MINOR	MODERATE Children have safety talk prior to using the equipment and agree how to use it safely. Daily reminders are given about assessing the risk in their play. Weather conditions to be considered when accessing the equipment. Area to be monitored to ensure surroundings are clear. All equipment checked regularly for damage.	Staff and children
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Wheeled Toys

Riding on and being a passenger on the bikes	Physical development, spatial awareness, communication, and social skills. Part of creative play.	Knocking other children, clothing trapped in moving parts, bikes tipping	POSSIBLE	MINOR	MODERATE Involve children in safety talks about using the bikes and where they are allowed to ride them (on the track). Scarves are to be secured in coats or not worn when on bikes. Limit the number of wheeled toys in wet weather when the ground is slippy. Ensure all wheeled toys are checked over regularly for damage and replaced when necessary.	Children and Staff
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Scooting around the area	Physical development, co-ordination. Social and creative play.	Knocking into other children, scooters tipping/sliding. Clothing trapped in moving parts	POSSIBLE	MINOR	MODERATE	<p>Involve children in safety talks about using the scooters and where they can ride them (on the track).</p> <p>Scarves are to be secured in coats or not worn when on bikes. Limit the number of wheeled toys in wet weather when the ground is slippery. Ensure all wheeled toys are checked over regularly for damage and replaced when necessary.</p>	Children and staff
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Sand and Water Play

Sand play	Sociable play, motor skills, creative play, language development.	Sand flipping up into eyes.	UNLIKELY	MINOR	LOW	<p>Talk to the children about playing together in the sand and use the rhyme – ‘the sand stays down low or out you go’ Monitor the number of children playing in the sand pit and regulate if necessary.</p>	Staff and children
Slipping on loose sand around the tray	Children benefit from playing in a large sand pit and connecting with the material.	Children slip and injury themselves on loose sand surrounding the pit.	POSSIBLE	MINOR	MODERATE	<p>Adults to encourage children to sweep sand up when it gets onto the floor. Adults to monitor mess and support cleaning up before it gets too much.</p>	Staff
Sand contamination	Children can be involved in checking the area before play creating a sense of ownership and raising awareness of potential hazards	Ingesting/ absorbing contaminated sand	UNLIKELY	MINOR	MODERATE	<p>The cover needs to be in place at the end of each day. Adults to remove the cover and check for any contamination. Area around the sandpit to be checked each day for any contamination, rubbish blown in, animal droppings etc.</p>	Staff

Sand and water	Sociable play, motor skills, creative play, language development. Science and mathematical development.	Water or sand splashed into eyes, consumption of materials.	LIKELY	MINOR	LOW	Involve the children in setting the safety rules in these areas.	Staff and children
Sand and water	Sociable play, motor skills, creative play, language development. Science and mathematical development.	Slipping on sand and water on the floor	LIKELY	MINOR	MODERATE	Staff to monitor these areas and encourage children to spot and help clear spillages to reduce the risk of slips.	Staff and children
Water tray play	Science exploration on water movement, maths capacity, motor skill development in filling and pouring.	Children become wet and cold	UNLIKELY	MINOR	LOW	Staff to consider the temperature outside before providing access to water play. If children are playing at water tray, aprons must be worn.	Staff and children
Water	As above	Water is dirty or contaminated	UNLIKELY	MINOR	LOW	All water trays to be emptied at the end of the session/day and refreshed with clean water. If children have transported soil/sand or other materials into the water, then trays need to be washed before they are refreshed.	Staff then children
Water toys	Offer creativity in the water play, can facilitate maths and science talk and interactive play.	Toys hold water and become mouldy or contaminated.	UNLIKELY	MINOR	LOW	Staff to ensure all water toys are drained and left to dry overnight – toys are periodically sterilized and checked for mould. Toys to be replaced when necessary.	Staff and children
Sprays/bubbles	Aiming skills. Blowing. Coordination.	Bubble solution or spray in the eye.	POSSIBLE	MINOR	MODERATE	Staff to involve children in assessing the risks of blowing bubbles or spraying water and look at how to do it safely. Staff to supervise use of bubbles.	Staff and children

This risk assessment has been acknowledged by the following people –

Miss K. Edwards (Leader of Learning for Reception) _____

Mr. M. Wood (Health & Safety officer and site manager) _____

Miss A. Stanford (Reception class teacher) _____

Mrs. M. Fellows (Reception class teacher) _____

Mrs. Z. Blundell (Reception Teaching assistant) _____

Miss J. Abberley (Reception Teaching assistant) _____

Mrs. A. Gould (Reception support assistant) _____