

# Rhondda Cynon Taf Council

## Risk Assessment

### A Guide for Primary Schools



July 2014

## Risk Assessment

### Introduction

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, require schools to make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks presented by work activities to the health and safety of its employees and other persons. In other words, you are required to examine what in your work could cause harm (a HAZARD), together with an indication of how likely and serious the harm could be (the RISK). The assessment process should help you to decide whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to meet what the law says you must do.

The law does not expect you to eliminate all risks, but you are required to protect people as far as is reasonably practicable.

Sometimes the difference between a HAZARD and a RISK can be confusing, so it's worthwhile remembering that;

A HAZARD is “something with the potential to cause harm”.

A RISK is the “likelihood that somebody could be harmed by the hazard along with an indication of how serious or severe the harm could be”.

To keep it simple we suggest you use a “low” “medium” or “high” scale to help you determine what RISK a person is at in relation to the HAZARD.

A common myth that risk assessments are cumbersome, bureaucratic and often unnecessary is rarely the case. Most of us are already aware of the risks involved in carrying out the many tasks involved in the course of a normal day. Don't over complicate the process. In most schools, the hazards and risks are well known and the necessary control measures are easy to apply.



This guide describes a method that can be used for identifying and suitably addressing the potential hazards and risks to the health and safety of employees and any other person who may be affected by the schools activities. It does not and cannot cover all possibilities, but it should enable you to apply your own knowledge and experience (together with that of your employees) and any industry specific guidance to complete a suitable and sufficient assessment

Further guidance on the risk assessment process can be obtained from the Health and Safety Team. The Council also has 26 Health and Safety Policies which are available on Moodle.  
Further guidance on the 5 steps to risk assessment can be obtained from the Health and Safety Executive website: [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

The Health and Safety Executive have outlined the basic steps to risk assessment and the principle of which will apply to all Organisations including schools. The five steps identified in their guidance are:



## Responsibilities

It is the employer who has the legal responsibility for risk assessment. In schools, this means the local authority or, in voluntary aided or foundation schools, the governing body.

In practice, the risk assessment process is delegated by the employer to individuals who manage the process and who undertake risk assessments on the employer's behalf. In the case of Primary Schools this role will usually sit with the Headteacher.



## Procedure

Headteachers and other managers who are required to undertake risk assessments should ensure that they obtain all the necessary support. Proper support may include training in risk assessment or seeking further guidance on the risk assessment process from a member of the Health and Safety Team when appropriate.

Headteachers may also consider it is desirable to involve other members of staff, particularly where they may have particular areas of expertise, for example science and technology.

As most schools will have similar hazards, Headteachers should consider working together to complete assessments (e.g. cluster groups). This will maximise efficiency by minimising duplication and so assist in the production of effective assessments by sharing experiences and good practice.

Sensible judgments are all that are generally required to ensure maximum benefits for children whilst ensuring that they are not exposed to significant risks.

Where required the following documents can be used within the risk assessment process. Generally, most Headteachers will only need to use RA/03 & RA/04.

RA/01	Schedule of Work Activities (If required)
RA/02	Hazard Identification Form (If required)
RA/03	Risk Assessment Form
RA/04	Risk Assessment - Action Plan
RA/05	Risk Assessment Summary Sheet

The following forms are **examples** that you may use to undertake a risk assessment. Managers may find an alternative form more appropriate for their own circumstances.

## Risk Assessment - Step 1 & 2

### Step 1 – Schedule of Work Activities RA/01

The first step is to identify all the activities that you or your team undertake. This step **does not** require you to undertake a detailed assessment but just to **list** the activities.

**(The use of this form in the process is optional).**

Schedule of Work Activities				Form RA/01			
School:			Assessor/s:				
			Date:				
RA Ref No.	List of Work Activities	Do known hazards exist?			Yes	Unsure	No
		Yes	Unsure	No			



### Step 2 – Hazard Identification Form RA/02

The second step is to identify those activities from the **RA/01** that will require further analysis. These activities must be brought forward from the **RA/01** (in priority order according to their potential to cause harm) to enable hazards to be identified for each individual activity.

Using the **RA/02**, hazards will be assessed for the likelihood of them occurring including the possible degree of harm that could result. Hazards which are **unlikely** to occur and are considered to pose a **low** degree of harm will remain on the form at this stage in order to show that they have been considered but do not warrant any further action in the circumstances.

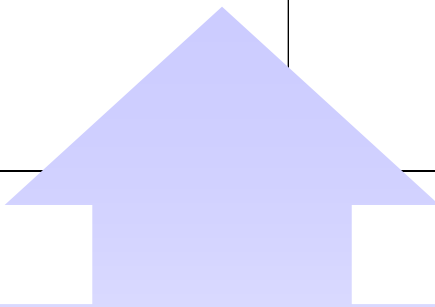
**(The use of this form in the process is optional).**

Hazard Identification				Form RA/02		
RA Ref No. <small>(Use your own ref. numbers)</small>		Work Activity:		Date:		
Item No.	Hazards associated with activity	Is the hazard:		Degree of harm		
		Likely	Unlikely	H	M	L

Key to risk factor	Risk Factor
Likely to occur x High degree of harm	H
Unlikely to occur x High degree of harm	M
Likely to occur x Medium degree of harm	M
Unlikely to occur x Medium degree of harm	M
Likely to occur x Low degree of harm	L
Unlikely to occur x Low degree of harm (insignificant/trivial)	L

## Risk Assessment - Step 3

RA Ref:	<b>Work Activity Risk Assessment</b>				<b>Form RA/03</b>		
Assessment Date		Work Activity being assessed:			Assessors:		
Review Date							
Item No.	Main Hazards (Something with the potential to cause harm)	Risk [H,M,L]	Reason (Explain the reasons why you have decided on either a H,M,L risk rating in the previous column. Include the person(s) at risk and the seriousness of the injuries they may sustain)	Current Control Measures (What are you doing already to control the hazard and risk? These controls must be in place and working effectively)	Residual Risk [H,M,L]	Further Action Required	
						Yes	No



Safe to proceed	Yes	No

### Step 3 – Risk Assessment Form RA/03

The third step is to take forward to the Work Activity **Risk Assessment Form RA/03** those hazards that are likely to cause harm identified on your **RA/02**. Here you will analyse them to consider the associated risks and determine if current control measures are adequate. It is at this stage that you may need to research and determine the relevant safety guidance and industry standards as they apply to the activity. This will help you determine if further controls are required and if you are complying with best practice and/or legal requirements. Where it is determined that it is unsafe to proceed with the activity (taking into account the current control measures) then the activity should be stopped until further controls are identified and implemented using the **Risk Assessment Action Plan - RA/04**.

**(Note -** Where the activity is high risk or complex then it is likely that further more detailed control measures will be required and could include the development of a formalised Safe Method of Work).

## Risk Assessment - Step 4

<b>RA Ref:</b>	<b>Risk Assessment - Action Plan</b>			<b>Form RA/04</b>	
<b>Resp. Person:</b>		<b>Work Activity:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Designation:</b>					
Item No.	Main Hazards	Action Required	Date Action to be taken by	By Whom	Date Completed

<b>Safe to proceed</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**Step 4 – Risk Assessment – Action Plan RA/04**

The **RA/04** will be used to indicate what further action is required to reduce the risk to an acceptable level. You will also include the timescales and names and designations of those responsible for the actions.

## Risk Assessment - Step 5

### Step 5 – Risk Assessment Summary Sheet – RA/05

The **Risk Assessment Summary (RA/05)** can be used to inform employees of the findings of the risk assessment and the relevant control measures to be adopted. You may use this to provide information stating the minimum safety requirements for the activity, including any additional precautions taking into account specific local conditions, working practices etc.

RISK ASSESSMENT SUMMARY (A closer look at the more hazardous areas of concern)		Form RA/05
Ref. No. _____	Work activity:	
School:		
Assessor/s:	Date of risk assessment:	
Description of work activity:		
Description of main hazards and harm	Current Control Measures	
Who could be harmed?		
Additional control measures for this work activity		
Where the activity is complex in nature, or requires further understanding, managers should consider developing a Safe Method of Work to support this Risk Assessment.		

### Recording

A file of risk assessments and associated risk assessment summary sheets must be retained and regularly reviewed and updated.

### Review of the risk assessment

There are few workplaces or activities that stay the same. Sooner or later, you will bring in new equipment, substances, and procedures that could lead to new hazards. It makes sense to review what you are doing on a regular basis. You should review your risk assessment:

- after an accident, incident or significant near miss;
- after any significant changes have been made, e.g. change of staff, new working method or equipment;
- any changes in the relevant legislation;
- at least annually.

# **Risk Assessment**

## **Examples of Completed Forms**



Schedule of Work Activities		Form RA/01		
Service Area: Education		Assessor/s: Headteacher & Staff Rep.		
School: St. Perry's		Date: May 2014		
RA Ref No.	List of Work Activities	Do known hazards exist?		
		Yes	Unsure	No
PS.01	Playground Activities – Supervision	✓		
PS.02	PE Activities	✓		
PS.03	Playground Equipment	✓		
PS.04	Work at Height (Teachers/Staff)	✓		
PS.05	Use of Cookers/Cookery Equipment	✓		
PS.06	Design Technology Studies	✓		
PS.07	Use of Glue Guns	✓		
PS.08	Finger Trapping – Gates and Doors	✓		

Remember a hazard is "something with the potential to cause harm".

This form is nothing more than your A4 scrap of paper. You may wish to use this to make a list of your activities in priority order. At this point you can also make a judgement about whether there is a potential for harm (the hazard) or not; if not leave the activity where it is.

If no, go no further with the risk assessment process for this particular activity.

## Hazard Identification

**Form RA/02**

No. (own ref.numbers)	<b>Work Activity:</b> Playground Equipment	<b>Date:</b>			
Hazards associated with activity	Is the hazard:		Degree of harm		
	Likely	Unlikely	H	M	L
Play Equipment Failure		✓	✓		
Falls From Height	✓		✓		
Inclement Weather	✓			✓	
Entrapment/Entanglement with parts of play equip.	✓			✓	
Collisions	✓				✓

This is another form you may wish to use to replace your scrap of paper. For those tasks that you have previously said a hazard exists, bring the most important over first so that you and your team can list all the potentials for harm - **your hazards**.

Use these columns to help you decide on the risk factor - if something is **unlikely** to happen and has a **low** degree of harm, again, leave it where it is. Ignore the trivial and focus on the significant.

Use the 'risk factor' key to assist you in deciding the level and degree of risk.

**'Low' risk** - unlikely, resulting in minor injury e.g. cut/bruise.  
**'Medium' risk** - likely, resulting in more serious injury e.g. serious wounds, fractures, strain/sprains, dislocation.  
**'High' risk** - likely, resulting in fatalities, major injury, severed limbs, loss of consciousness, loss of sight.

Key to risk factor	Risk Factor
Likely to occur x High degree of harm	H
Unlikely to occur x High degree of harm	M
Likely to occur x Medium degree of harm	M
Unlikely to occur x Medium degree of harm	M
Likely to occur x Low degree of harm	L
Unlikely to occur x Low degree of harm (insignificant/trivial)	L

RA Ref: PS.01		Work Activity Risk Assessment			Form RA/03			
Assessment Date		Work Activity being assessed: Playground Equipment					Assessors: Headteacher and A.N. Other	
Review Date								
Item No.	Main Hazards (something with the potential to cause harm)	Risk [H,M,L]	Reason (Explain the reasons why you have decided on either a H,M,L risk rating in the previous column. Include the person(s) at risk and the seriousness of the injuries they may sustain)	Current Control Measures (What are you doing already to control the hazard and risk? These controls must be in place and working effectively)	Residual Risk [H,M,L]	Further Action Required		
						Yes	No	
1	Play Equipment Failure	M	Equipment failure or collapse due to poor selection, installation or lack of maintenance. Resulting in pupils falling from or becoming injured when using play equipment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equipment installed by competent contractors. Arranged through Corporate Maintenance.</li> <li>Contractor signed off installation; installed to the appropriate British Standard (BS EN 1176).</li> </ul>	L			
2	Falls from height	H	Pupils falling from sections of the play equipment onto the surrounding concrete resulting in major injury.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equipment installed by competent contractors to the appropriate British Standards and dimensions.</li> <li>Safety surfacing provided in critical fall areas &gt; 600mm. Extending a safe distance beyond the play equipment.</li> <li>Play area supervised during break times and no's of pupils restricted on play equipment to avoid overcrowding.</li> </ul>	L			
3	Inclement Weather	M	Inclement weather resulting in slippery surfaces and parts of play equipment. Children may slip on wet/icy surfaces resulting in falls.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equipment assessed by Headteacher during periods of inclement weather. Use of equipment is prohibited when there is excessive wet weather or conditions. Cont....</li> </ul>	L			

The 'residual risk' is the level of risk remaining after the current control measures have been taken into account.

Even a low residual risk may need further action.

Risk is the chance (high, medium, low) that someone will be harmed. Use the Risk Factor from RA02 (if required) to decide the level of risk. Remember, you don't need to bring an **unlikely** and **low** harm to this page.

If after all current control measures are in place the hazards are not adequately controlled, then it may not be 'Safe to proceed'. You may need to cease the activity or introduce further controls.

Safe to proceed		Yes	No

RA Ref: PS.01		Risk Assessment - Action Plan		Form RA/04	
<b>Resp. Person:</b>		<b>Work Activity:</b> Play Equipment - Yard			
Mr. Smith					
<b>Designation:</b>					
Headteacher					
Item No.	Main Hazards	Action Required	Date Action to be taken by	By Whom	Date Completed
1	Play Equipment Failure	Monthly visual checks on play equipment undertaken by the Caretaker.  Annual inspection of play equipment to be undertaken by a Contractor.	May 2014  May 2015	Caretaker  Headteacher	Implemented & Ongoing  Ongoing
<p>These should only be the hazards that have been identified as requiring further action on the RA/03.</p> <p>If you have identified that further action is required in your risk assessment (RA03), then use this section to detail the action.</p>		<p>Ask yourself, can I eliminate the hazard by doing things differently, if not, what is the best way of managing the hazard so that the risk of harm becomes unlikely.</p>		<p>Identify who is to do what and by when.</p>	
<p>If you have determined it is unsafe to proceed at RA/03, is it now safe to proceed after putting further actions in place?</p>		<p>Safe to proceed</p>			
				<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>	

The RA04 is to be used to indicate what further action is required to reduce the risk to an acceptable level.

These should only be the hazards that have been identified as requiring further action on the RA/03.

If you have identified that further action is required in your risk assessment (RA03), then use this section to detail the action.

Ask yourself, can I eliminate the hazard by doing things differently, if not, what is the best way of managing the hazard so that the risk of harm becomes unlikely.

Identify who is to do what and by when.

If you have determined it is unsafe to proceed at RA/03, is it now safe to proceed after putting further actions in place?

RISK ASSESSMENT SUMMARY (A closer look at the more hazardous areas of concern)		Form RA/05	
Ref. No.	Work activity:		
Service area:	Education	Section:	St. Perry's
Assessor/s:		Date of risk assessment:	
Description of work activity:			
Description of main hazards and harm		Control Measures	
<p>The RA05 is another 'optional' step in the process. This form may be used to summarise the main hazards and control measures from the risk assessment process.</p>			
Who could be harmed?			
Additional control measures for this work activity			
Where the activity is complex in nature, or requires further understanding, managers should consider developing a Safe Method of Work to support this Risk Assessment.			

RA05 is intended to inform employees of the main hazards and the relevant control measures to be adopted.