

Risk Assessments:

Why risk assess?

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 a number of 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 up the environment to parents and children. Toileting, first aid and safeguarding are covered in our handbook and by whole-school policies available on the school website. Trips are covered separately using whole-school risk assessment forms and are agreed on a trip-by-trip basis.

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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Benefit Risk Assessment: Indoor Activities

Prepared by: Clare Croucher

Date: September 2021

Activity/Hazard	Risks	Risk Assessment (use Matrix)			Elimination/ Control methods	Who/When	Progress
		L	C	R			
Malleable activities	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 are supervised and taught about not eating the resources.	Staff and parents	
Sand and water	Water or sand splashed into eyes, Consumption of materials.	Possible	Minor	MODERATE	Involve the children in setting the safety rules in these areas.	Staff and children	
Sand and water	Slipping on sand and water on the floor	Possible	Minor	MODERATE	Staff to monitor these areas and encourage children to spot and help clear spillages to reduce the risk of slips. Shower mats on the floor around the trays.	Staff and children	
Toy boxes	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 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	



Benefit Risk Assessment: Mud Kitchen and Digging Patch

Prepared by: Clare Croucher

Date: September 2021

Activity/Hazard	Risks	Risk Assessment (use Matrix)			Elimination/ Control methods	Who/When	Progress
		L	C	R			
Contact with soil	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	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	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	Manual handling Moving pots and pans	Unlikely	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	Drowning Flooding during prolonged or heavy rain	Rare	Catastrophic	HIGH	Containers provided do not allow children to fall in. Teachers to supervise where large tubs are in use and do not fill deeply. Staff to monitor area during prolonged heavy rain	Staff to monitor	



Water	Stagnant water, consumption/absorption of contaminants	Unlikely	Moderate	MODERATE	Water containers are emptied at the end of each session/day so they do not go stagnant. Water containers are emptied regularly and check for contaminants. Children are encouraged to follow a no consumption routine in this area. Children are made aware of the hazards of stagnant water.	Staff to monitor	
Wet/dirty clothes	Children get cold	Possible	Insignificant	LOW	Children keep wellies at the setting. School has a supply of spare clothes. Parents are asked to supply coats that they do not mind getting muddy.	School Parents	
Gravel, pebbles, woodchip or other pieces of natural material	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 Children encouraged to follow a no consumption rule in this area	Staff	
Using plants and other foraged natural 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	



Benefit Risk Assessment: Climbing equipment and free standing play equipment

Prepared by: Clare Croucher

Date: September 2021

Activity/Hazard	Risks	Risk Assessment (use Matrix)			Elimination/ Control methods	Who/When	Progress
		L	C	R			
Climbing frame	Falling from a height, slipping on equipment	Possible	Moderate	HIGH	All children to have a safety talk before using the equipment and numbers are restricted to avoid collisions and overcrowding. Children are supervised at all times. Equipment is checked prior to use to ensure all parts are safe and secure.	Staff and children	
Climbing blocks-freestanding	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 and tubes to be checked by staff each day for dirt or cracks. No access to stand alone equipment in heavy rain. Equipment to be assessed/dried after periods of rain.	Staff	
Crates and planks, wooden blocks, tyres	Slips, trips or falls. Knocks from falling or moving blocks.	Possible	Minor	MODERATE	Children have a 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 and surface is flat. All equipment is checked regularly to look for damage.	Staff and children	



Benefit Risk Assessment: Wheeled Toys

Prepared by: Clare Croucher

Date: September 2021

Activity/Hazard	Risks	Risk Assessment (use Matrix)			Elimination/ Control methods	Who/When	Progress
		L	C	R			
Riding on and being a passenger on the bikes	Knocking other children, clothing trapped in moving parts, bikes tipping.	Possible	Minor	MODERATE	<p>Involve children in safety talks about using the bikes in the garden space.</p> <p>Make sure children do not wear scarves in the garden to avoid tangling in wheels. Limit the number of wheeled toys in the garden at any one time and keep them to hard surface area to avoid muddy/slippy wheels.</p> <p>Ensure all wheeled toys are checked over regularly for damage and replaced when necessary.</p>	Children and staff	
Scooting around the garden	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 in the garden space.</p> <p>Make sure children do not wear scarves in the garden to avoid tangling in wheels. Limit the number of wheeled toys in the garden at any one time and keep them to hard surface area to avoid muddy/slippy wheels.</p> <p>Ensure all wheeled toys are checked over regularly for damage and replaced when necessary.</p>	Children and staff	
Low handle powered wheeled toy.	Trapped fingers, clothing trapped in moving parts.	Unlikely	Minor	LOW	<p>Involve children in safety talks about using the bikes in the garden space.</p> <p>Make sure children do not wear scarves in the garden to avoid tangling in wheels. Limit the number of wheeled toys in the garden at any one time and keep them to hard surface area to avoid muddy/slippy wheels.</p> <p>Ensure all wheeled toys are checked over regularly for damage and replaced when necessary.</p>	Children and staff	



Benefit Risk Assessment: Growing Beds/ Vegetable Garden

Prepared by: Clare Croucher

Date: September 2021

Activity/Hazard	Risks	Risk Assessment (use Matrix)			Elimination/ Control methods	Who/When	Progress
		L	C	R			
Contact with soil	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	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	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	
Using gardening tools	Cuts/grazes from using tools. Poking or eye injuries.	Possible	Moderate	HIGH	Ensure children are show how to use the tools safely and that they only work under supervision when using sharp tools. Make sure tools available are child sized and appropriate. Check all tools regularly for damage and replace where necessary.	Staff and children	



Growing own food to cook in the environment	Allergic reaction to foods.	Unlikely	Moderate	HIGH	Ensure all information on allergies is stored centrally and all staff are aware of known allergens. Parents to inform school of any changes and updates and ensure all medication is in school. Staff to check dates and ensure all medication is stored centrally and in date. Plan activities carefully for children with allergies considering ingredients and possible sources for reaction. Source alternative safe ingredients where necessary.	Staff, parents, children	
Cooking and /or eating food grown in the garden	Allergic reaction to food. Consumption or absorption of a contaminant.	Unlikely	Moderate	HIGH	Children to understand not to put anything in their mouths in this area. Foods harvested to be washed and prepared safely. Staff carrying out cooking activities to have the relevant food hygiene certification. (EYFS manager to ensure this is kept up to date) Children to be involved in safe food preparation to develop their understanding.	Staff and children	
Water	Stagnant water, consumption/ absorption of contaminants	Unlikely	Moderate	MODERATE	Water containers are emptied at the end of each session/ day so they do not go stagnant. Water containers are emptied regularly and check for contaminants. Children are encouraged to follow a no consumption routine in this area. Children are made aware of the hazards of stagnant water.	Staff to monitor	
Wet/dirty clothes	Children get cold	Possible	Insignificant	LOW	Children keep wellies at the setting. School has a supply of spare clothes. Parents are asked to supply coats that they do not mind getting muddy.	School Parents	



Benefit Risk Assessment: Outdoor Sand Pit

Prepared by: Clare Croucher

Date: September 2021

Activity/Hazard	Risks	Risk Assessment (use Matrix)			Elimination/ Control methods	Who/When	Progress
		L	C	R			
Sand play	Sand flipping up into eyes.	Unlikely	Minor	LOW	Talk to the children about playing together in the sand and consequence if it goes in friends eyes. Monitor the number of children playing in the sand pit and regulate if necessary.	Staff and children	
Cold weather	The sand is too cold to sit in, children may become cold quickly.	Unlikely	Minor	LOW	Adults to assess the weather conditions and make children aware of the temperatures outside. Keep the sand pit closed if it is too cold.	Staff then children	
Heavy/persistent rain	Sand becomes contaminated with rain water	Unlikely	Minor	LOW	Adults to assess the weather conditions and make children aware of the weather conditions.	Staff and children	
Falling in or out of the sand pit	Injury from falling over the low wall either into or out of the pit.	Possible	Minor	MODERATE	Adults to involve children in discussions around safety in the sand pit and how to get in and out safely. Adults to monitor the numbers in the pit to reduce the risk of knocking.	Staff and children	
Slipping on loose sand around the pit	Children slip and injury themselves on loose sand surrounding the pit.	Possible	Minor	MODERATE	Adult to model how to empty sand from wellies, into the sandpit. Adults to monitor and clear the build-up of sand around the pit. Sweep sand from the walls into the sandpit before the cover is placed over the sand.	Staff	
Sand contamination	Ingesting/ absorbing contaminated sand	Unlikely	Minor	LOW	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.	Staff	



Benefit Risk Assessment: Outdoor Water Play

Prepared by: Clare Croucher

Date: September 2021

Activity/Hazard	Risks	Risk Assessment (use Matrix)			Elimination/ Control methods	Who/When	Progress
		L	C	R			
Water tray play	Children become wet and cold	Unlikely	Minor	LOW	Staff to consider the temperature outside before placing water trays out. If children are playing at the water ensure cover-ups are available to use.	Staff and children	
Water	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 each day. 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	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	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	



Benefit Risk Assessment: Classroom

Prepared by: Clare Croucher

Date: September 2021

Activity/Hazard	Risks	Risk Assessment (use Matrix)			Elimination/ Control methods	Who/When	Progress
		L	C	R			
Moving Furniture	Injury to back and other muscular injuries	Unlikely	Moderate	Moderate	Drawers and shelves to be emptied before any attempts are made to move furniture. 2 people to do the job if possible to minimise risk. Manual handling guidelines and policy to be followed at all times.	Staff	
Litter Picking	Accidents and back injury, Germs	Possible	Minor	Moderate	All staff to wear gloves and use appropriate tools.	Staff	
Plugs	Burns or internal damage	Possible	Major	High	All plugs have safety shutters that prevent children accessing live terminals.	Children	



Benefit Risk Assessment: Use of IT

Prepared by: Clare Croucher

Date: September 2021

Activity/Hazard	Risks	Risk Assessment (use Matrix)			Elimination/ Control methods	Who/When	Progress
		L	C	R			
Computers	Appropriate use on PC	Unlikely	Minor	Low	Age appropriate programmes installed on the computer, time limit for the children. Keyboard and equipment to be suitable. Staff to supervise.	Staff then children	
	Ipads						
	Access to the internet	Possible	Moderate	High	Only staff able to access the internet, WIFI turned off unless an adult is present.	Staff	



Benefit Risk Assessment: Arts & crafts

Prepared by: Clare Croucher

Date: September 2021

Activity/Hazard	Risks	Risk Assessment (use Matrix)			Elimination/ Control methods	Who/When	Progress
		L	C	R			
Painting	Contact with eyes and skin	Possible	Moderate	High	Staff to watch for adverse reactions when children using the paint Lids to be put on paint pots, adult supervision in the creative area. Facilities to wash immediately.	Children	
	Spillages causing a slip hazard	Possible	Minor	Moderate	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	
Cutting with scissors	Cutting injuries	Possible	Minor	Moderate	Children to use children safety scissors, Children to be supervised in the creative area.	Children	
Playdough & clay modelling	Contact with eyes and skin	Possible	Moderate	High	Staff to watch for adverse reaction when children are using products. Facilities to wash hands available.	Children	
Sticking and gluing	Contact with eyes, hair and skin	Possible	Moderate	High	Only approved products to be used Adhesives to be water based rather than solvent based. No glue guns, super glue or spray adhesives to be used. Manufacturer's instructions to be read and followed by staff.	Children and Staff	



Benefit Risk Assessment: Cooking

Prepared by: Clare Croucher

Date: September 2021

Activity/Hazard	Risks	Risk Assessment (use Matrix)			Elimination/ Control methods	Who/When	Progress
		L	C	R			
Hot surfaces	Burns and scalds	Unlikely	Major	High	Lifting lids off pans, kettles, moving hot tins, dishes and water to be only done by adults Adequate supervision at all times Position pan handles not to overhand the edge of the cooker.		
Sharp equipment	Cuts	Possible	Major	High	Controlled storage and use of knives Children to use safety knives Sharp knives to be washed separately, do not leave them in the sink		
Slippery floors	Slips and trips	Possible	Minor	Moderate	Spillages to be cleared up immediately, Paper towels to be used on small areas of water based contamination. No obstacles in walkways and floor regularly cleaned.		
Cookers / Kettles / toasters	Electric shock, Fire	Unlikely	Major	High	Electrical equipment to be PAT tested. Gas equipment to be maintained. Children must be supervised at all times. Fire blankets kept in the area and staff to be aware of how to use it.		



<p>Cooking food</p>	<p>Poisoning, incorrect storage of food</p>	<p>Rare</p>	<p>Moderate</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Personal hygiene routines followed, staff and children to wash their hands before handling food. Cuts are covered with waterproof dressings Hair tied back Use by and best before dates are checked. Food stored in suitable containers High risk / raw foods kept apart at all times Separate chopping boards and utensils used for raw and cooked foods. Equipment including cutlery should be stored in secure, clean conditions and only used for food preparation. Work surfaces cleaned with anti-bacterial cleaner Adequate rubbish bins for waste food must be emptied daily.</p>		
<p>Eating food</p>	<p>Children with food allergies</p>	<p>Possible</p>	<p>Major</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>All staff are aware of children's sensitive foods and food additives Staff should be aware of ingredients / food additives present in food before giving to the children.</p>		

Risk Matrix						
		Consequence				
Likelihood		Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
	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

