ST EDMUND'S SCHOOL CANTERBURY

WHOLE SCHOOL (INCLUDING EYFS) OPERATIONAL RISK ASSESSMENT POLICY

Policy owner: Bursar

Signed …………………………………………..

Reviewed: September 2026

Next review: September 2027

"Sensible risk management is about practical steps to managing real risks, not bureaucratic back covering. Address the real risks, not only to pupils, but also to the health and well-being of your staff. And remember, risk assessment is just good planning – keep it fit for purpose and act on it." Sir Bill Callaghan, former Chairman, HSC

Scope

St Edmund's School Canterbury (the School) will undertake and effectively implement suitable and sufficient operational risk assessments for activities, premises and arrangements under its control. This policy applies throughout the whole School, including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), boarding provision, educational visits, lettings and School-organised activities away from the main site. It supports compliance with the Independent School Standards and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. The School will take appropriate and proportionate action to eliminate hazards where reasonably practicable and otherwise to reduce identified risks so far as is reasonably practicable. Strategic and corporate risks are managed through the School's separate governance risk-management arrangements and corporate risk register.

Objectives

The School will ensure that:

- the welfare of pupils is safeguarded and promoted through the effective implementation of this written policy and appropriate action is taken to reduce identified risks;
- risks are managed proportionately so that pupils can benefit from challenging, educational and developmental opportunities without unnecessary restriction;
- assessments take account of age, developmental stage, boarding status, disability, SEND, medical needs, allergies, pregnancy, language and communication needs, and any reasonable adjustments required;
- suitable and sufficient risk assessments are completed by competent persons for reasonably foreseeable significant risks;
- the hierarchy of control is applied and identified control measures are implemented, monitored and maintained so far as is reasonably practicable;
- those affected by School activities receive suitable information, instruction, training and supervision;
- significant findings, decisions and actions are recorded; actions have named owners and target dates; and completion is verified;
- risk assessments are reviewed at intervals proportionate to risk and at least annually unless a different documented interval is required or justified, and sooner following relevant change, incident or evidence that controls may be ineffective; and

Responsibilities and Guidance

The Governing Body, as proprietor, retains ultimate accountability for compliance with health and safety legislation and the Independent School Standards. The Head is responsible for executive leadership of health, safety and pupil welfare. The Bursar is the policy owner and is responsible for operational implementation, resources and senior management oversight.

The Estates, Health and Safety and Fire Safety Manager acts as the School's competent adviser and coordinates the central risk-assessment system, monitors review dates, provides advice and reports on compliance. Heads of Department, managers, visit leaders and activity leaders remain responsible for the risks they control, for completing and implementing assessments, and for reviewing them when required. The central coordinator does not assume ownership of departmental or activity risks.

All staff must contribute to the School's health and safety culture, follow relevant controls, remain alert to changing circumstances, report hazards, incidents and near misses promptly, and stop or modify an activity where controls are absent or no longer effective.

The Estates, Health and Safety and Fire Safety Manager will report through the Health and Safety Committee to the Governors' Development and Estates Committee on compliance, overdue assessments and actions, significant or emerging risks, incidents, recurring themes and the effectiveness of controls. Significant or intolerable risks must be escalated promptly to the Bursar and Head and, where appropriate, to the Chair of the responsible committee.

Contractors must be selected and managed proportionately to risk. They must provide suitable risk assessments and method statements where required, receive relevant site information and induction, coordinate their work with the School and comply with School controls. The School will monitor higher-risk work and may stop unsafe work.
For lettings and third-party use, the School and hirer must identify their respective responsibilities, exchange relevant information and coordinate fire, safeguarding, first-aid, security and emergency arrangements. Higher-risk activities require prior written approval.

Individual safeguarding, behavioural, medical and pastoral assessments will be undertaken under the relevant School procedure and led by the appropriate safeguarding, medical or pastoral professional. Sensitive records must be stored securely, separately from general operational assessments, and shared only on a need-to-know basis.

This policy applies to general operational risk assessment. Where a specific statutory or specialist regime applies, including fire, asbestos, legionella and water hygiene, hazardous substances (COSHH), first-aid needs, manual handling, display screen equipment, work at height, new and expectant mothers or young persons, the relevant approved procedure and competent specialist assessment must be used. A general risk-assessment form must not replace a required specialist assessment.

The Bursar will ensure that persons who prepare, review or approve risk assessments are competent through appropriate knowledge, training and experience. Training must be completed before staff are authorised to approve assessments and refreshed at appropriate intervals. Higher-risk or specialist matters must be referred to a suitably competent internal or external adviser. Training and competence records will be retained.

A template general risk-assessment form is included at Appendix 1. It must record the activity and location, persons at risk, hazards and foreseeable harm, existing controls, initial and residual risk ratings, further action, named action owners, target dates, approval, communication arrangements and review history. The School adopts current CLEAPSS model risk assessments and guidance for Science and Design & Technology, adapted to the School's circumstances and implemented by competent staff.

An assessment is suitable and sufficient where it identifies reasonably foreseeable significant hazards and affected groups, reflects relevant legal and professional requirements, evaluates existing controls and residual risk, identifies and tracks further action, is approved and communicated appropriately, and is reviewed when required.

Records must be version controlled, retained in accordance with the School's retention schedule and accessible to those who need them. Superseded assessments must remain identifiable. Personal and special-category data must be limited to what is necessary and protected by appropriate access controls.

Risk assessments will consider:

- Hazard - anything with the potential to cause injury, ill health, damage or other harm.
- Risk - the combination of the likelihood that harm will occur and the severity of that harm.
- Risk rating - the level of risk determined by applying the School's approved methodology to likelihood and severity.
- Control measures - measures selected and implemented to eliminate a hazard or reduce risk.
- Residual risk - the risk remaining after existing control measures have been applied.

The risk assessment process will consist of the following steps:

- Define the activity, location and scope and identify reasonably foreseeable hazards and potential harm.
- Identify everyone who might be harmed, including pupils, boarders, EYFS children, staff, contractors, visitors and persons with individual needs.
- Evaluate the initial risk by considering likelihood and severity.
- Identify existing controls and apply the hierarchy of control: elimination, substitution, engineering or physical controls, administrative controls and, lastly, personal protective equipment.
- Evaluate residual risk and identify any further controls, each with a named owner and target completion date.
- Approve and communicate the assessment at the appropriate level, verify completion of actions, monitor critical controls and set a review date.

No activity requiring assessment may proceed unless a suitable and sufficient assessment has been completed, approved and communicated. Low residual risks may be approved by the activity owner; medium residual risks require approval by the relevant Head of Department or manager; high residual risks require referral to the Bursar or Head with competent advice and must not proceed without written approval; intolerable risks must not proceed. Assessment owners are responsible for updates and action completion. The Estates, Health and Safety and Fire Safety Manager will maintain the central register, issue reminders and monitor compliance.

Risk assessments must be reviewed at planned intervals proportionate to risk and at least annually unless a different documented interval is required or justified, and whenever:

- there is a material change to the activity, equipment, premises, occupancy, room use or supervision;
- there is an accident, near miss, dangerous occurrence, safeguarding incident or failure of a critical control;
- the persons affected or their needs change, including medical, disability, SEND, age, pregnancy or communication needs;

- new information, professional guidance, inspection findings, insurer recommendations or good practice indicates that revision is needed;
- relevant legislation, statutory guidance or School policy changes;
- staff, pupils or others raise a credible concern, or monitoring shows controls may be ineffective;
- following an educational visit where an incident, near miss, unexpected hazard, control failure or material learning point arose. All visits must receive a proportionate post-visit evaluation.

Staff leading activities away from the School must remain alert to changing conditions and undertake a dynamic risk assessment where necessary. This does not replace prior planning. Significant decisions, changes and learning points must be reported and, where appropriate, recorded. A non-exhaustive list of areas requiring assessment is included at Appendix 2.

Monitoring and Review

The Bursar and Estates, Health and Safety and Fire Safety Manager will monitor implementation through sampling assessments, checking overdue actions, reviewing incidents and trends, and testing whether critical controls operate in practice. The Governing Body will receive sufficient information to provide effective assurance. This policy will be reviewed annually and sooner following significant legal, regulatory or organisational change or evidence that it is ineffective.

Legislation, Statutory Guidance and Professional Standards

A: Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

B: Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, including the requirement for suitable and sufficient assessments.

C: Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, as amended, Schedule, Part 3, paragraph 16 and Part 8.

D: Equality Act 2010 and Children and Families Act 2014, where relevant to individual needs and reasonable adjustments.

E: Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and other activity-specific health and safety legislation, where applicable.

F: Department for Education, Health and safety: responsibilities and duties for schools, current guidance.

G: Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage for group and school-based providers, current edition.

H: Keeping Children Safe in Education, current edition.

I: National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools, current edition.

J: Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales, current edition.

K: Health and Safety Executive, Managing risks and risk assessment at work, current guidance.

L: Current guidance and model risk assessments issued by CLEAPSS and other recognised competent professional bodies, where relevant.

M: Relevant current inspection framework and guidance issued by the School's appointed inspectorate.

N: Charity Commission, Charities and risk management (CC26), as applicable to the School's separate strategic and corporate risk-management arrangements.

AJK September 2026

Next Review: September 2027

Example Risk Assessment:

Name:	
Position:	DT Department
Date created:	04/2018

ST EDMUND'S SCHOOL
CANTERBURY

Name:	Food Technology	**Reviewed:**	01/04/22	**Venue:**	Food Technology Room

(1) Activity / Area of Concern	**(2) Hazards Identified**	**(3) Persons at Risk**	**(4) Current Risk Factor (high, medium or low)**	**(5) Actions to be Taken to Minimize each Risk** ie: what action can you take to lower the level of risk	**(6) New Risk Factor (high, medium or low)**
Food preparation	Hot surfaces liquids / Burns, scalds	Pupils /Staff	H	• Lifting lids off pans & kettles, moving hot tins, dishes and water to be restricted to adults only. • Adequate supervision and safe working procedures in place • Position pan handles not to overhang the edge of the cooker • Ensure adequate space is available around the ovens at all times when handling hot items.	L
Food preparation	Sharp equipment / Cuts	Pupils /Staff	H	• Controlled storage and use of knives. • Pupils taught correct techniques for use of knives and use under supervision. • Knives are kept sharp as blunt knives can cause serious injuries. • Wash separately do not leave in sink	L
Food preparation	Slippery floors / Slips and trips	Pupils, Staff	M	• No obstacles in walkways and regular cleaning of floors • Prompt maintenance of defects • Spillages should be dealt with immediately.	L

Appendix 2: Areas requiring risk assessment (non-exhaustive)

Curriculum, pupil and boarding activities

- Science
- Design & Technology
- Food and Nutrition
- Sport, PE and swimming activities
- The Duke of Edinburgh's Award
- Art
- CCF
- Music
- Drama, dance and productions
- General classrooms, EYFS and outdoor learning
- Boarding accommodation, supervision, activities and temporary boarders
- Educational visits, residential and overseas visits

Premises, employment and third-party activities

- Catering, cleaning, food safety and allergens
- Caretaking, lone working, security and access control
- Legionella and water hygiene
- Asbestos management and intrusive works
- Maintenance, contractors, machinery and work at height
- Grounds, trees, vehicles and traffic management
- Offices, display-screen equipment, manual handling and occupational health
- Lettings, hirers, visitors, volunteers and visiting groups
- Open days, concerts, events and additional functions
- Fire, evacuation, lockdown, severe weather and other emergencies
- Young persons, new and expectant mothers, work-related stress and violence or aggression
- Individual medical needs, allergies, accessibility and personal emergency evacuation plans
- Construction projects, simultaneous operations and changes of use