Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Safety and Suitability of Premises, Environment and Equipment

Risk assessment

Policy statement

The health, safety and wellbeing of children are of paramount importance. Our setting is committed to providing an environment where risks are carefully assessed, controlled and reviewed, enabling children to learn, explore and take appropriate, developmentally beneficial risks within a safe and supportive environment.

Risk assessment is an essential part of our safeguarding responsibilities and is embedded in daily practice, routines, activities and off-site visits. We comply with the EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers effective 1 September 2026, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, relevant HSE guidance and current London Borough of Bromley/BSCP arrangements.

This policy has been reviewed against the EYFS framework effective 1 September 2026, current Ofsted early-years inspection arrangements, HSE risk-management requirements, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and current Bromley Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures.

Definitions of Risk Assessment

Risk assessment involves identifying aspects of the environment, resources, activities or behaviours that may cause harm, and taking proportionate, reasonable steps to reduce or manage those risks.

Legally, risk cannot be eliminated entirely; instead, we must take reasonable precautions to prevent harm. Children must still be able to engage in challenging and explorative play, learning to assess risk, problem-solve and make safe choices with adult guidance.

We follow the five recognised steps of risk assessment:

1. Identify the hazards – What could cause harm?
2. Identify who may be harmed – Children, staff, visitors, volunteers, parents, contractors.
3. Evaluate the risks – Consider likelihood, severity, and level of risk (high/medium/low).
4. Decide on control measures – What actions will reduce or remove the risk?
5. Monitor, review and update – Assess whether measures are effective; amend as needed.

Risk assessment must be suitable and sufficient, proportionate to the level of risk, and focused on significant hazards rather than creating unnecessary paperwork.

Controls follow a sensible hierarchy: avoid the hazard where reasonably practicable; reduce exposure; use safer systems, supervision or physical controls; provide information/training; and use personal protective equipment where appropriate.

Risk-benefit thinking is used so that controls protect children from foreseeable serious harm without unnecessarily restricting play, exploration, independence or development.

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Procedures

Written and Dynamic Risk Assessments

- We use written risk assessments for all key areas of practice, including premises, equipment, activities and outings.
- Dynamic risk assessments are carried out continuously throughout the day by all staff, adjusting supervision or environment immediately where emerging risks are identified.
- Risk assessments are reviewed:
    - At least annually
    - After any significant incident or accident
    - Following changes to the environment, staffing or procedures
    - Immediately if advised by Bromley Environmental Health, Fire Safety, or Ofsted.

Areas Covered by Risk Assessments

Our risk assessment process covers all adults and children and includes:

Premises and Environment

- Indoor and outdoor spaces
- Daily opening/closing checks
- Trip hazards, flooring, lighting and ventilation
- Security, entry/exit points and perimeter safety
- Fire safety measures and evacuation procedures
- Water safety and Legionella awareness (as advised)

Equipment and Resources

- Age-appropriate use
- Climbing equipment and physical play
- Storage, safety checks and maintenance
- SEND-specific equipment
- Removal/replacement of unsafe items

Activities and Routines

- Changing nappies and toileting
- Food preparation, serving and snack routines
- Cooking and science activities
- Messy play, sensory activities, small parts
- Outdoor learning, weather conditions and seasonal risks
- Use of tools, scissors or equipment that requires supervision

Individual Child Needs

September 2026 welfare and safeguarding risks

Assessments take account of safer eating and weaning, including choking hazards, allergies, food preparation and the requirement for children to remain within sight and hearing while eating.

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Where applicable, safer-sleep arrangements are assessed for the individual child and environment, including positioning, temperature, bedding/equipment, monitoring and medical advice.
Screen use and electronic devices are assessed in line with the EYFS 2026 requirements and the setting's Online Safety/Mobile Devices policy.
Childcare is not provided from premises where a dog of a breed prohibited under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 is kept or present, in line with the EYFS registration requirement.
Risks from any permitted animal visits or contact are assessed separately.
Safeguarding risk assessment includes contextual or environmental risks where relevant, but a risk assessment never replaces immediate referral/escalation under the Child Protection Policy when a child may be at risk of harm.
Risk assessments are completed for:

- Children with medical conditions or allergies
- Children requiring medication
- Behaviour support (if applicable)
- Children with SEND requiring specific arrangements
- Safeguarding concerns or vulnerability risks

Assessments consider reasonable adjustments for disability/SEND, medical needs, sensory or communication differences, and emergency evacuation/support arrangements. Parents and relevant professionals are involved where appropriate.
Individual risk assessment is not used to discriminate against or unnecessarily exclude a child; controls should enable safe participation wherever reasonably possible.

Visitors and Contractors

Risk assessments cover:

- Visitors bringing resources, animals, tools or equipment
- Contractors working on site
- Students and volunteers

Off-site Activities & Outings

- Transport (including public transport and walking routes)
- Supervision ratios (meeting EYFS requirements)
- Venue-specific hazards
- Medical, allergy or SEND considerations
- Lost child procedures
- Emergency contact arrangements

Outing assessments consider the children's ages, developmental needs, staff competence and deployment, route/venue hazards, emergency arrangements, essential medication, headcounts and any higher-risk transitions. Ratios are determined by the EYFS minimum requirements and the risk assessment; additional adults are used where necessary for safety.

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Staff Responsibilities

- The Manager has overall responsibility for ensuring that risk assessments are completed, reviewed and implemented.
- All staff receive training in risk assessment procedures during induction and ongoing CPD.
- Staff must immediately report any hazards or concerns and remove unsafe items from use.
- Staff must adapt supervision, group organisation and activities based on risk and emerging situations.

Documentation

- Risk assessments are clearly dated and signed.
- Where the setting employs five or more people, the significant findings of health and safety risk assessments are recorded as required by law. In all cases, the setting keeps proportionate written records where they support safe practice, consistency, review or evidence of compliance.
- Daily, weekly and termly checklists are maintained and monitored by management.

Monitoring and Review

- Risk assessments are reviewed at planned intervals appropriate to the risk and sooner following significant change, an accident/incident/near miss, new information or where controls may no longer be effective. Routine review dates do not replace continuous dynamic assessment.
- Near-misses, accidents and incidents inform future risk assessments.
- Learning from incidents is shared with the team during staff meetings and supervision.

Legal Framework

- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- EYFS Statutory Framework for group and school-based providers (DfE, effective 1 September 2026)
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) 2002

Further Guidance

- HSE: Risk assessment - current guidance for employers and workers
- HSE: Managing risks and risk assessment at work
- London Borough of Bromley Early Years Quality Team guidance and support
- HSE: Legionnaires' disease - guidance for dutyholders

Ready Steady Grow Pre-School

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Safeguarding, recording and escalation

Significant hazards, controls, responsible persons and actions are recorded clearly. Sensitive individual assessments are stored securely and shared only with those who need the information to keep the child safe.

Serious or repeated hazards, near misses, injuries, safeguarding concerns or failures of control are escalated promptly to the manager/DSL and, where relevant, the premises responsible person, local authority, HSE, Ofsted or emergency services under the applicable reporting procedure.

Current framework and guidance

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026

Bromley Safeguarding Children Partnership and London Child Safeguarding Procedures

Ofsted early years inspection toolkit and operating arrangements effective September 2026