



Orange Tree School

Risk Assessment and Risk Management Policy 2026 - 2027

Orange Tree School Main Site and Ridgeway Hospital Provision

Independent School Standards, Part 3, paragraph 16

This policy sets out Orange Tree School's approach to identifying, assessing and managing risk across both the Main Site and Ridgeway Hospital Provision in order to safeguard pupils, staff and visitors and support safe participation in education and therapeutic practice.



DOCUMENT DETAILS	
Applies to:	All pupils, employees, agency staff, volunteers, contractors, visitors, parents and carers across Orange Tree School Main Site and Ridgeway Hospital Provision.
Policy Author:	Zoe Ramshaw
Approval Body:	Advisory Board – Peter Curtis
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Risk Assessment Policy Summary

Purpose

Orange Tree School is committed to providing a safe environment in which pupils, staff, visitors and contractors can learn, work and participate confidently.

Risk assessment is a fundamental part of the school's approach to safeguarding, health and safety, therapeutic practice and educational provision. The purpose of risk assessment is not to eliminate all risk, but to identify foreseeable hazards, implement proportionate control measures and enable pupils to access education, therapeutic interventions and wider opportunities as safely as reasonably practicable.

The school recognises that positive risk management supports independence, personal development and wellbeing whilst maintaining appropriate safeguards.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- Orange Tree School Main Site;
- Ridgeway Hospital Provision;
- all employees;
- agency staff;
- volunteers;
- contractors;
- pupils;
- visitors; and
- others undertaking activities on behalf of the school.

Whilst the principles of this policy apply across both sites, the nature of risk assessments and operational arrangements differ to reflect the distinct educational environments and governance arrangements at each location.

Our Principles

Orange Tree School believes that effective risk assessment should:

- safeguard the welfare, health and safety of pupils, staff and visitors;
- support participation rather than unnecessarily restrict opportunities;
- be proportionate to the level of foreseeable risk;
- be informed by professional judgement and current information;
- recognise individual strengths as well as potential risks;
- take account of pupils' educational, therapeutic, medical and safeguarding needs;
- promote independence wherever it is safe to do so;
- be reviewed regularly and whenever circumstances change; and
- support a culture in which everyone shares responsibility for identifying and managing risk.

Types of Risk Assessment

Risk assessments may include, but are not limited to:

- whole-site and premises risk assessments;
- room-specific risk assessments;
- individual pupil risk assessments;
- educational visits and trips;
- external venues and activities;
- transport arrangements;
- home visits;
- curriculum activities;
- work experience;
- hazardous substances;
- fire safety;
- staff-specific risk assessments;
- contractors and visitors; and
- dynamic risk assessments undertaken in response to changing circumstances.

The type and frequency of risk assessment will vary according to the activity, location and level of risk.

Two-Site Approach

Orange Tree School operates across two distinct educational settings.

Orange Tree Main Site provides specialist education for pupils attending the School on a daily basis, requiring risk assessments that reflect educational visits, therapeutic activities, transport, curriculum delivery and community participation.

Ridgeway Hospital Provision delivers education within Ellern Mede Ridgeway Hospital. Risk assessment is undertaken in collaboration with hospital colleagues where responsibilities overlap and reflects the additional clinical, environmental and operational considerations associated with an inpatient setting.

Dynamic Risk Assessment

Staff are expected to exercise continual professional judgement throughout the school day.

Where circumstances change or new information becomes available, staff should undertake dynamic risk assessments, implement immediate control measures where necessary and ensure that formal risk assessments are reviewed and updated as appropriate.

Review

Risk assessments are reviewed:

- annually where appropriate;
- following significant incidents or near misses;
- when circumstances change;

- following changes to legislation or guidance;
- when new hazards are identified; or
- whenever professional judgement indicates that review is necessary.

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1. Introduction

Orange Tree School is committed to providing a safe, healthy and supportive environment in which pupils, staff, visitors and contractors can learn, work and participate confidently.

Effective risk assessment and risk management are fundamental to safeguarding, health and safety, therapeutic practice and educational provision. The school recognises that all activities

involve some degree of risk. The purpose of risk assessment is therefore not to eliminate all risk, but to identify foreseeable hazards, implement proportionate control measures and enable pupils to participate safely in education, therapeutic interventions and wider opportunities.

As a specialist therapeutic school, Orange Tree School recognises that positive risk management is an important part of promoting independence, resilience and personal development. Decisions relating to risk are therefore informed by professional judgement, individual need and the best available information, balancing the benefits of participation with the need to safeguard pupils, staff and others.

This policy applies across Orange Tree School Main Site and Ridgeway Hospital Provision. Whilst both sites operate under the same overarching principles of risk management, each site has distinct operational arrangements, environments and responsibilities which require different approaches to identifying, assessing and managing risk.

Risk assessment at Orange Tree School is an ongoing process rather than a one-off exercise. Staff are expected to remain alert to changing circumstances, undertake dynamic risk assessments where appropriate and review formal risk assessments whenever new information, incidents or changing circumstances indicate this is necessary.

This policy should be read alongside the School's Health and Safety Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Relationship and Behaviour Policy, Educational Visits and Trips Policy, Admissions Policy, First Aid Policy, Fire Safety Policy, Accessibility Plan and other relevant School policies.

2. Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy has been developed with regard to:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974;
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999;
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013;
- Independent School Standards Regulations (Part 3 – Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils, Paragraph 16);
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (current edition);
- Equality Act 2010;
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice;
- Department for Education guidance relating to health and safety and educational visits; and
- other relevant statutory guidance.

The Independent School Standards require the Proprietor to ensure that:

- the welfare of pupils is safeguarded and promoted through the effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
- appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

Orange Tree School recognises that effective risk assessment is closely linked to safeguarding, health and safety, equality, educational provision and therapeutic practice. Risk assessment is therefore embedded within everyday decision-making and supports the school's wider duty to protect pupils, staff and visitors whilst enabling safe participation in School life.

3. Key Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

Hazard

Anything with the potential to cause harm or adverse effects to the health, safety or wellbeing of pupils, staff, visitors or others.

Risk

The likelihood that a hazard will cause harm, together with the potential severity of that harm.

Risk Assessment

A structured process used to identify hazards, evaluate the level of risk and determine appropriate measures to eliminate, reduce or manage foreseeable risks.

Risk Management

The ongoing process of identifying, assessing, controlling, monitoring and reviewing risks to ensure that activities can be undertaken as safely as reasonably practicable.

Control Measures

Actions, procedures or arrangements implemented to eliminate, reduce or manage identified risks.

Control measures may include:

- environmental adaptations;
- staff training;
- supervision;
- individual support strategies;
- therapeutic interventions;
- equipment;
- procedural changes; or

- emergency arrangements.

Dynamic Risk Assessment

The continuous process by which staff assess changing circumstances, identify emerging risks and implement immediate control measures using their professional judgement.

Where new or significant risks are identified, formal risk assessments should be reviewed and updated as appropriate.

Individual Risk Assessment

A personalised assessment that identifies foreseeable risks relating to an individual pupil, member of staff or specific circumstance and outlines the measures required to reduce those risks whilst promoting safe participation.

Reasonably Practicable

Balancing the level of risk against the measures necessary to control it, taking account of the likelihood and severity of harm whilst ensuring that actions taken are proportionate.

4. Risk Assessment Arrangements

Orange Tree School undertakes a range of risk assessments to safeguard pupils, staff, visitors and others whilst supporting the effective delivery of education, therapeutic provision and wider school activities.

The school recognises that the level of detail required for a risk assessment will depend upon the nature of the activity, the foreseeable level of risk and the individuals involved. Risk assessments should always be proportionate and based upon professional judgement.

Risk assessments may be undertaken for, but are not limited to:

- the school premises and working environment;
- educational visits and enrichment activities;
- curriculum activities;
- therapeutic interventions;
- individual pupils;
- medical and healthcare needs;
- behaviour support and physical intervention;
- transport arrangements;
- work experience and community access;
- contractors, visitors and external providers;
- lone working;
- new and expectant mothers;
- manual handling;

- display screen equipment (DSE);
- fire safety and emergency evacuation;
- maintenance works and contractors;
- safeguarding and contextual safeguarding; and
- any other activity where foreseeable risks require assessment.

The school recognises that some risk assessments relate to the organisation as a whole, whilst others relate to specific individuals, activities or circumstances. All risk assessments will be proportionate, regularly reviewed and communicated to those responsible for implementing them.

Operational guidance relating to specific activities is contained within the relevant School policies, including the Trips & Activities Policy, Health and Safety Policy, First Aid Policy, Relationship and Behaviour Policy and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

4.1 Risk Assessment Across the Two Sites

Orange Tree School Main Site

Risk assessments are undertaken by appropriately trained staff and approved in accordance with the school's procedures. The school has direct responsibility for managing educational, therapeutic and operational risks across the Main Site.

Ridgeway Hospital Provision

Education is delivered within Ellern Mede Ridgeway Hospital. Risk assessment is therefore undertaken collaboratively where responsibilities overlap. Orange Tree School remains responsible for educational risk assessments, whilst clinical, environmental and inpatient healthcare risks remain the responsibility of the hospital. Where necessary, information is shared to ensure risks are managed effectively and pupils receive safe educational provision.

5. Risk Assessment Process

Orange Tree School adopts a systematic approach to identifying, assessing, managing and reviewing risk. Risk assessments are intended to support informed decision-making, safeguard the welfare of pupils, staff and visitors, and enable activities to take place safely whilst promoting participation, learning and therapeutic outcomes.

The school recognises that risk assessment is an ongoing process. Assessments should be proportionate to the level of foreseeable risk and informed by professional judgement, relevant information and, where appropriate, consultation with other professionals.

All risk assessments should:

- identify foreseeable hazards;
- consider who may be harmed and how;

- evaluate the likelihood and potential severity of harm;
- identify appropriate control measures;
- record significant findings where required;
- be communicated to relevant staff;
- be implemented consistently;
- be reviewed regularly; and
- be amended where circumstances change or new risks emerge.

The level of detail required will depend upon the complexity of the activity, the environment and the individuals involved.

Risk assessments should not be viewed as static documents but as part of a continuous process of identifying, managing and reviewing risk.

5.1 Completing Risk Assessments

Risk assessments should be completed by staff with appropriate knowledge of the activity, environment or individual concerned.

Where appropriate, advice may be sought from:

- senior leaders;
- the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL);
- the School Nurse or other healthcare professionals;
- therapists;
- the SEND team;
- Ellern Mede colleagues (for Ridgeway Hospital Provision);
- external professionals; or
- other competent persons.

Risk assessments should reflect the most up-to-date information available and take account of previous incidents, professional advice and any known changes in circumstances.

5.2 Reviewing Risk Assessments

Risk assessments are live documents and must be reviewed whenever necessary to ensure they remain accurate and effective.

Reviews should take place:

- annually, where appropriate;
- following an accident, incident or near miss;
- when there is a significant change to the activity, environment or individual;
- following updated professional advice;
- following changes to legislation or statutory guidance;
- where control measures are no longer considered effective; or
- whenever professional judgement indicates that review is required.

5.3 Recording and Communicating Risk

Relevant staff must be made aware of the risk assessments that relate to their responsibilities.

Risk assessments should:

- be stored securely in accordance with School procedures;
- be accessible to those who need them;
- be communicated to relevant staff before activities take place;
- be treated as confidential where they contain personal information; and
- be reviewed as part of ongoing quality assurance and safeguarding arrangements.

Where a risk assessment relates to an individual pupil, information should be shared on a need-to-know basis, balancing effective risk management with the pupil's right to privacy.

6. Dynamic Risk Assessment

Orange Tree School recognises that not all risks can be anticipated in advance. Staff are therefore expected to exercise continual professional judgement by undertaking dynamic risk assessments throughout the school day and during all school activities.

Dynamic risk assessment is the ongoing process of identifying, assessing and responding to changing circumstances or emerging risks to ensure that appropriate action is taken to safeguard pupils, staff and others.

Staff should remain alert to changes including, but not limited to:

- a pupil's presentation, behaviour or emotional regulation;
- medical concerns or changes in health;
- safeguarding concerns or new information;
- changes to staffing or supervision;
- environmental or weather conditions;
- equipment failure or defects;
- unforeseen events during educational visits or community activities;
- changes within the hospital environment at Ridgeway Hospital Provision; and
- any other circumstance that may increase or reduce risk.

Where a dynamic risk assessment identifies that additional control measures are required, staff should take proportionate action to reduce risk, seek support where necessary and inform an appropriate senior leader as soon as practicable.

Where significant changes occur, the relevant written risk assessment should be reviewed and amended to reflect the new circumstances.

The school recognises that dynamic risk assessment supports, but does not replace, formal written risk assessments.

6.1 Professional Judgement

Risk assessments provide a framework for safe practice but cannot anticipate every situation that may arise.

Orange Tree School therefore places significant value on the professional judgement of its staff. Decisions should be informed by:

- the individual needs of the pupil;
- safeguarding considerations;
- therapeutic and educational objectives;
- previous incidents or known risks;
- advice from relevant professionals; and
- the circumstances at the time.

Where staff are uncertain about the most appropriate course of action, they should seek advice from a senior leader, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or another appropriate professional before proceeding wherever this is reasonably practicable.

6.2 Responding to Emerging Risks

Where new or increased risks are identified, staff should:

- prioritise the immediate safety and welfare of pupils, staff and others;
- implement appropriate control measures;
- seek assistance where required;
- communicate relevant information to colleagues;
- record significant incidents in accordance with School procedures; and
- ensure that formal risk assessments are reviewed where necessary.

Where emerging risks relate to safeguarding, staff must follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and report concerns without delay to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL.

7. Individual Risk Assessment and Positive Risk Management

Orange Tree School recognises that every pupil is unique and that individual risk assessments are an important part of safeguarding, therapeutic practice and educational planning.

Individual risk assessments are intended to identify foreseeable risks, implement proportionate control measures and support pupils to participate safely in education, therapeutic interventions and wider school life.

The school adopts a positive risk management approach. This means that, wherever reasonably possible, pupils are supported to access learning, community activities and new experiences safely rather than being excluded because of perceived risk.

Risk assessments will take account of the school's duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils and staff in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

Risk assessments should balance:

- the need to safeguard pupils, staff and others;
- the benefits of participation;
- the promotion of independence and personal development;
- therapeutic and educational outcomes; and
- the individual strengths, needs and vulnerabilities of each pupil.

Wherever appropriate and proportionate, pupils should be involved in discussions about risks, protective measures and strategies that support their safety, independence and participation.

Where appropriate, parents, carers and relevant professionals will contribute to the development and review of individual risk assessments.

7.1 Individual Pupil Risk Assessments

All pupils will have an individual risk assessment where this is necessary to support their safety, wellbeing and educational provision.

Risk assessments may be completed:

- prior to admission;
- during the admissions process;
- following transition into the School;
- following significant incidents;
- when new risks are identified;
- following updated professional advice; or
- whenever professional judgement indicates that review is required.

Individual risk assessments will normally be reviewed at least termly and more frequently where circumstances require.

7.2 Information Considered

Individual risk assessments may take account of:

- the pupil's EHCP;
- safeguarding information;
- medical conditions and healthcare plans;
- therapeutic recommendations;
- mental health needs;

- neurodevelopmental profile;
- communication needs;
- sensory processing differences;
- emotional regulation;
- behaviour and positive behaviour support strategies;
- risks to self or others;
- attendance patterns;
- transport arrangements;
- community access;
- family and contextual information;
- advice from external professionals; and
- the school's ongoing knowledge of the pupil.

The school recognises that effective risk assessment develops over time as staff build relationships with pupils and develop a deeper understanding of their individual needs.

7.3 Positive Risk Management

Orange Tree School recognises that some degree of managed risk is often necessary to promote learning, confidence, resilience and independence and quality of life.

Positive risk management may include:

- gradual exposure to new experiences;
- increased independence where appropriate;
- supported community access;
- therapeutic activities;
- work experience;
- educational visits;
- life skills opportunities; and
- other activities that contribute to pupils' personal development.

Decisions will always be based upon individual circumstances, professional judgement and the implementation of appropriate safeguards.

7.4 Reviewing Individual Risk Assessments

Individual risk assessments are live documents.

They will be reviewed whenever:

- there is a significant change in presentation;
- safeguarding concerns arise;
- an accident, incident or near miss occurs;
- professional advice changes;
- there is a significant change in educational or therapeutic provision;
- new information becomes available; or
- professional judgement indicates that review is necessary.

Where changes are made, updated information will be communicated promptly to relevant staff.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

Effective risk assessment and risk management are a shared responsibility. All members of the school community have a role in identifying foreseeable risks, implementing agreed control measures and promoting a safe learning and working environment.

8.1 The Proprietor and Advisory Board

The Proprietor and Advisory Board are responsible for:

- ensuring compliance with the Independent School Standards and other relevant health and safety legislation;
- ensuring that the school maintains an effective Risk Assessment and Risk Management Policy;
- providing appropriate oversight of health, safety and welfare arrangements;
- monitoring significant risks through the school's governance arrangements; and
- ensuring appropriate resources are available to support effective risk management.

8.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for implementing this policy across both the Main Site and Ridgeway Hospital Provision.

This includes responsibility for:

- promoting a positive culture of risk awareness and safeguarding;
- ensuring suitable and sufficient risk assessments are completed;
- ensuring appropriate control measures are implemented;
- monitoring the quality and effectiveness of risk assessments;
- ensuring staff receive appropriate information, instruction and training;
- ensuring significant incidents are reviewed and lessons learned are incorporated into future practice;
- ensuring effective liaison with Ellern Mede Hospital where responsibilities overlap; and
- reporting significant health and safety matters through the school's governance arrangements.

8.3 Senior Leaders

Senior leaders are responsible for:

- overseeing risk assessment within their areas of responsibility;
- ensuring risk assessments remain current and proportionate;

- supporting staff in identifying and managing risk;
- ensuring agreed control measures are implemented consistently;
- promoting professional judgement and dynamic risk assessment;
- reviewing incidents and identifying opportunities for improvement; and
- escalating significant concerns to the Headteacher where appropriate.

8.4 Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- taking reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others;
- familiarising themselves with relevant risk assessments;
- implementing agreed control measures;
- exercising professional judgement and undertaking dynamic risk assessments where appropriate;
- reporting hazards, incidents, near misses and emerging risks promptly;
- participating in the review of risk assessments where required; and
- seeking advice whenever they are uncertain about how risks should be managed.

8.5 Pupils

Pupils are encouraged, in a manner appropriate to their age, understanding and individual needs, to:

- follow reasonable instructions designed to keep themselves and others safe;
- report hazards or concerns to a trusted adult;
- engage positively with individual support plans; and
- contribute to maintaining a safe, respectful and supportive school environment.

8.6 Parents and Carers

The school values positive partnerships with parents and carers in promoting the safety and wellbeing of pupils.

Parents and carers are expected to:

- provide accurate and up-to-date information regarding their child's health, wellbeing and needs;
- inform the school promptly of any significant changes that may affect risk assessments;
- work collaboratively with the school in implementing agreed support strategies; and
- support the school's reasonable decisions regarding risk management and pupil safety.

9. Monitoring, Assurance and Review

Orange Tree School is committed to continuously improving its approach to risk assessment and risk management.

9.1 Monitoring

The school monitors the effectiveness of its risk management arrangements through:

- regular review of risk assessments;
- incident, accident and near-miss reporting;
- safeguarding monitoring;
- health and safety inspections;
- leadership oversight;
- staff feedback;
- quality assurance activities; and
- governance monitoring by the Advisory Board.

Monitoring enables the school to identify emerging risks, evaluate existing control measures and promote continuous improvement.

9.2 Learning from Incidents

Where accidents, incidents, near misses or safeguarding concerns occur, the school will consider whether existing risk assessments remain appropriate and whether additional control measures are required.

Lessons learned will be used to strengthen future practice, update risk assessments where necessary and inform staff training.

9.3 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where:

- legislation or statutory guidance changes;
- significant incidents identify the need for review;
- operational practice changes;
- the school introduces new activities or environments; or
- monitoring identifies improvements that should be made.

10. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Health and Safety Policy

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Relationship and Behaviour Policy
- Trips & Activities Policy
- Admissions Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Medical Policy
- SEND Policy
- Accessibility Plan
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Physical Intervention Policy
- Lone Working Policy