



**MERCHANT
TAYLORS'
SCHOOLS**

For Boys and Girls
aged 4 to 18 years

Risk Assessment Policy

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What is a risk assessment?

It is a working document to look at activities to see if there is any potential harm and what steps need to be taken to minimise them.

The law

Not only do we have moral, ethical and economic reasons for carrying out risk assessment but there are legal responsibilities too! In the original 1974 Health and Safety at Work Act, under common law, we have a duty towards those in our care to take necessary precautions to safeguard them 'so far as is reasonably practicable' (SFARP).

There are 3 tests for foreseeable risk; is it common knowledge, is there industry knowledge or is there expert knowledge?

HSE 5 steps to risk assessment

When carrying out risk assessments HSE suggest using the following sequence:

1. Identify the hazards:

This will largely be done through personal observations. However, you may need to consult other people who might be affected, or refer to secondary sources of information. There may also be statistics or records from the past.

2. Decide who might be affected and how:

This should look at all those who may be affected, so consider the following; staff, pupils, support staff, visitors to the school, etc. There are particular groups that are more vulnerable most notably for us the students! However, also consider those with a medical or disability issue and new/pregnant mothers.

There are a range of hazards you should consider:

- a. Physical hazards - this includes mechanical (eg trips, falls, etc), electrical (eg shocks, fires), or noise/vibration (less relevant to us!).
- b. Chemical hazards (eg spills on skin).
- c. Biological hazards (eg exposure to bacteria from cuts)
- d. Ergonomic hazards (eg poor posture or working layout)

3. Evaluate the risks and decide if enough is being done:

Consider what are the existing control measures (or not), these may be hard (eg putting in a physical guard or wearing protective glasses) or soft (eg training, educating students).

There is a hierarchy of controls you may put in place. This may start with the elimination of a risk, or the substitution of something. More likely it will involve some form of administrative control such as following certain guidelines or being supervised.

4. Record significant findings:

HSE suggest using a 5x5 matrix (see exemplar). These are the measures you are taking and by recording risks down you provide evidence that risks have been considered (SFARP). There may be generic risk assessments for common activities or individual location/activity specific. In either case the starting point is the new matrix.

5. Review and revise:

This should happen on a regular basis; HSE say every 12 months. But it should also happen when there has been any significant change (eg change of machinery in the workshop). Finally if there has been an incident/accident then it should be followed up and the risk assessment revised.

Writing the risk assessment

The school is now using a common form (RA1) on which to carry out the risk assessment. All risk assessments should follow this format and assess potential risks using the 5x5 matrix (see details at the bottom of the form). For further guidance contact JBG.

Types of risk assessment

There are two types of risk assessment:

1. Generic risk assessments (form gRA)

These are common risk assessments that the school has produced. They will cover onsite locations such as a standard classroom. There will also be some for offsite activities, such as different types of travel.

All generic risk assessments are kept on the school network in: MTBS Staff Shared, Administration, Risk Assessments.

In this folder there will be two folders one for Departmental Risk Assessments and the other called Generic Risk Assessments. You will find the range of generic risk assessments in here.

2. Activity or Site specific risk assessment

These risk assessments are to be carried out by members of staff who are responsible for a particular activity. The common form (RA1) should be used to complete the assessment. The form can be found in the Risk Assessment folder on MTBS Staff Shared (see above).

Before writing any risk assessment please check the generic risk assessments which you may be able to use by adapting what is already there. Alternatively please speak to JBG.

Training

All staff should be trained about the need for risk assessment and how to write one. Each department is responsible for producing their risk assessments and training members of staff in the use of their area. Records of training should be kept of what training is done. Each year risk assessments need to be reviewed and this should be carried out during the safety week during June.