VITA ET PAX
PREPARATORY SCHOOL
est. 1936

Risk Assessment Policy

Version: 17 November 2026

Approved: 17 November 2026 by the Chair of Governors, and ratified by the Head of Education & Compliance under authority delegated by the Head of Operations. To be submitted to the next full Governing Body meeting for ratification. Review: annually, and after a significant change or incident.

1. Purpose and scope

Make school activities safe by identifying hazards, putting effective controls in place and checking they work. This applies to pupils (including EYFS), staff, volunteers, visitors, contractors and hirers: rooms, grounds, lessons, clubs, events, maintenance and educational visits. Specialist assessments, including fire and COSHH, remain necessary.

2. Who does what

Head: overall responsibility for risk management; Educational Visits Officer (EVO); approves educational visits and resolves risks needing escalation.

Head of Education & Compliance: supports assessment, records, staff guidance and review; Deputy EVO. Either the Head or the Head of Education & Compliance may check a residual level 2. This does not replace the Head's visit approval or the wider duties of the school's health and safety leads.

Teachers, visit leaders and area/activity managers: assess their work, verify controls, brief everyone affected, monitor and report hazards, incidents and near misses promptly. Staff must read and follow the relevant assessments; pupils and visitors follow instructions and report concerns.

3. Use one simple rating — not a multiplication

Consider both how likely harm is and how serious it could be. Give each hazard one initial rating before the listed controls and one residual rating after those controls have been implemented and checked. Do not multiply likelihood and severity.

Rating	Meaning and required action
3 — HIGH	Unacceptable risk. Stop / do not start. Add controls and reassess; never proceed while residual risk remains 3.
2 — MEDIUM	Some risk remains. Before proceeding, obtain and record a check with the Head OR Head of Education & Compliance, including any conditions and monitoring.
1 — SAFE / LOW	Low, controlled risk: controls are implemented, checked and monitored. "Safe" does not mean risk-free. Proceed only with all other required approvals.

An uncontrolled serious hazard, or a missing, failed or unverified critical control, means STOP whatever rating is written. If unsure, stop and ask the Head or the Head of Education & Compliance.

4. Which assessments are needed

• General assessments: every classroom, specialist room and outdoor area, recorded on Appendix A at the start of each term and reviewed after any change.

• Specialist assessments, completed or reviewed by a competent person: fire, asbestos, water/legionella, electrical and gas safety, COSHH (substances), display screen equipment, manual handling, work at height

and first-aid needs. They remain separate records and must be reviewed when this policy is reviewed or circumstances change.

• Individual assessments for staff: new and expectant mothers, staff with health conditions or temporary restrictions, lone working, and any work activity with a significant risk to that person.

• Individual assessments for pupils: where medical needs, SEND, behaviour, allergies or mobility create risks that general assessments do not cover. Use them alongside the pupil's individual healthcare or support plan; keep personal details in the protected record, not on displayed forms.

• Higher-risk lessons and activities: science practicals, design and technology, food preparation, PE and sport, swimming, use of tools or equipment, clubs, events, and any new or unusual activity. Assess before the first session, brief staff and pupils, and review after an incident.

• Educational visits and off-site activities: Appendix B, with Head/EVO approval (section 7).

• Dynamic assessment: staff continually judge conditions on the day. If something changes, pause, make safe and reassess before continuing.

Bespoke risk assessments

Edith, the school's operations assistant, can draft bespoke risk assessments for a room, lesson, activity, event, visit or individual using this policy, its 1–3 rating rules and the Appendix forms. Ask through the school office or the Head of Education & Compliance. Every Edith draft must be checked against actual conditions, completed and signed off by a named member of staff, with any residual 2 checked and visits approved as this policy requires. Edith does not approve risk assessments or replace professional judgement.

Putting the assessment into practice

5. Five practical steps

1. Look: inspect the area/activity, identify what could cause harm and who may be affected. Include additional needs, foreseeable misuse, visitors and changing conditions.

2. Control: remove the hazard where possible; otherwise substitute, isolate or change the activity before relying on instructions or protective equipment. Record actual controls, not assumptions.

3. Check: name who checks each control and when. Record evidence that it works; assign an owner and deadline for any further action. Rate residual risk only after checks.

4. Decide and brief: apply the rating rules in section 3. Record any residual 2 check and conditions. Brief staff, helpers, pupils and others as appropriate; confirm they understand.

5. Monitor: check before use and during the activity. If conditions change, a control fails or an incident occurs, pause, make safe, inform the Head or the Head of Education & Compliance and reassess before restarting.

6. Reviews and records

Review assessments at least annually; check area assessments at the start of each term, in line with the termly forms. Review immediately after an incident, significant change or new activity. Recheck each visit for its particular group, venue and date. The policy itself is reviewed annually and when circumstances change.

File area assessments in AllStaff / School-Staff / Health & Safety Risk Assessments / Classroom risk assessments. Keep a visible room copy without personal or confidential information. The EVO keeps visit proposals, assessments, consent and evaluations in the central visits records. Keep check evidence and revised versions securely under the school's retention arrangements.

The Head and the Head of Education & Compliance check that assessments and actions are current and that staff have suitable training; arrange refresher guidance when procedures change. Report defects rather than assuming that equipment, testing or physical conditions are compliant.

7. Educational visits

Use the visit form in Appendix B with the visit proposal, consent, emergency arrangements and protected group/medical information. Check supervision, transport, provider credentials and insurance, first aid, medical/SEND needs, headcounts, lost-child arrangements and a contingency plan. Do not put pupil medical details on this blank or publicly displayed form.

Head/EVO approval remains required before the visit proceeds, even if the Head of Education & Compliance has checked a residual 2. Retain any required Governing Body approval for residential/overseas visits. For any EYFS child, a person with a current full paediatric first-aid certificate must accompany the visit; if unavailable, cancel or postpone. No waiver.

Alignment with the Educational Visits Policy

This policy uses EVO (Head) and Deputy EVO (Head of Education & Compliance); the existing Educational Visits Policy calls the coordinating role EVC. It also uses a 5 × 5 score. Align that policy and its forms at its next review; do not treat this policy as authority to bypass current approvals. Appendices A and B (outside the policy page limit) adapt the school's existing forms to the proposed 1–3 system.

Appendix A — Area / activity risk assessment

Blank working proforma • Adapted from this term's school area forms. Complete for the actual conditions; no controls or ratings are pre-approved.

Area / room / activity:	Assessment date / term:
Assessor / responsible person:	Review due / version:
People who may be affected:	Related specialist assessment / reference:

One row per hazard. Controls must state who checks them, when, and the evidence kept. Further actions need an owner and deadline. Add rows as needed in a working copy.

Risk / hazard	Initial 1–3	Risk mitigation / checks	Residual 1–3	Further action / owner / due

Other risks / changed conditions to report: _____

Controls verified by / date / evidence reference:	
Any residual 2: checked with Head OR Head of Education & Compliance — name / date / decision / conditions:	
Staff / others briefed by / date; monitoring and next review:	

3 HIGH: stop and reduce risk. 2 MEDIUM: recorded Head OR Head of Education & Compliance check before proceeding. 1 SAFE / LOW: controlled, not risk-free. Never proceed with failed critical controls.

Appendix B — Educational visit risk assessment

Blank working proforma • Adapted from the school visit proforma and current policy appendices. Use with the proposal and protected visit pack; do not duplicate pupil medical details here.

Destination / activity / learning purpose:	Date / depart / return:
Visit leader / assessor:	Cohort / pupil number / staff & helpers:
Transport / route / contingency:	Supervision / ratio & reasons:
First aider / full PFA if EYFS:	Medical, SEND, food needs: protected-plan ref. / lead:
Emergency contact / lost-child plan ref.:	Provider / insurance / pre-visit / consent refs.:

Consider traffic, separation, falls, medical/allergy needs, weather, behaviour and transport. Controls: who checks, when and evidence. Record who to inform: parents / staff / pupils.

Issue / hazard & who at risk	Initial 1–3	Controls / checks / who to inform	Residual 1–3	Further action / owner / due

Leader confirmation / date; control verification evidence & review date:	
Any residual 2: Head OR Head of Education & Compliance check — name / date / decision / conditions:	
Head / EVO visit approval — decision / date / conditions:	
Governing Body approval if required / reference:	

Keep emergency contacts, pupil lists and individual plans in the protected visit pack; office retains the final offsite list. Record briefing and post-visit review there. A Head of Education & Compliance residual 2 check is not Head visit approval. Residual 3: STOP; 1: low/controlled, not risk-free.