

The American School in London

Risk Assessment Statement

Reviewed March 2018

This policy is systematic with a view to promoting the welfare of pupils, staff and visitors of the American School in London (ASL) and refers to all grade levels, athletics, after-school programs and clubs, the aquatics program, Summer Programs and our Canons Park athletics fields.

What is a Risk Assessment?

A risk assessment is a careful examination of what, in our work, could cause harm to people and the environment, so that we can weigh up whether we have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm.

A risk assessment is an important step in protecting faculty, staff, students, visitors, contractors, the environment and ASL as a whole. It helps faculty and staff focus on the risks within their department and activities that they undertake. In many instances, straightforward measures can readily control risks; for example, ensuring faculty and staff have sufficient information when they are offsite, operating equipment or using chemicals, cleaning up spillages promptly so people do not slip, and ensuring good housekeeping is maintained to ensure people do not trip.

A printable risk assessment form is included within this policy (please see appendix 1) or an electronic version can be found on the ASL Forms and Documents web pages.

When should a risk assessment be completed?

The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 requires an assessment to be made of the risks arising out of the activities that ASL undertakes.

Who is responsible for drawing up and checking risk assessments?

There is a requirement for our divisions, athletics areas, and hands-on activities areas to develop risk assessments and to define how health and safety is managed for their areas. This includes lower, middle and high school activities and trips, the School Center, the MILL, music, science areas, aquatics, robotics and athletics.

Assigned risk assessors in these areas have a responsibility for ensuring risks assessments are complete for their areas, and the health and safety manager should check and monitor assessments. This may be by one assessment, by a number of assessments linked together or by individual assessments for different tasks/activities, offsite visits, experiments, machinery or process within the division or department.

Examples can be found on the staff portal under Forms and Documents.

Storing assessments

Once the completed assessments have been shared with appropriate staff and students, they need to be recorded and kept digitally by the division or department. A risk assessment library in Google Docs is provided for this purpose. Faculty and staff are asked not to overwrite

previous assessments. New and updated assessments should be created and titled so as allow faculty and staff quick access to the latest assessment.

Sharing of assessments and best practice will ensure that the assessments are improved and that staff have good, reliable information.

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Definitions

A hazard is anything that may cause harm, such as chemicals, electricity, working from ladders, open drawer, etc.

The risk is the chance, high or low, that somebody could be harmed by these and other hazards, together with an indication of how serious the harm could be.

How to carry out a risk assessment

The health and safety manager provides regular training and updates to all ASL risk assessors. His training and follows the Health & Safety Executives guidance of 5 Steps to Risk Assessment.

Step 1: What are the hazards?

Consider how someone may be harmed, this will help to identify the hazards—disregard the inconsequential or trivial

- Walk around your classroom or office; think through your task or activity; ask the staff doing the task, consider the location, duration, purpose of your visit, is there long-term health hazards associated with the task?
- Consult the manufacturer's instructions, safety data sheets, trade associations, and associated websites.

Step 2 :Who may be harmed and how?

Consider each hazard and who may be harmed and how they may be harmed.

- Who may be at risk? Students, teachers, office staff, housekeeping team, maintenance and/or security staff, visitors etc. Identify groups that are more vulnerable, such as young persons, the disabled, lone working staff, contractors, members of the public, etc.
- How? May be from tripping on a bag left on the floor, accessing a box from a high shelf, putting up displays from a step ladder, sports activity, noise, machinery, offsite trips, etc.

Step 3: What are you doing already?

Having spotted the hazards, consider what is already in place to control them. Compare your list to good practice; is there more that could be done?

When controlling risks, apply the following principles, if possible in the following order:

1. Can I remove the hazard altogether?
2. If not, how can I control the risks so that harm is unlikely?
3. Try a less risky option (e.g., switch to using a less hazardous chemical)
4. Prevent access to the hazard (e.g., by guarding)
5. Organize work to reduce exposure to the hazard (e.g., put barriers between pupils/staff and the works)
6. Issue personal protective equipment (e.g., clothing, footwear, goggles, etc.)

7. And provide welfare facilities (e.g., first aid, removal of contamination). Within this step there is a heading of “What further action is needed?” Have the risks been reduced as far as possible or is there a need for more?

For instance:

- You may consider that staff require refresher training on the machinery/task/activity.
- You may feel that before the trip goes ahead, the ratio of staff to students should be increased. Without the increase in staff, you could not go ahead with the trip.
- There may have been a change of legislation or best practice and therefore new equipment or additional equipment is required.

Step 4: How will you put the assessment into action?

The completed risk assessment must be shared with the appropriate staff and, where necessary, students. You may have outstanding issues; if so, prioritize. State what needs to be done, when and by whom. Remember the assessment demonstrates how the event, task, activity, etc., is to be managed. For example, staff to carry out inspection of equipment before and after use, and regular safety checks; information provided to staff and students via a briefing.

Step 5: Monitor and review

Monitor: There are a number of occasions, such as offsite activities, an event, a project, etc., where it is recommended that a “wash up” be carried out. Once the wash up has occurred, use this section to make comments/action points for when the situation is carried out again. This will assist staff to improve the situation in the future.

Review: Few activities, classrooms, etc., stay the same. Sooner or later a piece of new equipment, substance, procedure, etc., is brought in; this can lead to new hazards and therefore the assessment will need to be reviewed.

Should no changes occur that you are aware of, there will still be a need to review the assessment and it is suggested that the assessment be reviewed on an **annual basis**.

Signature and sharing with staff

The last section of the form asks how the assessment will be shared and with whom. For example, naming the staff on the trip, activity or doing the task, via a department meeting, via email to all staff, etc.

The person who has completed the assessment should enter his/her name and that of the manager. Once the content is agreed with the manager, it should be stored by the department and entered into the risk assessment library.