**Gracefield Preparatory School Risk Assessment Policy**

**Rationale:** This policy aims to promote the welfare of pupils, staff and visitors of Gracefield Preparatory School. This policy is required by the Independent Schools Standards Section 3.16

**What is a Risk Assessment?**

A risk assessment is nothing more than a careful examination of what, in your work, could cause harm to people and the environment, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm.

A risk assessment is an important step in protecting staff, pupils, visitors, contractors, the environment and Gracefield as a whole.

It helps staff focus on the risks within their class, across the school and in activities that they undertake. In many instances, straightforward measures can readily control risks; for example ensuring staff have sufficient information when they are offsite, ensuring spillages are cleaned up promptly so people do not slip, or good housekeeping is maintained to ensure people do not trip.

Printable risk assessment forms are included in the Risk Assessment Folder in the school office.

**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 many of the activities that Gracefield undertakes, whenever risks are identified.

**Who is responsible for drawing up and checking risk assessments?**

All staff have a responsibility for ensuring risks assessments are completed for their area of work, and the compliance officer 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. Whole School Risk Assessments can be found in the Risk Assessment Folder in the School Office.

Sharing of assessments and best practice will ensure that the assessments are improved and that staff have good, reliable information of how to keep pupils, staff and visitors safe.

**Definitions**

A **hazard** is anything that may cause harm, such as chemicals, electricity, working from ladders 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 & Safety Executives guidance of 5 Steps to Risk Assessment can be found at http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/controlling-risks.htm

**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, office or location for the activity; think through your task or activity; ask the staff doing the task, consider the location, duration, purpose of your visit. Are there long term health hazards associated with the task or risk of immediate harm? Consult the manufacturer’s instructions, safety data sheets, trade associations, associated websites or location’s own risk assessments where appropriate for clarification of risk.

**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? Pupils, teaching, office, cleaning, maintenance staff, visitors etc. Identify groups, which 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 trip etc.

**Step 3 – What are you already doing?** 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 material)

4. Prevent access to the hazard (e.g. by guarding)

5. Organise 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 consider “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 task/activity. You may feel that before the trip goes ahead the ratio of staff to pupils 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 who can ensure the risks are recognised and controlled. Were necessary, pupils may need to be informed of how risks are controlled.

You may have outstanding issues. If so prioritise; say what needs to be done, by 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 before use, information provided to staff and pupils 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 actions are considered for when the situation is carried out again. This will assist staff to improve the situation in the future. These should be annotated on the risk assessment.

**Review** - Few activities, classrooms etc. stay the same. Sooner or later a piece of new equipment, substance, procedure etc. is changed; 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 risk assessments are reviewed on an annual basis.

**Step 6: Signature and Sharing with Staff** The person who has completed the assessment should sign and date the assessment and share the assessment with relevant staff, including sharing with the compliance officer.

Policy created by Jon Bird Mar 2019

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