



Risk assessment policy

Independent school standards

Paragraphs 16 and 34.

Last updated by senior leaders

September 2026

Last reviewed by advisory board

September 2026

Next review due

September 2027

Introduction

- Risks are inherent in everyday life. We actively identify risks and adopt effective systems for minimising them. As per national guidance and paragraph 16 of the independent school standards, there is a need for both dynamic and formal written assessments to actively reduce risk.
- All risk assessment templates are available to staff on Google Drive.

Risk assessments

A risk assessment is a tool for conducting a formal examination of the harm or hazard to people (or an organisation) that could result from a particular activity or situation.

- A hazard is something with the potential to cause harm (e.g. fire).
- A risk is an evaluation of the probability (or likelihood) of the hazard occurring (e.g. a chip pan will catch fire if left unattended).
- A risk assessment is the resulting assessment of the severity of the outcome (e.g. loss of life, destruction of property).
- Risk control measures are the measures and procedures that are put in place in order to minimise the consequences of the unfettered risk (e.g. staff training, clear work procedures, fire alarms, fire practices and insurance).

Accidents and injuries can ruin lives, damage reputations and cost money. Apart from being a legal requirement, risk assessments focus on prevention, rather than reaction.

Areas of risk

There are numerous activities carried out at St. John's, many of which require a separate risk assessment. The most important of these cover:

- fire safety and procedures.
- educational visits and trips (individually risk assessed by class teacher and passed to a senior leader for approval).
- contractors on-site, including cleaners.
- lunch and break time play.
- the Domesday Pond on the Senior School site.
- use of minibuses.
- higher-risk classrooms such as science laboratories which are kept locked at all times when not in use.

We also risk assess:

- activities inside the school buildings, such as use of specialist classrooms.
- activities outside the school buildings, such as play areas, pupils' arrival and departure times and site security.
- regular off-site activities, such as swimming and travel to/from physical education lessons at the Senior School.

Risk assessments are updated regularly and as necessary. They are supported by regular (weekly, monthly and termly) documented health and safety checks.

We ensure that pupils understand why they do not have access to potentially dangerous areas, such as the kitchen or areas which are deemed out of bounds and these are fully signposted, as appropriate.

Off-site visits

Off-site activities enhance and enrich pupils' learning. When taking pupils off site for day trips, residential trips or overseas trips, leaders and teachers assess any possible risks involved and take all reasonable steps to address these risks. To this end, a written risk assessment is carried out by the group leader before the proposed visit. It is designed to assess the risks which might be encountered on the visit, and indicates measures to prevent or reduce them. The risk assessment is based on the following considerations:

- What are the hazards?
- Who might be affected by them?
- What safety measures are needed to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- Can the group leader put the safety measures in place?
- What steps will be taken in an emergency?

Key considerations and the process

- Trip leaders planning an off-site activity make a preliminary visit to the venue before taking pupils there, in order to carry out an on-site risk assessment. It is important to assess and record any health, safety or security issues that are identified during the preliminary visit. Any such issues will be considered when the final decision is taken on whether the visit should proceed, and the visit plan must state both the extent of any risks involved, and the measures that will be taken to reduce or eliminate them. The cost of these preliminary visits will be borne by the School and should be built into the overall financial arrangements for the visit.
- Trip leaders will assess the site's suitability with regard to the proposed group size, the age and particular needs of the pupils; the venue's approach to

security and to health and safety; and will also consider the probable weather conditions at the time of year proposed.

- Venues providing instructor-led activities will have their own risk assessments for particular sessions, and these assessments may be adopted if it is impractical for the group leader to experience the activity beforehand, or if he/she lacks the skills required to make informed judgements about the risks it may involve.

A risk assessment must also cover transport to and from the venue. The selected coach companies we use on a regular basis has provided us with written confirmation detailing all the health and safety measures it routinely takes, including:

- the provision and required use of seat belts.
- proper vetting of the driver by the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- proper insurance for the driver and the vehicle.
- satisfactory MOT/VOSA checks.
- details of first aid and emergency equipment.
- breakdown and emergency procedures.

With at least four school weeks of notice, and usually a term's notice or an academic year's notice in the case of residential and overseas visits, the Principal or Headteacher will not give their approval for the visit unless they are satisfied with the venue, its instructors, their risk assessment procedures and the group leader's overall written risk assessment.

The group leader must fully brief all adults involved in supervising on the trip as to their duties before the trip commences.

Managing pupil welfare risks

The School recognises its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils in its care, including vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This responsibility includes protecting all pupils from harm and neglect; ensuring that all pupils are provided with a safe and healthy environment; and managing welfare concerns effectively.

The School addresses its commitment to these principles through prevention and protection, as follows.

Prevention – ensuring that all reasonable measures are taken to minimise the risks of harm to pupils and their welfare by:

- ensuring staff are trained and committed to adhering to this policy.
- providing curricular and extended-curricular activities which equip pupils with skills to enable them to manage risk.

- providing accessible medical and wellbeing support to pupils.

Protection – ensuring all appropriate actions are taken to address concerns about the welfare of a pupil, whether of a safeguarding nature or otherwise. This includes:

- sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know and involving pupils and their parents appropriately.
- monitoring pupils thought to be at risk of harm and, if necessary, formulating and/or contributing to support packages for those pupils.