

RISK ASSESSMENT POLICY



Agreed: February 2024

To be Reviewed: February 2025

Elysian is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Vision

At Elysian we believe that all young people have the right to receive an education that allows them to thrive and reach their potential regardless of their past experiences or additional needs. To learn, young people need to feel safe and able to develop positive and healthy relationships.

We recognise the significant role animals can play in helping young people create new experiences that allow the brain and body to build more positive ways of communicating. Animals offer an alternative way to connect that is less threatening or demanding, they take their time and do not judge or ask too many questions! Through repetitive practice the brain can re-organise neural pathways and young people can learn new ways to relate to others. Most importantly the work with animals can then be transferred into how they relate and connect with other humans and in daily life experiences.

Alongside the animals the positive impact on mental health of being outside, connecting with nature and engaging in practical tasks is well documented. Using the farm environment to learn can feel less demanding and a welcome relief away from the frenetic life of a mainstream school, a release from noisy, large classrooms and busy corridors; common triggers for many young people particularly those diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Pathological Demand Disorder and Generalised Anxiety.

Our animals and the farm environment provide a **unique**, therapeutic space to help young people reframe their experiences of learning so they can **enjoy, believe and achieve**.

The purpose of this Policy is to set out the procedure for producing, retaining and updating risk assessments at Elysian.

A risk assessment has three purposes:

- to identify all things and activities which may cause harm to our children, staff, visitors etc. (the hazards);
- to consider the chance of that harm actually befalling anyone in the circumstances identified, and the possible consequences which could arise from it (the risks);
- to enable plans to be made for the introduction and monitoring of preventive measures to ensure that the risks are adequately controlled at all times. Without effective assessment, there can seldom be effective control (i.e. a safe system of work).

Definitions

As ever, the terms used need to be understood and these definitions should help:

HAZARD – the potential to cause harm, including ill health and injury; damage to property, plant, products or the environment;

LIKELIHOOD – the chances of an event involving the identified hazard actually happening;

RISK – is the combination of the hazard and likelihood. For example, the HAZARD existing in an electric light fitting above your head is severe but the LIKELIHOOD of it falling on you is so low, that the RISK is negligible.

Conversely walking along the edge of a cliff at night in a force 8 gale has a high HAZARD rating and high LIKELIHOOD that you might fall, so the RISK is very severe. The RISK from a substance or activity is, therefore, the likelihood that it will cause harm in the circumstances of use. This will depend on:

- the hazard presented by the substance or activity
- how it is used or done
- how it is controlled
- who is exposed, how much, for how long, etc.
- what they are doing
- what guards, precautions, etc, already exist

Poor control of activities can create a substantial risk even from a substance or activity with low hazard.

However, with proper precautions most risks of being harmed can be adequately controlled.

General Guidance

Within the Elysian community, the majority of hazards, likelihoods, and risks have already been identified and documented, and will already be adequately controlled in conformity with existing legal requirements. Undertaking another formal risk assessment will simply confirm that the hazards are already identified and adequately controlled and will simply act as a review, as required by the legislation.

Where previous risk assessments have not been comprehensive, or have never taken place, the exercise will identify potential hazards and the risks they present so that effective action can be taken to control them before an incident takes place. The important point is to ensure that the hazards associated with ALL areas and activities have been assessed and are adequately controlled.

Risk assessment will assume a place in health and safety management that will be seen to be caring, cost effective and central to the objective of the school's health and safety policy statement. In using the risk assessment forms you can help to ensure that risks can be addressed and, where necessary, safe systems of work created.

The existence of an effective risk assessment procedure together with self-inspection is a prerequisite for the system of monitoring by proper safety audits. This task cannot be achieved instantly but will require persistence from a wide range of teaching/support staff.

We must assess not only the risks that our staff are exposed to, but also any person affected by our business. This includes children, parents, contractors e.g. caterers and window cleaners; visitors, people who let parts of the building and members of the public. We must assess both the risks that occur on a daily basis, and those that happen only occasionally, e.g. daily floor cleaning and occasional gutter cleaning.

As we employ contractors, e.g. caterers, grounds staff and window cleaners, we need to provide them with comprehensive information on the risks that they are exposed to by working on the premises and the measures that need to take in order to ensure health and safety. A contractor may introduce new risks to our staff e.g. ground keeping equipment or cleaning chemicals, and we need to ensure that the contractors need to inform us about these risks so that effective and coordinated controls can be implemented.

Detailed assessment of risk

In completing a risk assessment, you should:

- Identify the likely hazard, any you can think of with your knowledge of the activity.
- Identify the control measures to minimize the risk.
- Use existing systems to for auctioning these measures. Date and initial your part in these actions.

Risk Assessments are not a once-and-for-all activity; they should be 'living documents' that are reviewed and amended if necessary:

- After an accident, incident or significant near miss
- After any significant changes have been made, e.g. change of staff, introduction of a new working method or piece of potentially hazardous equipment.
- Annually

The review should be conducted by the person/people responsible for the activity, area.

Appendices

Risk Assessment

This is a careful examination of the risks association with both working practices and activities.

- **A hazard is anything that may cause harm.**
- **A risk is a chance, great or small, that someone will be harmed by a hazard.**

The aim is to make sure that no one becomes ill or gets hurt. There are five steps to achieve this:

1. Look for hazards.

Look at what may cause harm as a result of an activity.

2. Decide who might be harmed and how.

Look at who may be affected by the work activity and how they may be affected; this may include members of the children, visitors, contractors, maintenance personnel and public.

3. Assess the risks and take appropriate actions.

If you find a hazard that may be a risk you will need to decide what steps have to be taken to eliminate or reduce those risks as is reasonably practical. What needs to be done depends on whether the hazard is low risk or high risk. You can determine this by looking at what type of injury may occur and how often it may happen (use the tables and guidance provided). It may be possible to remove the hazard altogether or to take steps to reduce this risk to an acceptable level. If there is no risk present, then you do not need to take any action.

4. Record the findings.

You will need to write down the more significant hazards and record the most important conclusions. The following need to be shown:

- A proper check was made;
- Those who might be affected were consulted;
- All the obvious significant hazards were dealt with and an account was taken of the number of people who could be involved;
- The precautions are reasonable and the remaining risk is low.

5. Review the assessment from time to time and revise if necessary.

It is important that you check the risk assessment, especially if there is a change in the working procedures. You will need to ensure that the assessment takes into account the new hazards, which may cause harm to the health and safety of children and staff, or other people who may be affected by the change in working conditions.

For the purposes of this policy, where the term Elysian is used, it refers to Elysian Animal Assisted Interventions Ltd including Elysian School and Elysian Animal assisted Therapy and Learning.