



Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Safety and Suitability of Premises, Environment and Equipment

Providers must ensure that they take all reasonable steps to ensure staff and children in their care are not exposed to risks and must be able to demonstrate how they are managing risks.

8.4 Risk Assessment

Policy Statement

At Impact Montessori Nursery, the health, safety and wellbeing of children, staff, parents, visitors and volunteers are of paramount importance.

We recognise that children need opportunities to explore, develop independence and take appropriate risks as part of their learning and development. Our approach is therefore to identify hazards, assess risks and put proportionate control measures in place to reduce the likelihood of harm.

Risk assessment is an ongoing process. It involves identifying hazards, considering who may be affected, assessing the level of risk, implementing appropriate control measures and reviewing those measures to ensure they remain effective.

We do not aim to eliminate every risk. Instead, we take reasonable and proportionate precautions while allowing children appropriate opportunities to develop confidence, resilience and an understanding of risk.

What is a Risk Assessment?

A risk assessment is a careful examination of what could cause harm to people, what precautions are needed to prevent harm, and whether those precautions are effective.

Our risk assessment process considers:

1. **Hazard** – What could cause harm and where is it?
2. **Who may be at risk** – Who could be affected, including children, staff, parents, visitors and contractors?
3. **Level of risk** – How likely is the hazard to cause harm and how serious could the consequences be?
4. **Control measures** – What action is needed to eliminate or reduce the risk?
5. **Monitoring and review** – Are the control measures working and do they need to be changed?

Responsibilities

The Nursery Manager is responsible for ensuring that appropriate risk assessments are completed, implemented and reviewed.

All staff are responsible for:

- Following agreed risk assessment procedures.
- Reporting hazards, accidents, incidents and near misses promptly.
- Taking immediate action to reduce an identified risk where it is safe to do so.
- Informing the manager of any changes that may require a risk assessment to be reviewed.
- Ensuring that children are appropriately supervised.
- Following specific risk assessments relating to individual children, activities, equipment and areas of the nursery.

Staff will receive appropriate health and safety information and training to enable them to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

Areas Covered by Risk Assessment

Our risk assessment process covers both the indoor and outdoor environment and includes, where relevant:

- Premises, entrances, exits, doors, windows and gates.
- Outdoor play areas and equipment.
- Indoor play areas and learning environments.
- Furniture, toys and other equipment.
- Fire safety and emergency evacuation.
- First aid and medical emergencies.
- Food preparation and eating areas.
- Allergies and individual medical needs.
- Nappy changing and toileting.
- Sleep and rest arrangements.
- Manual handling.
- Cleaning products and other potentially hazardous substances.
- Electrical equipment.
- Water and water-based activities.
- Cooking and other practical activities.
- Visitors, contractors and maintenance work.
- Children with additional needs or disabilities.
- Children who may require individual safety arrangements.
- Staff working practices.
- Outings and off-site activities.
- Transport and use of public transport.
- Home visits, where applicable.
- Security and safeguarding.
- Extreme weather and environmental conditions.
- Infectious diseases and public health risks.
- Any activity or circumstance identified as presenting a significant risk.

Daily Safety Checks

Before children arrive each day, staff will carry out appropriate checks of the nursery environment, including indoor and outdoor areas.

Any hazards identified will be dealt with promptly. Where a hazard cannot be immediately resolved, appropriate measures will be taken to prevent children and others from being exposed to the risk.

Examples may include:

- Removing or isolating damaged equipment.
- Restricting access to an unsafe area.
- Reporting maintenance issues to the manager.
- Increasing supervision.
- Temporarily stopping an activity.

Daily checks will be recorded where required by the nursery's health and safety procedures.

Written Risk Assessments

Written risk assessments will be completed where they are necessary to manage a significant or specific risk effectively.

These may include risk assessments relating to:

- Specific activities.
- Outings and trips.
- Outdoor play.
- Cooking and practical activities.
- Food allergies.
- Children with individual medical or additional needs.
- Sleep arrangements.
- Nappy changing.
- Use of specialist equipment.
- Hazardous substances.
- Visitors and contractors.
- Premises and environmental hazards.
- Individual children where additional safety measures are required.

Each written risk assessment will identify:

- The hazard.
- Who may be affected.
- The level of risk.
- Existing control measures.
- Additional action required.
- The person responsible for taking action.
- The timescale for action.
- The date of review.

Children and Appropriate Risk

We recognise that appropriate risk-taking is an important part of children's learning and development.

Staff will provide children with opportunities to develop:

- Physical confidence.
- Independence.
- Problem-solving skills.

- Awareness of their own safety.
- Understanding of consequences.
- Resilience and decision-making skills.

Activities will be appropriately supervised and risks will be assessed in proportion to the activity and the age and developmental stage of the children.

Individual Children

Where a child has a medical condition, disability, additional need or other circumstance that may require specific safety arrangements, an individual risk assessment will be considered.

This will be developed, where appropriate, with the child's parents/carers and relevant professionals.

Risk assessments will be reviewed when:

- The child's circumstances change.
- New information becomes available.
- An incident or near miss occurs.
- Staff identify that existing control measures are not effective.
- The child develops new skills or abilities.
- There are changes to the nursery environment or equipment.

Outings and Off-Site Activities

A suitable risk assessment will be completed for outings and off-site activities where required.

This will consider:

- The location and environment.
- The number and ages of children attending.
- Staffing and supervision arrangements.
- Transport arrangements.
- Accessibility.
- Weather conditions.
- Medical needs and allergies.
- Emergency procedures.
- Communication arrangements.
- Lost or missing child procedures.
- Any specific risks associated with the activity or venue.

Staff must follow the relevant risk assessment and ensure that any significant changes in circumstances are considered before and during the outing.

Hazardous Substances

Cleaning products, chemicals and other substances that could present a risk to children will be stored securely and used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and relevant Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) requirements.

Children will not have unsupervised access to hazardous substances.

Fire and Emergency Procedures

Risk assessments will be used alongside the nursery's Fire Safety and Emergency Evacuation Policy and other emergency procedures.

Emergency arrangements will be reviewed regularly and staff will be familiar with the actions they need to take in the event of an emergency.

Legionella and Water Safety

Where applicable, Impact Montessori Nursery will follow appropriate arrangements for managing the risk of Legionella and other water-related hazards.

Where the premises are rented, we will liaise with the landlord or responsible premises manager to ensure that appropriate water safety arrangements are in place.

Monitoring and Review

Risk assessments will be reviewed regularly and whenever there is a significant change to the premises, staffing, equipment, activities or circumstances.

They will also be reviewed following:

- An accident or incident.
- A near miss.
- Identification of a new hazard.
- Changes to legislation or relevant guidance.
- Concerns raised by staff, parents or other relevant persons.

The Nursery Manager will ensure that identified actions are followed up and completed within an appropriate timescale.

Staff are encouraged to contribute to the review of risk assessments because they have direct knowledge of the children, activities and environment.

Record Keeping

Risk assessments and associated records will be maintained securely and made available to staff who need to follow them.

Records will be retained in accordance with the nursery's document retention and data protection procedures.

Legal Framework and Guidance

This policy is informed by relevant UK health and safety legislation and current Early Years Foundation Stage requirements, including:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH).
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR), where applicable.
- Regulatory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

This policy will be reviewed regularly and updated where necessary to reflect changes in legislation, statutory guidance, nursery practice or identified risks.

This policy was adopted by: Impact Montessori Nursery

Date adopted: _____

Date to be reviewed: _____

Signed on behalf of the provider: _____

Name of signatory: _____

Role of signatory: Nursery Manager