



Risk Assessment Policy

Activities, Educational Visits and Individual Risk Management

Policy owner	Director / Head of Provision
Approved by	Director
Date issued	June 2026
Review date	June 2027, or sooner following a significant incident, statutory change or material change to provision
Status	Approved policy

This policy should be read alongside the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Behaviour Policy, Educational Visits Procedures, First Aid Policy and Data Protection Policy.

1. Purpose and scope

Compass Learning & Education is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and appropriately challenging learning environment. Risk assessment is a proactive process used to identify foreseeable harm, evaluate the level of risk, put proportionate controls in place and review whether those controls are effective.

This policy applies to all employees, contractors, volunteers, learners, visitors and anyone undertaking activities on behalf of Compass Learning & Education. It covers three connected areas:

- activity risk assessments for learning, enrichment, catering and food-preparation activity, use of premises and other routine or higher-risk activities;
- educational visits and off-site activity risk assessments, including local walks, visits, travel, work-related learning and residential activity where applicable; and
- individual risk assessments and risk-management plans for learners whose needs, circumstances or presentation require tailored arrangements.

Risk assessments do not remove all risk, nor should they unnecessarily prevent beneficial learning experiences. Controls must be proportionate, inclusive and designed to enable participation safely.

2. Legal and safeguarding context

This policy is informed by the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the Equality Act 2010, the Children Act 1989 and 2004, data-protection legislation, and Department for Education guidance on health and safety on educational visits.

It is also informed by Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025. Compass Learning & Education recognises that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that a child-centred approach is fundamental. Risk assessment must therefore take account of possible safeguarding concerns, including neglect, abuse, exploitation, peer-on-peer abuse, online risks, mental health, attendance and vulnerability linked to SEND, communication needs, family circumstances or previous experiences of education.

Where a risk assessment identifies a safeguarding concern, this must not be managed only as a health-and-safety issue. Staff must follow the safeguarding reporting procedure and refer the concern without delay to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or a deputy DSL. If there is an immediate risk of significant harm, staff must take emergency action, including contacting emergency services or children's social care where necessary.

3. Principles

- Child-centred and strengths-based: plans should identify what helps the learner to participate safely, not simply what they cannot do.
- Proportionate: the level of assessment, approval and documentation reflects the level of risk and complexity of the activity.
- Dynamic: staff must remain alert to changing circumstances and stop, adapt or withdraw an activity where risks become unacceptable.
- Inclusive: reasonable adjustments will be considered to enable learners with SEND, medical needs or other vulnerabilities to participate safely.
- Collaborative: learners, parents/carers and relevant professionals should contribute where this would improve understanding and safety.
- Confidential: individual plans are shared only with staff who need the information to keep the learner or others safe.

4. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Key responsibility
Director / Head of Provision	Has overall accountability for this policy, ensures suitable arrangements and resources are in place, approves higher-risk

Role	Key responsibility
	activities and visits, and reviews risk-management performance.
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Advises on safeguarding-related risk, ensures safeguarding concerns arising from assessment are managed through the correct procedure, and supports appropriate information-sharing.
Health and Safety Lead	Maintains the central risk-assessment register, provides advice on health-and-safety controls, monitors review dates and escalates significant gaps.
Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) or nominated visits lead	Ensures off-site activity is suitably planned, checked and approved; confirms competence, supervision, emergency arrangements and communication with parents/carers.
Activity / Visit Lead	Completes or reviews relevant risk assessments, briefs staff and learners, checks controls are in place and carries out dynamic assessment throughout the activity.
All staff	Read and follow relevant assessments, raise concerns, report changes in risk, use professional judgement and stop activity where risk is no longer manageable.
Learners	Follow safety instructions, use equipment responsibly, tell an adult if they feel unsafe and contribute to planning where appropriate.

5. The risk-assessment process

The standard process is:

1. Identify foreseeable hazards and safeguarding risks.
2. Identify who may be harmed and how, including learners, staff, visitors and members of the public.
3. Consider existing controls and assess the level of remaining risk.
4. Decide further controls required, who will implement them and by when.
5. Record the assessment where required and communicate it to relevant people.
6. Review the assessment before the activity, after an incident or near miss, and whenever circumstances change.

Compass Learning & Education uses a 5 × 5 likelihood and impact matrix. Risks rated high or very high must not proceed until further controls reduce risk to an acceptable level and the appropriate senior approval has been obtained. The risk rating supports professional judgement; it does not replace it.

6. Activity risk assessments

Activity risk assessments are required for planned activities that present more than a low level of foreseeable risk, involve unfamiliar environments or equipment, involve food preparation or external providers, or where the participants' needs mean that routine arrangements are insufficient.

Activities usually requiring a documented assessment include, but are not limited to:

- catering and food-preparation sessions, including use of knives, hobs, ovens, electrical equipment, hot liquids, food allergens and hygiene controls;
- enrichment, physical activity, outdoor learning, travel training, community-based learning and work-related activity;
- use of tools, specialist equipment, substances or equipment that requires specific competence or supervision;
- activities delivered by external providers, including venue-based activity and visiting specialists; and
- activities with specific safeguarding considerations, such as online contact, photography, changing arrangements, 1:1 support or contact with members of the public.

The assessment should identify supervision arrangements, learner readiness, equipment checks, emergency action, first-aid needs, allergens and dietary information where relevant, behaviour and safeguarding controls, and any individual plans that must be read alongside it.

For routine activities delivered regularly without material change, a generic assessment may be used. The activity lead must still complete a pre-session check and dynamic risk assessment. A generic assessment must be reviewed at least annually, after any incident or near miss, or when the activity, group or venue changes materially.

7. Educational visits and off-site activities

All off-site activity must be planned to the same safeguarding and health-and-safety standard as activity on site. The visit lead must ensure that the educational purpose is clear and that the benefit of participation is balanced with foreseeable risks.

Before approval, the visit lead must consider:

- the suitability of the destination, route, transport, timing, accessibility, weather and local environment;
- staff competence, first-aid arrangements, supervision ratios, gender and safeguarding considerations, and a named visit leader;
- the needs of individual learners, including medical needs, SEND, emotional regulation, personal care, medication, behaviour, communication, travel anxiety and any current safeguarding plan;
- the provider or venue's own risk-management information, insurance, emergency arrangements and safeguarding procedures where relevant;
- parent/carer consent and information, including emergency contact details, medical and dietary information, expected return arrangements and any necessary costs;
- communication arrangements, headcounts, rendezvous points, lost-child procedures, contingency arrangements, emergency contacts and procedures for late return; and
- whether additional approval is needed due to the level of risk, unfamiliarity, overnight accommodation, water activity, adventure activity, overseas travel or other heightened concern.

The visit lead must complete a written visit risk assessment or proportionate planning record, obtain approval before the visit takes place, brief staff and learners, and carry key emergency information during the visit. Staff must maintain dynamic assessment throughout. A visit may be amended, delayed or cancelled where conditions or learner presentation make it unsafe.

Off-site activity involving a third-party provider must not rely solely on the provider's risk assessment. Compass Learning & Education must satisfy itself that the provider is competent and that its own learners, staff, travel arrangements and safeguarding responsibilities are adequately covered.

8. Individual risk assessments and risk-management plans

An individual risk assessment is used when a learner's specific needs, circumstances or pattern of presentation mean that ordinary arrangements may not be sufficient to keep them, other learners or staff safe. It must be supportive, proportionate and focused on reducing risk while enabling meaningful access to learning.

An individual assessment may be required following, for example:

- a significant incident, repeated near misses, a safeguarding disclosure or concern, or evidence of escalating risk;
- known risks relating to self-harm, suicidal thoughts, harm to others, absconding or going missing, exploitation, substance use, unsafe sexual behaviour or vulnerability in the community;
- a medical condition, allergy, disability, personal-care requirement, mobility or sensory need that requires specific arrangements;
- a high level of dysregulation, trauma response, impulsivity, communication difficulty or behaviour that increases foreseeable risk;
- significant attendance anxiety, EBSA, transport concerns, contact arrangements or family circumstances that affect safety; or
- a recommendation from parents/carers, school, social care, health professionals or another relevant agency.

The plan should be prepared by the Head of Provision or delegated competent staff member, with input from the DSL where safeguarding is relevant. It should draw on available information such as EHCPs, medical plans, professional advice, safety plans, behaviour support plans, previous setting information and the learner's own views. Parents/carers should normally be involved unless doing so would increase safeguarding risk or conflict with advice from social care or the police.

Individual plans must clearly set out:

- the specific risk, triggers, early-warning signs and protective factors;
- the strategies and reasonable adjustments that reduce risk and support participation;

- supervision, staffing, environment, communication and de-escalation arrangements;
- clear action to take if risk escalates, including who to contact and thresholds for emergency or safeguarding referral;
- the learner's views, where appropriate, and how dignity, privacy and inclusion will be protected;
- who must read the plan, the date of review and any linked documents.

Individual risk assessments are not substitutes for safeguarding referrals, medical care plans, EHCP provision, behaviour support plans or multi-agency safety plans. They should complement those arrangements and be updated to reflect them.

9. Safeguarding within risk management

Staff must be alert to the fact that risk can arise from a learner's vulnerability as well as from their behaviour. In line with KCSIE, staff must adopt a child-centred approach, maintain an attitude of "it could happen here", and act on concerns rather than waiting for certainty.

Where safeguarding information is included in a risk assessment, it must be relevant, factual, necessary and handled securely. Staff must avoid speculative, stigmatising or unnecessarily detailed language. The assessment should identify practical protection measures, such as safer handover arrangements, increased supervision, controlled access to phones or online systems, planned check-ins, safe routes, safe collection arrangements, or referral to appropriate services.

Any allegation, disclosure or concern involving abuse, exploitation, sexual violence or harassment, peer-on-peer abuse, online abuse, radicalisation, missing education or a child at risk of significant harm must be reported immediately to the DSL and managed under the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Staff must not investigate concerns themselves or promise confidentiality to a learner.

10. Communication, recording and confidentiality

All documented risk assessments must be dated, version-controlled and stored in the central register or secure learner record as appropriate. Relevant staff must confirm that they have read and understood the assessment before carrying out the activity or working with the learner.

Individual plans should only be shared on a need-to-know basis. The Head of Provision and DSL will determine appropriate information-sharing with parents/carers, commissioners, schools and other agencies, taking account of safeguarding duties and data-protection requirements.

Risk assessments should be written in clear, practical language. They should identify actionable controls rather than simply repeating the hazard. For example, "learner will be supervised" is insufficient without stating who will supervise, when, in what context and what action they will take if the risk increases.

11. Review, monitoring and quality assurance

- Activity risk assessments: reviewed annually, after an incident or near miss, or whenever the activity, equipment, environment or learner group changes materially.
- Visit risk assessments: reviewed before every visit; a fresh assessment or planning record is required where the location, activity, group, travel or conditions materially differ.
- Individual risk assessments: reviewed at least termly, following any incident, disclosure, major change in circumstances, new professional advice or significant change in presentation.
- The Head of Provision reviews incident, near-miss, safeguarding and attendance information to identify patterns and improve controls.
- Staff training needs arising from risk assessment are recorded and acted upon.

12. Non-compliance

Failure to follow a relevant risk assessment or to report a significant change in risk may place people at harm and will be addressed through supervision, training or formal procedures as appropriate. Staff are expected to use professional judgement and may stop an activity immediately where they believe that risk is no longer acceptable.

13. Related documents and reference points

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Educational Visits Procedures
- Behaviour Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Medication Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Individual Healthcare Plans and EHCPs where applicable
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025
- Department for Education: Health and Safety on Educational Visits

Appendix A - Activity Risk Assessment Template

Use this template for activities where a written assessment is required. A generic assessment may be used for recurring activity, but must be reviewed and supplemented by dynamic assessment.

Activity		Location	
Lead		Date	
Participants / group		Linked individual plans	
Review date		Approved by	

Hazard / safeguarding risk	Who may be harmed?	Existing controls	L	I	Further actions / person responsible	Residual rating / review

Dynamic assessment / changes made on the day:

Lead signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix B - Visit Planning and Risk Assessment Checklist

Check	Completed / N/A	Notes or action required
Educational purpose and intended outcomes are clear.		
Visit lead and supporting staff are suitable, competent and appropriately briefed.		
Venue / provider has been checked; relevant safety and safeguarding information has been reviewed.		
Travel, route, meeting points, headcounts and return arrangements are planned.		
Supervision ratios and staff deployment are suitable for the group and activity.		
Individual learner needs and risk plans have been considered; reasonable adjustments are in place.		
Medical, dietary, medication, accessibility and first-aid arrangements are confirmed.		
Parent/carers consent, emergency contacts and key information have been obtained where required.		
Safeguarding arrangements, staff conduct, changing facilities, photography and public-contact risks have been considered.		
Emergency procedures, communication, lost-child arrangements and contingency plans are clear.		
Risk assessment and required senior approval are complete before departure.		
Staff and learners have been briefed; key contact information is carried during the visit.		

Visit lead: _____ Date: _____ Approved by: _____ Date: _____

Appendix C - Individual Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan

This plan must be completed in a respectful, factual and non-stigmatising manner. It should be read alongside relevant safeguarding, medical, EHCP and behaviour documentation.

Learner name		DOB / year group	
Plan lead		DSL consulted?	Yes / No
Parent/carer involved?	Yes / No / Not appropriate	Date completed	
Linked plans / professional advice		Review date	
People who must read this plan		Confidentiality level	Need to know
Learner voice recorded?	Yes / No	Emergency contacts	

Risk / concern and context	Triggers / early signs	Protective factors and adjustments	Staff response and escalation arrangements	Review / evidence of effectiveness

If there is an immediate danger to the learner or another person, follow emergency and safeguarding procedures. Do not rely on this document alone.

Plan lead signature: _____ Head of Provision / DSL sign-off: _____

Appendix D - Risk Matrix

Likelihood (L) and impact (I) are both scored from 1 to 5. Multiply $L \times I$ to calculate the risk score.

Impact / Likelihood	1 Rare	2 Unlikely	3 Possible	4 Likely	5 Almost certain
5 Catastrophic	5	10	15	20	25
4 Major	4	8	12	16	20
3 Moderate	3	6	9	12	15
2 Minor	2	4	6	8	10
1 Negligible	1	2	3	4	5

Risk categories: 1-3 Low: manage through routine controls. 4-7 Moderate: record and monitor controls. 8-14 Significant: additional controls and management oversight required. 15-25 High: do not proceed until risk has been reduced and senior approval is given.

Professional judgement always applies. Any safeguarding risk that indicates a child may be at risk of significant harm must be referred immediately, regardless of a numerical score.