

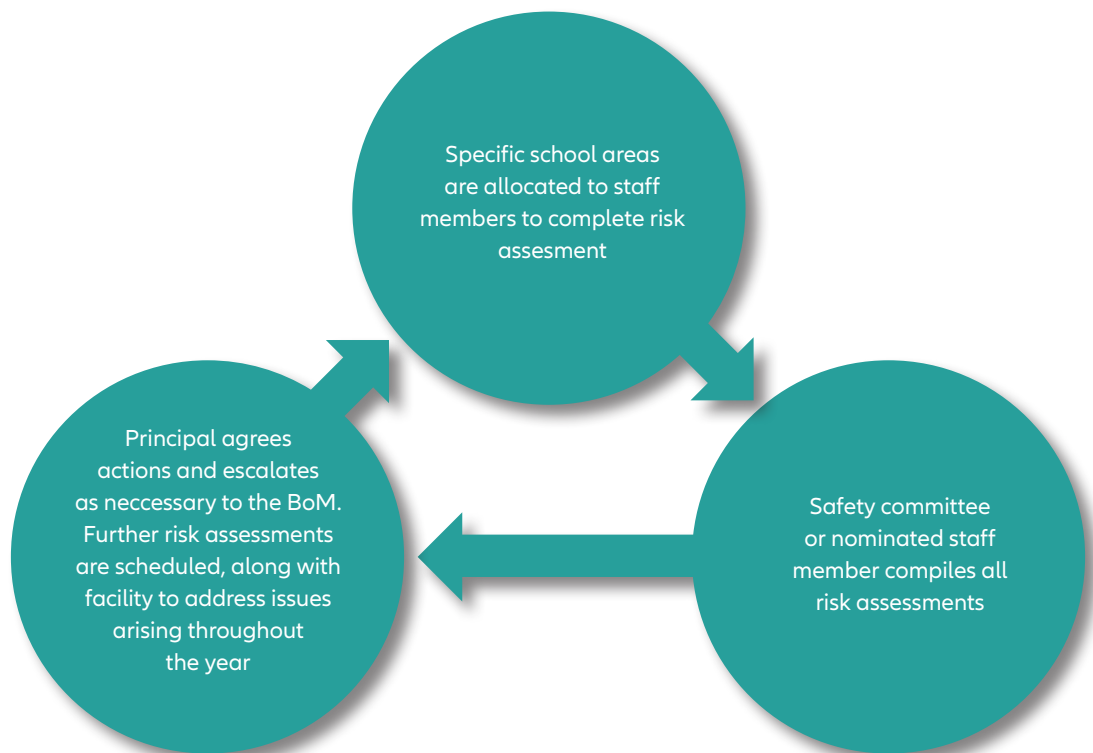


Allianz Secondary School Risk Assessment

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It is a legal requirement for a school to compile a safety statement. The schools board of management have the ultimate responsibility to ensure this is complete and that they create a safe environment for all users of the school. Therefore health and safety should be an ever present item on the board of managements agenda. All members of staff have responsibility for health and safety in the school and the school needs to have processes and structures in place to facilitate staff members to adhere to their responsibilities.

A key component of a schools safety statement and safety structure is the periodic completion of risk assessments. A risk assessment is essentially the identification of hazards and then suitable assessment of these risks with the intention to eliminate, reduce and control the risks. The diagram below illustrates a simple structure schools can implement in order to ensure all areas of the school are reviewed and all staff members are involved.



In this booklet we have identified a number of recurring hazards that we have seen in school settings throughout the country. The following scenarios aim to give schools a flavour of what to look out for and address.

Classroom

Hot liquids should not be brought outside of the staff room in open mugs. The school may decide to allow securely sealed travel mugs.

Loose cables should be secured along the wall.

Untidy & overstacked shelves are a clear danger. Items should never be stored on top of shelving units.

Posters should only be hung at a reachable height using a 2-step ladder and not a table or chair.

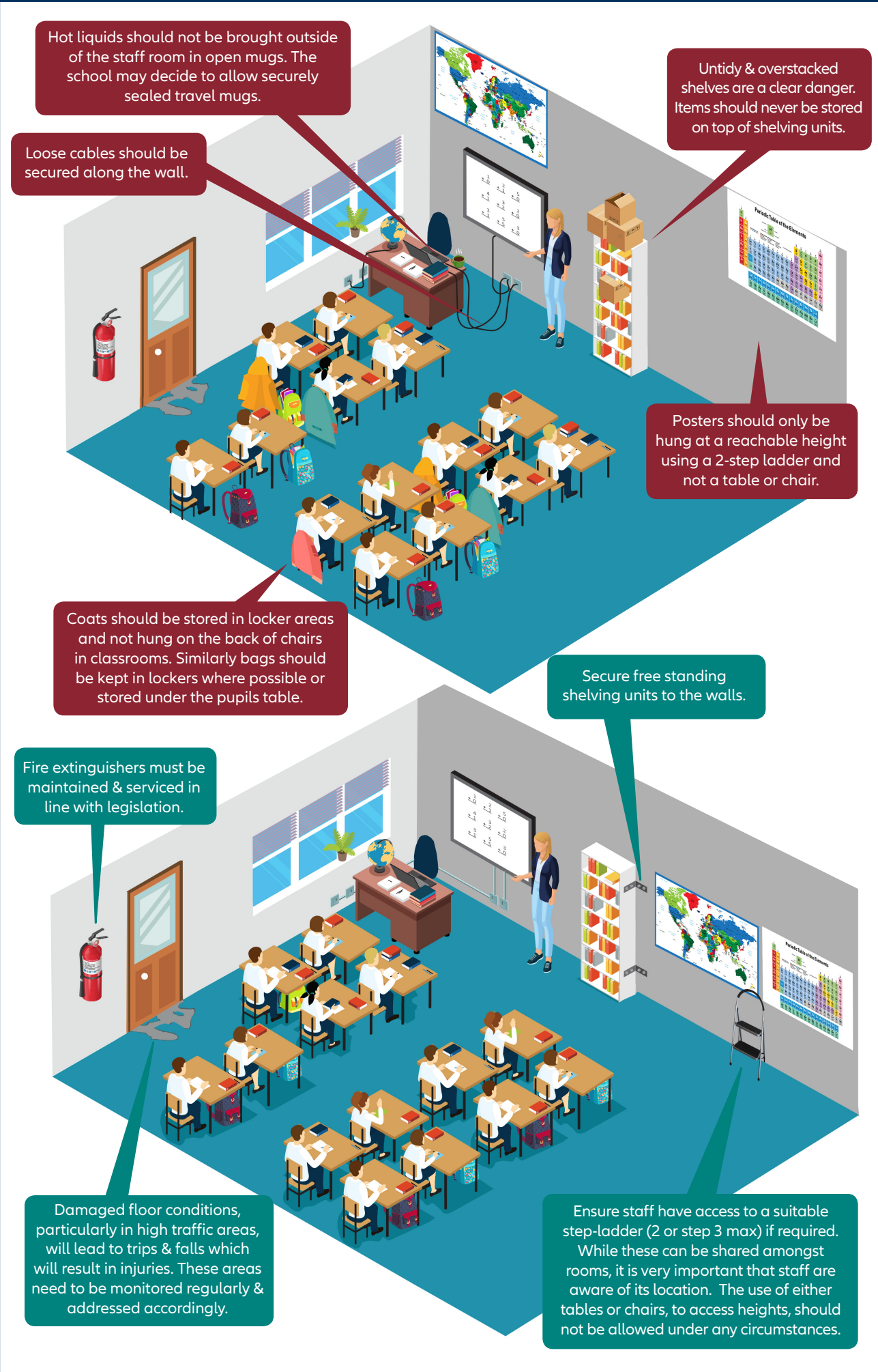
Coats should be stored in locker areas and not hung on the back of chairs in classrooms. Similarly bags should be kept in lockers where possible or stored under the pupils table.

Secure free standing shelving units to the walls.

Fire extinguishers must be maintained & serviced in line with legislation.

Damaged floor conditions, particularly in high traffic areas, will lead to trips & falls which will result in injuries. These areas need to be monitored regularly & addressed accordingly.

Ensure staff have access to a suitable step-ladder (2 or step 3 max) if required. While these can be shared amongst rooms, it is very important that staff are aware of its location. The use of either tables or chairs, to access heights, should not be allowed under any circumstances.



Staffroom & office area

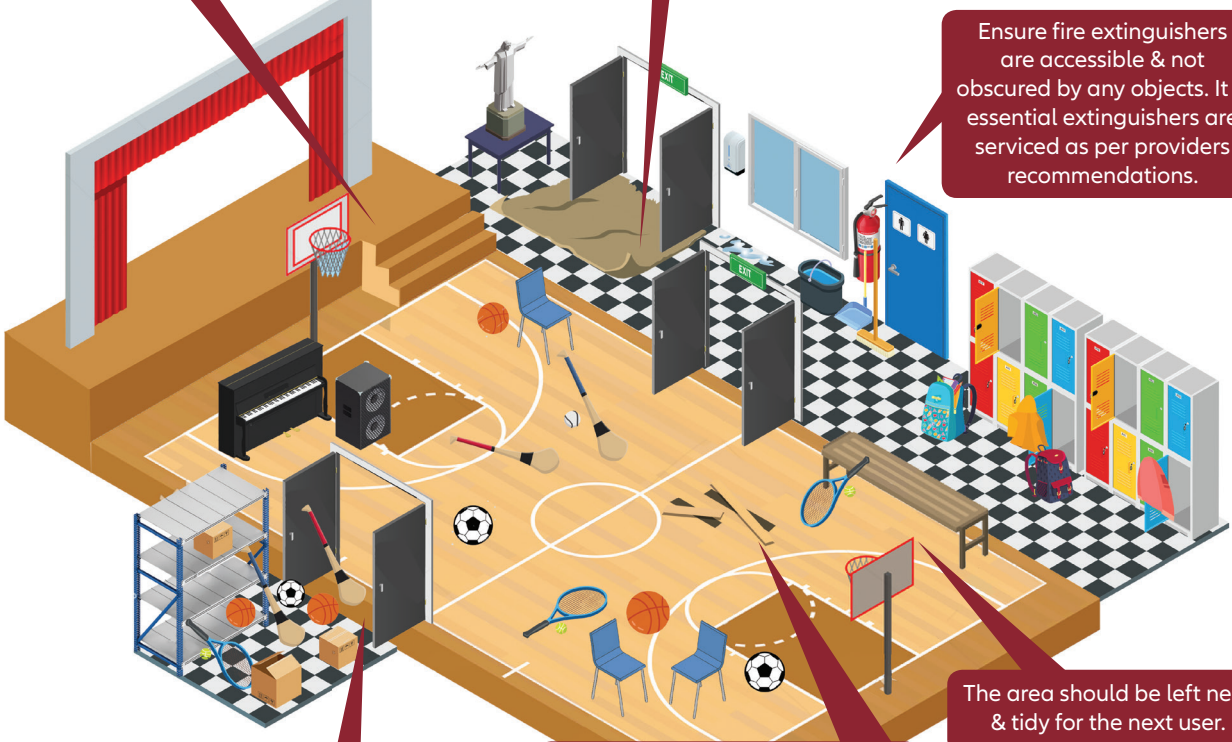


Sports hall & corridors

Steps more than 1.5 metres wide or with 3 or more steps regardless of width, should have handrails fitted.

Damaged or upturned mats create a significant trip hazard.

Ensure fire extinguishers are accessible & not obscured by any objects. It is essential extinguishers are serviced as per providers recommendations.



Storage areas need to be tidy & accessible.

Regularly inspect the condition of the sports hall floor & promptly address any defects.

The area should be left neat & tidy for the next user.

Statues & school /class work projects & themes should be secured. Strong consideration should be given to their placement in social areas to ensure they do not cause an obstruction and impede safe exit from the School in an emergency.

Ensure any sanitization stations cater for spillages.

Toilet areas need to be regularly checked, with particular attention to any spillages. All checks should be recorded.



Non-sporting items, chairs & benches should be removed from the playing area when being used for sports activities.

Review basketball poles & consider is padding required to reduce risk of injury in the event of a collision.

Ensure corridors are free of clutter & locker areas are kept neat & tidy in order to allow safe movement of pupils & staff.

Science classroom

Fire extinguishers must not be obstructed & must be maintained in line with legislation. The relevant fire extinguisher types must be in place within the science lab.

Teachers & students must wear all appropriate PPE (personal protective equipment) for the lesson at that particular time.

Chemical store room must be well ventilated. Chemicals should be segregated, labelled correctly & not stored above eye-level. Safety data sheets (SDS) must be readily available & an up to date inventory should be maintained, along with safe disposal procedures.

Only chemicals & equipment relevant to the class at that particular moment should be on the table, & removed prior to next experiment/class.

All cracked, damaged and or broken glassware or equipment should be removed from use immediately. Any broken glass or spillage should be cleaned immediately in line with cleaning processes within the lab. Glassware must be cleaned thoroughly after use.

Ensure first aid arrangements are in place & contact notice for emergency services, national poisons centre etc. is present & up to date.

Ensure the gas isolation switch is unobstructed & readily available for staff to access in an emergency.

Access to the lab must be controlled & should be locked when not in use. Ensure only authorised personnel have access to the chemical storage room, & that it is locked at all other times.

Use of the fume cupboard must be supervised at all times. It must be fit for purpose, inspected as required, with maintenance records kept.

Standard procedure should be to shut-off gas at the end of each class & gas supply should be isolated during holiday periods. Gas installations must be maintained in line with manufacturers guidelines.

General lab rules need to be communicated & adhered to by students. Clear communication on the risks of equipment (in particular bunsen burners), experiments & relevant sections of SDS must be conveyed to students.

There should be a specific bin, with no liner, to dispose of broken glass safely. Broken glass disposed of in bin liners can lead to cuts & injury when the person picking up the bag is unaware of the contents.

Ensure all tools & equipment are only plugged into a circuit protected by a residual current device (RCD). Fixed electrical installations should be inspected periodically also.

Good housekeeping is essential. Equipment should have its own place, repaired promptly if broken or faulty & the room should be cleaned after every class. An up to date inventory of equipment should be maintained also.

Store room must be kept neat & tidy. Teachers, & pupils if allowed, must be able to access, & work safely within, required area.

Ensure that machines that require emergency stop controls have appropriate versions fitted. The emergency stop control must be more prominent than the start control, easily accessible and not obstructed in any way.

No unauthorised use of hand held power tools allowed & teachers should ensure supervised use when necessary. Tools should be clearly identified as "Teacher use only" where applicable.

Ensure all tools are fitted with the necessary safety guards & covers. This is absolutely essential. Equipment should never be used, by teachers or pupils, without recommended guards/covers. Safe areas should be marked out around equipment.

Non-powered tools need to be regularly inspected such as checking hammer heads & saw blades are secured, chisels in good condition, etc.

All fixed or portable power tools should be visually inspected/ tested, maintained & serviced in line with manufacturers guidelines. Cables for fixed tools need to be secured to the wall, & also regularly inspected. Defective power tools should be marked as defective & removed from use immediately until competently repaired.

Teachers should ensure rules are understood & adhered to, & the teacher should supervise work stations appropriately. Appropriate PPE must be worn, ties & loose jewellery removed & long hair tied up.

Art classroom



Shelves must be kept tidy to allow safe access. Chairs & tables should never be used to access high points. Hanging items must have a safe system to access.

Ensure all necessary fire extinguisher types are available & clearly accessible.

Teachers must have control over kilns & other hot equipment. Kilns should be interlocked to prevent opening during operation, & it must be maintained & used in line with manufacturers recommendations.

Ensure access routes for emergency exits are clear at all times.

An inventory of equipment, particularly sharp tools & blades, should be kept & monitored, with a procedure for pupils accessing & returning such equipment in place. During washing, blades & knives should never be left to soak in a sink as someone else will not know what is in there.

Defective equipment must be removed until competently repaired. Equipment for "teacher use only" should be clearly labelled.

Safety data sheets (SDS) for hazardous chemicals, glazes & other liquids must be retained & accessible, while PPE must be used as per SDS. The least hazardous products should be purchased. All products should be labelled & stored in line with SDS, with solvents & flammables stored in secure metal containers. Access must be controlled & up to date procedures for safe control & disposal of chemicals must be kept.

Materials, equipment & paints/oils/glues should all have their own segregated storage area. An inventory of equipment & oils/chemicals should be kept.

Blades should be kept sharp & in good condition in order to reduce students using excessive force thus increasing the chance of injury. General classroom rules & safety steps such as cutting away from your body & not trying to catch a falling blade must be communicated to pupils.

The room should be kept neat & tidy with a clean as you go policy in place. Waste material must be disposed of safely, with broken glass disposed of in its own bin, with no liner. A suitable vacuum should be used to remove clay dust, sweeping is not recommended. Cleaners should also be made aware of this.

Damaged fencing, especially those that curl up at the bottom, should be repaired/replaced. These cause a tripping hazard to pupils especially when playing games.

Car park should be for school staff & visitors only. Students that drive should not be permitted to park in the school car park.

Any set of 3 or more steps or any steps 1.5m or wider should have handrails fitted.

Ensure manhole covers, drain caps and the likes are secured. Any damaged or missing caps must be replaced.

Ensure users of gardening equipment are adequately trained & have necessary PPE. Ride-on mowers require their own insurance policy.

The grounds of the school should be free of loose objects or old equipment. If the items are still required they should be securely stored, otherwise they should be disposed of.

Safe & appropriate use of facilities must be implemented.

Schools should consider replacing old oil tanks & those that are not "bunded". The connections & pipes must be replaced as required. Furthermore schools are encouraged to secure their oil & LPG tanks, along with securing gas cylinders in cages.

Secure & lock sports facilities where possible to deter unauthorised use outside of school time.

Bins should be stored in a secured location, away from the school building, to help prevent vandalism. This area should be kept neat & tidy with equipment disposed of promptly.

Oil boilers must be fitted with an automatic fire extinguisher over the burner unit. Access should be restricted & there should be no storage of flammable/combustible materials.

Schools should never allow pupils access roofs to retrieve balls. Only safe forms of access should be allowed for contractors & employees who have been provided with "work at height" training.

All surfaces should be fit for purpose. Crumbling tarmac, disjointed concrete sections, slippery/mossy ground & rough playing fields should be addressed appropriately. Goalposts must meet relevant safety standards & portable goals should be anchored.

Timber products such as benches, tables, flowerbeds etc. should be inspected at least once a term to ensure they are in good condition and don't have any rusty or protruding nails/screws/splinters. This inspection should be recorded.

Other areas to consider:



Safety statements: The school has a legal obligation to have a written safety statement in place and to implement and monitor any safety measures identified in the safety statement. The safety statement must be up to date and available to all and should include risk assessments. It should show that hazards have been identified with risks assessed and eliminated or controlled. The Health and Safety Authority have free-to-access guidelines in relation to safety statements, risk assessments and also provide on-line training modules, www.hsa.ie.



Training records: Records of all training carried out should be maintained and kept up to date for each individual staff member.



School security: Schools should regularly review security measures to prevent unauthorised members of the general public accessing the premises either by vehicle or foot. Gates should be locked after school, and signs should be put in place discouraging members of the public accessing the school.



CCTV: Some schools may need to consider CCTV to help prevent trespassing and vandalism. Where CCTV is installed, appropriate signage advising same must be clearly visible, and the school should have a CCTV policy in place.



Control of contractors: School management should require any contractor employed by them to provide written confirmation that they are in possession of suitable and adequate liability insurance cover. A minimum limit of indemnity of €6.5 million is recommended for Public Liability and €13m for Employers Liability. Formal risk assessments and supporting method statements should be requested from contractors for any significant contracts and/or contracts involving significant hazards. For work involving any application of heat, school management or project management must request a copy of the contractors written Hot Works Permit. This should set out necessary safety precautions to be taken.



Emergency lighting: Schools should consider the need to install emergency lighting. Existing systems need to be inspected and maintained to ensure they remain in line with current regulations. All exits from the building must be clearly identified with the appropriate signage.

Its recommended to run a fire drill every term in order to practice a safe exit in the event of an emergency and identify any potential issues. Results should be recorded.



Fire doors: Where fire doors are installed, schools will sometimes clip open in order to facilitate the free flow of students and to assist those students with physical difficulties etc. The school should discuss this process with the fire wardens and look to install magnetic clips connected to fire alarms or procedures to ensure the doors close in the event of a fire alarm activation.

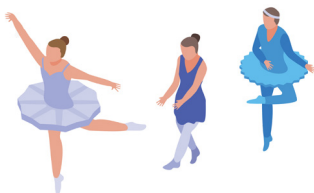
Fire detection and prevention: Schools should consider automatic fire detection and alarm system if not already in place. Any defects or faults with existing systems should be addressed without delay.

Fire extinguisher training: Staff members should be trained how to use fire extinguishers at the school and shown the correct type of extinguisher to use on the different types of fires. In the event of a fire, staff should only use the extinguisher when safe to do so, and prioritise their own safety.

Third party providers: The school should ensure that they have confirmation of adequate insurance for all third party providers (travel, catering, IT, cleaning etc.). Confirmation from their insurers should be produced and examined by the school annually to ensure the necessary insurances are in place.



Third party use of school facilities: School management must ensure that all external groups who use the school facilities (e.g. the sports hall, classrooms, sports facilities) have suitable liability insurances in place. Copies of insurance documents for each group should be requested on an annual basis, along with written confirmation the group have their own child safeguarding procedures in place if dealing with minors (do not request a copy of the procedures). It is best practice for schools to have lease agreements in place with all third party users.



Completing a risk assessment

Completing a risk assessment may seem daunting to a teacher or staff member who has not completed one previously. Ultimately staff members are best placed to complete the risk assessment as they are the ones who know the school building best, its quirks, its nuances and how staff, pupils and visitors interact with it.

Providing a template to staff members to complete the risk assessment is a simple but important step. A standard template adds consistency throughout the school if all staff members are completing the same form.

There is no correct or incorrect format or template to completing a risk assessment but there are essential components that should be included in your template.

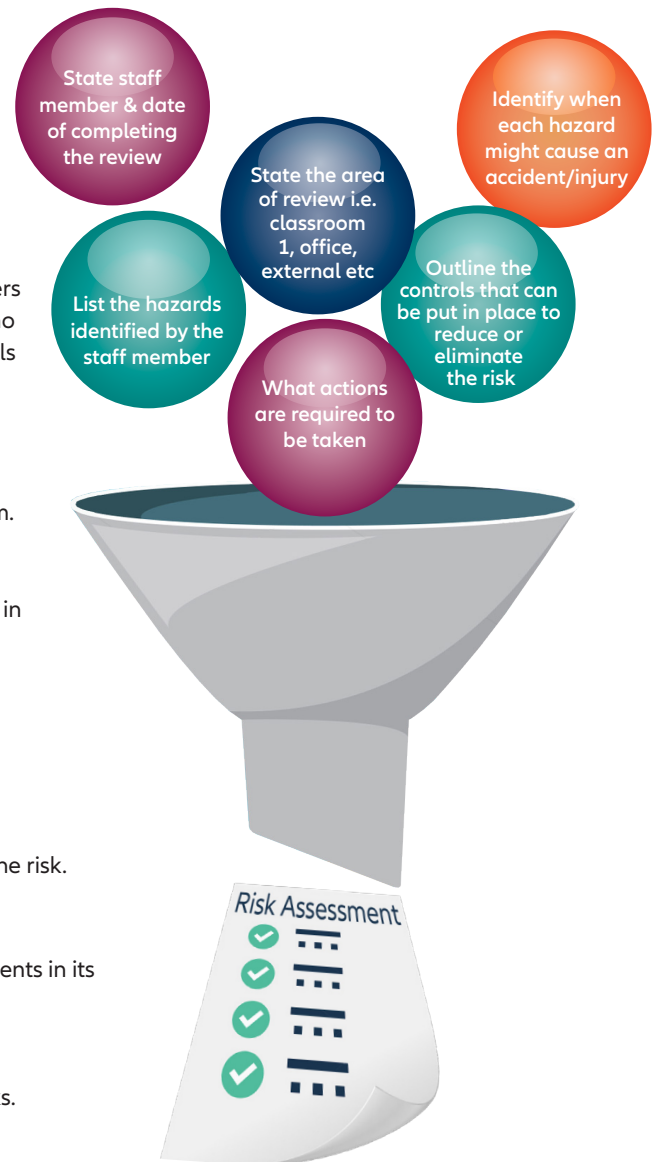
- State the area of review i.e. classroom 1*, office, external etc.
- State staff member and date of completing the review.
- List the hazards identified by the staff member.
- Identify when each hazard might cause an accident/injury.
- Outline the controls that can be put in place to reduce or eliminate the risk.
- What actions are required to be taken.

The HSA website has lots of useful information and sample risk assessments in its dedicated Education section, <https://www.hsa.ie/eng/Education>

*Where individual risk assessments are completed on classrooms, its acceptable to combine these into one risk assessment identifying all risks.

A simple example is as follows:

Area: Classroom 1	Date: xx/xx/xxxx	Staff member: John Doe	
Hazard identified	Who is at risk & when	Controls	Action required
Mat at door is upturned & torn	Anyone entering the room is at risk of tripping	Remove the mat immediately as it cannot be repaired	Mat to be removed, disposed & replaced. All staff to be aware of the danger damaged mats pose, and notify a nominated person if they identify an issue
Area: External	Date: xx/xx/xxxx	Staff member: Jane Doe	
Hazard identified	Who is at risk & when	Controls	Action required
Discarded & broken equipment left unsecured on site	Pupils/Staff may be injured if in the area. Vandals may use to damage or access the buildings.	Process in place to ensure discarded/broken equipment is secured & then removed promptly.	Process is communicated as required & continually adhered too.



We hope you find this guide to be helpful and useful when completing your own risk assessment.
If you have any questions please contact your local Allianz representative
(details can be found at <https://www.allianz.ie/products/schools/schools-insurance/Localrepresentatives.html>).
If you are insured through an insurance intermediary, please contact them for assistance.

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