

PRIMARY SCHOOL RISK ASSESSMENT

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT SCHOOLS IDENTIFY THE RISKS AND HAZARDS PRESENT IN THEIR SCHOOL. THIS IS A LEGAL REQUIREMENT UNDER THE HEALTH, SAFETY & WELFARE AT WORK ACT 2005 AND IT IS INCUMBENT ON YOUR BOARD OF MANAGEMENT TO ENSURE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL SCHOOL USERS.

To assist you with the completion of such an assessment we have outlined some of the areas of concerns and the typical advice we would provide.

Internal	Risk Review Comments
Working at Height:	A procedure for working at height within classrooms should be established and communicated to all relevant staff. The use of a suitable step ladder(s) should be available and use of same compulsory. Examples of such would be hanging posters or accessing high shelving
Shelving/Storage:	Teachers/Employees should be advised not to store heavy items on or near the top of storage shelves. These should be stored from the bottom up. Shelving needs to be kept tidy to prevent items falling. Free standing shelving in hallways/classrooms should be reviewed & secured where possible to prevent it capsizing onto a pupil.
Cleaning Supplies Room:	The cleaning supplies room should be locked at all times when not in use.
Mats:	Mats in the school should be regularly checked to ensure they are not becoming unravelled or upturned and therefore a trip hazard. Furthermore, embedded mats need to be monitored to ensure a "lip" does not develop between the mat & floor, again becoming a trip hazard.
Clear Corridors:	The corridors should be free from tables, chairs and other such objects that could impede safe exit from the building in an emergency.
Fire Extinguishers:	An annual service contract on your fire extinguishers is required. You should request training from the company who service the fire extinguishers which should be provided at little or no cost when they are carrying out the regular service.
Toilet Floors:	It is important that toilet floors are checked at least once a day for surface water and the checks are recorded. We see a lot of claims for slips on wet bathroom floors and in order to defend them adequately the school needs to be able to prove they are taking reasonable precautions in this regard.
Hot Drinks from Staff room:	The first aid kit should be close to the staffroom and each member of staff should know where it is. Staff should not take hot drinks outside of the staff room unless they are in suitable containers with secured lids
PE Hall:	The PE Hall should be cleared of objects such as benches, tables, etc. in advance of use.
Floor Condition:	The floor in the school should be checked to ensure there are no uneven areas/broken tiles/cracked vinyl etc. that may cause a trip and fall.
Classroom Tidiness:	Floor area of classrooms should be kept free of clutter including school bags, PE bags etc.
Manual Handling Courses:	You should ensure that employees that are required to perform tasks that require lifting/moving objects have completed a manual handling course.
Fire Doors:	Fire Doors should not be held open as it renders them useless in the event of a fire. Modern fire alarms systems are linked to doors by magnets and these are ideal and facilitate doors remaining open during the day.
Electrical Inspection::	It is recommended that a full inspection of the electrical installations be carried out by a qualified electrician (a member of RECI or ECSSA) and an appropriate certificate issued once every five years. Any defects in the installation found by the electrician and/or any recommendations made by the electrical contractor must be rectified and/or implemented immediately.

External	Risk Review Comments
Bins:	Refuse and recycling bins should be kept in a secure compound or alternatively secured by a padlock and chained to a post sited no less than ten metres from the building. This will prevent them being moved against the building and set alight or used as climbing aids.
Step Nosing:	The nosing on steps should be painted using a non-slip coating in order to highlight changing levels. Gloss paint should not be used as it will make the surface slippery under wet conditions.
Gutters/drains:	Ensure the gutters & drains are free from a build up of debris and leaves to ensure they can work to their optimum during periods of heavy rain.
Surface Condition: (Concrete/Tarmac)	Large concrete tiles – These need to be monitored as they are susceptible to breaking up and sinking over time. When they break up around the edges of the tiles or one tile sinks, a trip and fall hazard is created. Tarmac surface – Tarmac surface need to be checked and monitored to ensure they do not break up into loose stone over time causing trip and fall hazards.
Timber Benches & Flowerbeds:	Timber benches & flower beds should be checked regularly to ensure they are not becoming rotted or developing splinters. These checks should be documented yearly also.
Goal Posts & Pitch Condition:	The goal posts should be checked regularly to ensure they are in a good state of repair, adequately anchored into the ground and safe to use. The field should be checked regularly for pot holes, rough areas and large stones to reduce the possibility of injury.
Basketball Poles:	The upright stands for the basketball rings should be padded with rubber or similar type material to soften impact in the event of someone falling against them. These should be checked regularly to ensure they remain at a sufficient height.
Drain/Manhole Coverings:	Drain covers & manhole covers need to be monitored to ensure they do not become a trip hazard when lose, jagged or upturned.
Playground Equipment:	Playground – Your playground should be included in your schools safety statement along with procedures and protocols surrounding its safe operation and supervision. It is essential the playground complies with the relevant safety standards EN1176 & EN1177 for playground equipment and surface. Certification of compliance should be sought from the installers if the school do not currently have these records. If the installer cannot supply certification of same, then the school should strongly consider requesting RoSPA to review, and certify if possible.
Boiler Room:	To reduce the risk of fire in the event of malfunction, combustible items must be removed from the boiler room and if still required stored safely elsewhere or otherwise suitably disposed of.
Step Handrails	Where there are three or more steps, it is a requirement of current building regulations that those which are up to 1m in width, should have a single handrail fitted and that any steps wider than this should have at least two handrails fitted at either side.
Oil Tanks:	Oil tanks should be provided with a bund enclosure capable of containing 110% of the maximum contents of the oil container. The bund base and walls must be impermeable to water and oil and be checked regularly for leaks. There should be no drains or outlets within the bund. Rainwater should be pumped out periodically and contaminated water disposed of safely. Any taps and pipe work should be lockable to prevent tampering and a drip tray container beneath the tap to collect drips is advisable.
Window Openings:	PVC windows which open outwards into the yard should be fitted with locks to prevent them from being opened wider than the recess of the window so that people cannot walk into them when opened.
Gap under Pre-Fab:	The gap between the underside of the pre-fabricated building and the ground beneath should be blocked off to prevent access underneath.

This is not an exhaustive list of all hazards but does encompass the major hazards we generally encounter in Schools. As referenced in our Local Service Article, your Local Allianz School Representative is happy to assist in this process.

If you have any queries in relation to the contents of this article, please contact our School Support Team at 01 6133966 / education@allianz.ie, Your Local Allianz Schools Representative or your Insurance Intermediary.