

RISK ASSESSMENT · UNITED KINGDOM · 2026

School Premises Risk Assessment

UK template for a whole-school premises risk assessment — DfE responsibilities and duties for schools, Education (School Premises) Regulations and HSE sector guidance.

A school premises risk assessment is the document Ofsted, the local authority and the academy trust's responsible body all expect to see on inspection. It sits under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, but in practice it is shaped by the DfE's 'Health and safety: responsibilities and duties for schools' guidance and the HSE's sector pages for education. The document has to cover the building, the grounds, the people on site (pupils, staff, contractors, visitors) and the activities that happen during and outside the school day.

Document structure a reviewer expects

- 1. Duty holder and employer**
Name the employer (LA / trust / proprietor), the headteacher and the responsible governor / trustee for H&S.;
- 2. Site coverage map**
List every building, zone and external area covered — classrooms, labs, DT, PE, kitchens, playground, plant, pool, perimeter.
- 3. Hazards by zone**
For each zone, identify hazards, people at risk by age band, existing controls and residual risk.
- 4. Safeguarding integration**
Cross-reference KCSIE, the safeguarding policy, lockdown / invacuation procedure and unauthorised-access controls.
- 5. Statutory inspections**
Legionella (HSG274 Pt 2), LOLER, fixed electrical (EAWR / BS 7671 EICR), gas (Gas Safety Regs), fire risk assessment (RRO 2005).
- 6. Contractor management**
CDM 2015 duties for any construction works, permit-to-work for hot works / roof access, contractor sign-in and DBS arrangements.
- 7. Incident data review**
Reference the school's accident book and near-miss log; demonstrate the assessment has been informed by real data.
- 8. Educational visits and off-site activity**
Reference DfE 'Health and safety on educational visits' and the school's EVC / OEAP arrangements.
- 9. Action plan and review cycle**
Open actions with named owners and target dates; annual review minimum, sooner after any RIDDOR-reportable incident.

Common reasons reviewers reject this document

- Wrong employer named — academy trust vs local authority confusion invalidates the insurance and RIDDOR routes.
- Generic template with no reference to the school's own incident log or named zones.
- Lockdown / invacuation procedure missing — Ofsted now expects this in any modern school setting.
- Legionella risk assessment older than 24 months or no scheme of control.
- LOLER register missing for stage equipment, lifts, hoists or PE apparatus.
- No named action owners or target dates — open actions sit in the document indefinitely.

UK regulation reference

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 1974 c.37

Primary statute — employer duty under s.2, duty to non-employees (pupils, visitors) under s.3.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/37/contents>

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 SI 1999/3242

Regulation 3 — the explicit duty to carry out and record a suitable and sufficient risk assessment.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1999/3242/contents/made>

Education (School Premises) Regulations 2012 SI 2012/1943

Sets minimum standards for school premises — washing, drainage, lighting, acoustics, structural condition.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/1943/contents/made>

DfE — Health and safety: responsibilities and duties for schools DfE guidance

The operational reference for headteachers, governors and trust H&S; leads.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-advice-for-schools>

DfE — Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) DfE statutory guidance

Statutory safeguarding guidance — must be cross-referenced for unauthorised access, lockdown and pupil welfare controls.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

HSG274 Part 2 — Legionnaires' disease: hot and cold water systems HSE HSG274/2

Scheme of control for the school's water system.

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg274.htm>

Frequently asked questions

How often does a school premises risk assessment need to be reviewed?

Annually as a minimum, and immediately after any RIDDOR-reportable incident, any significant change to the building or use (new classroom, building works, change of catering provider), or any change of headteacher or responsible governor. A document older than 12 months is the single most common adverse finding on local authority H&S; audits.

Does an academy trust need a separate assessment for each school?

Yes. Each school is a distinct premises with its own zones, incident history and statutory inspection register. The trust can provide a common template and central oversight, but the assessment itself has to be site-specific. A single trust-wide document is rejected by most insurers and would not satisfy MHSWR reg 3.

Who can sign off a school premises risk assessment?

The competent person under MHSWR reg 7 — typically the headteacher with input from the trust / LA H&S; adviser, a CMIOASH-qualified safety practitioner, or a sector specialist (CLEAPSS for science, afPE for PE). Final approval sits with the employer's named representative (CEO of the trust, director of children's services, or proprietor).

Does the assessment need to cover wraparound care and lettings?

Yes. Any activity on the school premises — breakfast club, after-school club, holiday club, community lettings, sports club hire — is in scope. The assessment should name who the duty holder is for each non-school-day use and how the boundary of responsibility is documented in the hire agreement.

Do I need a separate fire risk assessment as well?

Yes. The fire risk assessment is a distinct legal duty under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and post-Grenfell the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022. The premises risk assessment cross-references it but does not replace it.

Need a finished version of this document?

Riskora generates a sign-off ready risk assessment in about 5 minutes — UK-aligned, hierarchy of controls baked in, versioned and exportable. Free 7-day trial at riskora.cloud.

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