Risk Assessment Policy

Grass Roots Nursery Group

1. Purpose

This policy outlines Grass Roots Nursery Group's approach to identifying, assessing, managing, and reviewing risks across all areas of the setting. It ensures that children, staff, parents, and visitors experience a safe, well-managed environment where risks are understood, minimised, and balanced with opportunities for learning, independence, and exploration.

This is a practitioner-facing document.

2. Statutory Responsibilities (EYFS & Legislation)

Our approach reflects the statutory requirements of:

- **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)** – Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements
- **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974**
- **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**
- **Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002**
- **Fire Safety Order 2005**
- **Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR)**

We are legally required to ensure that:

- risks are identified and managed
- children are kept safe
- staff follow safe systems of work
- risk assessments are recorded, reviewed, and acted upon

3. Our Approach

Practitioners at Grass Roots Nursery Group are expected to:

- understand and follow all risk assessments relevant to their role
- complete dynamic risk assessments throughout the day
- report hazards immediately
- support children to take safe, appropriate risks
- maintain safe environments indoors and outdoors
- contribute to the review and improvement of risk assessments

Leaders ensure staff receive training, supervision, and support to manage risk confidently and competently.

4. Key Principles

Safety First

Children's safety and wellbeing are the highest priority.

Proportionate Risk Management

We balance safety with opportunities for challenge, independence, and exploration.

Risk–Benefit Thinking

We recognise that some risks are developmentally beneficial and support learning.

Shared Responsibility

All staff contribute to identifying, reporting, and managing risks.

Continuous Review

Risk assessments are living documents that evolve with practice, environment, and children's needs.

5. Types of Risk Assessments Covered by This Policy

This policy applies to all risk assessments across the setting, including:

Premises & Environment

- indoor areas
- outdoor play areas
- allotment and garden spaces
- sleep rooms
- kitchens and food preparation areas
- toilets and changing areas

Activities & Provision

- outdoor play
- outdoor adventuring
- messy play and sensory activities
- water play
- cooking and food activities
- use of tools and equipment

Outings & Transport

- local walks
- public transport
- planned visits

Health & Safety

- fire safety
- emergency evacuation
- COSHH
- manual handling
- infection control

Children's Individual Needs

- SEND adjustments
- medical needs
- behaviour support
- allergies and intolerances

6. Risk Assessment Process

All risk assessments follow the same five-step process:

1. **Identify hazards**
2. **Decide who may be harmed and how**

3. **Evaluate risks and decide on control measures**
4. **Record findings and implement actions**
5. **Review and update regularly**

Risk assessments are written in clear, accessible language and stored where staff can easily access them.

7. Dynamic Risk Assessment

Dynamic risk assessment is the ongoing, in-the-moment process staff use to:

- scan the environment
- anticipate hazards
- respond to changes (weather, behaviour, equipment, group size)
- adapt activities to maintain safety

Examples include:

- removing a slippery log during outdoor play
- adjusting an activity if a child becomes distressed
- changing the route during a local walk
- pausing an activity due to sudden weather changes

Dynamic risk assessment is a core part of daily practice.

8. Risk–Benefit Assessment

We recognise that some activities involve **beneficial risk**, particularly in:

- outdoor play
- outdoor adventuring
- physical development
- tool use
- nature-based learning

Risk–benefit assessments consider:

- the developmental value of the activity
- the potential hazards
- the control measures needed
- how staff will support children to take safe risks

This approach supports confidence, resilience, independence, and problem-solving.

9. Staff Responsibilities

All staff must:

- read and understand relevant risk assessments
- follow control measures consistently
- complete dynamic risk assessments
- report hazards immediately to the Manager
- record incidents or near misses
- contribute to reviews and updates

The Manager is responsible for:

- approving all risk assessments
- ensuring staff training
- monitoring compliance
- escalating concerns to the provider or external agencies if required

10. Frequency of Risk Assessment Reviews

Risk assessments are reviewed:

- **annually** as standard
- **termly** for high-risk areas (e.g., outdoor adventuring, outdoor play)
- **after any incident or near miss**
- **when new equipment or activities are introduced**
- **when children with new needs join the setting**
- **when environmental changes occur**

11. Recording and Documentation

We maintain:

- written risk assessments for all areas and activities
- daily checklists for indoor and outdoor environments
- dynamic risk assessment notes (where relevant)
- incident and near-miss records
- COSHH records
- fire safety logs
- maintenance and repair logs

All documentation is stored securely and reviewed regularly.

12. Training

Staff receive training in:

- risk assessment principles
- dynamic risk assessment
- risk–benefit thinking
- fire safety and evacuation
- manual handling
- COSHH
- infection control
- outdoor play and outdoor adventuring safety

Training is refreshed annually or sooner if required.

13. Links to Other Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Outdoor Play and Physical Development Policy
- Outdoor Adventuring Policy
- Outings & Visits Policy
- Fire Safety and Emergency Evacuation Policy
- Infection Control Policy

- Behaviour and Emotional Wellbeing Policy
- Inclusion and SEND Policy

These policies work together to ensure a safe, well-managed environment.

14. Review Cycle

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required due to changes in legislation, guidance, or following an incident.