

School grounds focus:

- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to be?
- How can we get there?
- Making the changes

Curriculum focus:

- This activity could be carried out as part of PSE / Citizenship lessons, or as a Technology activity. It is adaptable to a wide age and ability range, depending on the amount of adult involvement.

Purpose of this activity:

- To introduce pupils to thoughtful assessments of risk and how they can be managed.
- To carry out risk assessments on current or planned school grounds features or activities.

Equipment / materials needed:

- Depending on the age of the children, you might want each pupil or group of pupils to have a copy of the sheet overleaf, or you might use one copy for the adult leading the activity.

Preparation:

- Introduce the idea of risk to the pupils at a level suitable to their understanding. As an example deliberately set up a trip hazard for yourself to demonstrate risk and risk prevention. Talk about risks that pupils encounter, introduce ideas about how likely different risks are and how dangerous. Make clear that risks cannot be completely avoided and that responsible behaviour is required.

What to do:

- Identify which school grounds risk(s) will be assessed. This might be an existing feature in your grounds, like a woodland area; a proposed risk, like a new pond; an existing activity, like informal football games at break time; or a proposed activity, like an outdoor dance festival. In general, younger children will find it easier to assess existing physical features.
- You might want to assess one risk as a whole group, or divide older children up into small groups to assess different risks. Or assess the same risk independently to see how the groups compare.
- What are the risks? Prompt ideas by looking at the existing feature / activity, or talking about similar examples that pupils are aware of. For a proposed feature you might be able to visit something similar nearby or use photos for stimulus.
- Who might be harmed and how? Prompt pupils to think of different potential users (e.g. young children, partially sighted) and different situations (e.g. managed lessons, break times, unofficial after-school use).
- Is it a big risk or a small risk? Discuss both likelihood and severity measures of risk. You might want to use a scoring system using numbers or symbols to compare risks – which can lead to a lively debate!
- What can we do about it? Pupils should think of ways of making the risk less likely or less dangerous. Can things be done differently? Do there need to be behaviour rules? Discuss whether the activity / feature should be scrapped entirely because of the risk. If so, what are the disadvantages, as well as advantages?
- Decision – how are you going to respond to the risk analysis?

Follow-up:

- Pupils could present their analysis to decision makers – e.g. the head teacher or governors.
- Make sure that pupils see their recommendations are taken seriously – if they are not acted upon, explain why a different decision has been taken.

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Risky?

A risk assessment of

What are the risks?

Who might be harmed and how?

Is it a big risk or a small risk?

What can we do about it?

Our decision . . .