

Insight - a closer look at

Managing school events





Education

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The guidance in this note is distilled from our long association with the independent schools sector and is enhanced by insights derived from our experience of managing risk in commercial business sectors.

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Managing school events

Schools often have a timetable of regular events for pupils, parents, those interested in sending their child to the school and the wider community. The school has a responsibility to ensure that their site is safe for those people who are to be involved in the event.

It is therefore important that the school is aware of how to plan and deliver an event in way that minimises the risks to participants.

Schools have a duty to plan, manage and monitor their event to ensure that employees, pupils and any visitors are not exposed to health and safety risks during their time at the event and on the school premises.



School duties

Health and safety doesn't have to be complicated. To make sure that risk management best practice is followed the Bursar and / or School Health and Safety Manager should be involved closely with event planning.

Consider the following aspects as part of the planning process:

- The scale and type of event – ensure that you have enough time to plan adequately
- Identify key people who will be required to help and support before, during and after the event – make this group your event organisers
- Select who will be responsible for Health and Safety for the particular event and ensure that the school H & S policy is followed
- Scope out the risk management issues relevant to the event and create a Safety Plan that consists of the findings of your risk assessment process
- Plan the steps you need to take to control risks associated with the event
- Record the risk assessment findings and the event planning process clearly, not only to help you but to show 'due diligence' in the event of an incident occurring
- Gain a range of opinions to ensure that all the risks have been considered
- Ensure first aid provision: first aid kits as a minimum and St John Ambulance on standby for large events – the size and nature of the school event will help dictate these measures
- Identify the mains water source and electrical cut off point for the school in case of an emergency incident.





“Plan the steps you need to take to control risks associated with the event.”

Planning the event

Consider the following issues when planning where the event is to take place:



- 1** If the event is a joint event - held on the school premises but run by an outside company e.g. a theatre company, ensure a close working relationship clearly defines roles and responsibilities for each party
- 2** Thoroughly assess the profile of the audience who will attend and consider the needs of the audience accordingly.
- 3** Plan safe pedestrian routes that are segregated from vehicle routes as far as possible.
- 4** Ensure that those attending the event are afforded safe access and egress.
- 5** Depending on the event, there may need to be procedures for managing larger bodies of people.
- 6** Emergency evacuation plans and giving adequate and rapid access to the Fire Brigade, Police or Ambulance services.
- 7** Temporary demountable structures (TDS) including stages, marquees and seating require particular attention and close working with contractors to plan safe systems of working, usage and dismantling in order to minimise the risk of collapsing structures.



Communication is key

Minimising the risk of injury to any persons involved in an event, whether a participant or a member of the audience, requires a good level of communication. Examples of communication issues include:

- Close communication between the event organisers and the school management team on foreseeable risks.
- Communication of health and safety requirements from the responsible person to all persons involved in planning and delivering the event.
- Communication of risk assessment findings to those persons involved in delivering the event.
- Develop a good level of two-way communication on risk management issues with outside specialists involved in the event.
- Provision of relevant on-site information and induction briefings to include:
 - Emergency arrangements including first aid, toilets, water, electric and gas sources and cut offs
 - Site speed limits and safe parking zones
 - Plant and machinery hire and usage instructions
 - Site hazards and controls e.g. vicinity to playgrounds, children crossing the road at peak times, school drop off and pick up arrangements and times of day
 - Need for additional health and safety signage
- Monitor and review regularly how contractors are operating and clearly communicate feedback on safety concerns.



Incident and emergency planning

Sometimes events do not go as planned. Consideration of the following issues will help in the event of a problem occurring:

- Each individual significant risk should have an emergency procedure that can be followed in the event of the worst case occurring
- Consider contingency planning in case of cancellation due to illness, a power cut or bad weather, etc.
- Consider the merits of discussing any issues proactively with any of the emergency services to assist incident planning and allocate responsibilities
- Dependent on the level of risks involved, an emergency plan is recommended to cover the following items:
 - Evacuation of people
 - Assistance provided to emergency services
 - Care of injured people
 - Protection of property
- Instructions for staff/volunteers to follow in an emergency and their specific responsibilities in the event of an emergency
- A specific process for stopping the event and communicating with audience, performers and other visitors that an emergency is underway e.g. pre-prepare a public announcement to be delivered from the stage in the event of an emergency situation
- Transfer of the authority to manage the event over to the Emergency Services if necessary
- A process for re-commencement of the event if practicable once the initial dangers have subsided.



After the event...

It is good practice to evaluate how the event went in term of risk management and health and safety, to ensure any issues that arose are captured and used in the future to improve on events management.

Any review process should consider how any contractors performed, whether the risk assessments captured all necessary issues, the nature of any injuries suffered by those involved and how those injuries could have been prevented etc.

Events are complex and require much consideration in order to be planned well and to meet with legal requirements. A crucial element of any event plan is the risk assessment stage where key risks to health and safety are identified and their management planned for in advance. Be sure to include the school Bursar or Health and Safety Manager in the events committee to ensure close tie in with the overall school Health and Safety Policy. With good teamwork and communication your event should be a great success!

Consider contingency planning in case of cancellation due to **illness, a power cut or bad weather.**





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