**PTA Policy – Managing Risk**

**PTA Name: Verulam School PTA**
**Name of school: Verulam School**
**School address: Brampton Rd, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL1 4PR**

**Date policy adopted: January 2016**

**Risk Assessments**

Prior to every PTA event a risk assessment is undertaken, in accordance with the advice given by PTA UK attached as Appendix 1. A risk assessment template can be found on [www.thegrid.org.uk](http://www.thegrid.org.uk). The event organiser, with guidance from the Health and Safety staff at Verulam, must take responsibility for ensuring that the assessment is accurate and that the recommendations are implemented.

**Insurance**

As a PTA, we have a duty of care to ensure that the association has adequate insurance cover in place. If a child is hurt at a PTA event or the school is damaged, the committee may be held financially responsible. In addition, local authorities require all third parties using school premises to have public liability insurance in place. Verulam PTA is a member of PTA UK. Membership includes public liability insurance of up to £10 million.

If an incident occurs that may result in an insurance claim, the Committee must contact the PTA UK Advice Line as soon as possible to discuss this and what action should be taken (0300 123 5460/info@pta.org.uk). PTA UK advise not to engage in discussion about an incident with any third party that may be seeking to claim and not to accept liability; to do so could impact on our insurance cover.

**Appendix 1 - PTA UK ADVICE ON RISK ASSESSMENTS**

Health and safety are key considerations for all PTA committee members. Before putting on any event your association should carry out a full risk assessment. Your association should maintain a record of its findings and you should be prepared to produce these in the event of an incident at your event.

What is a risk assessment?

The Health and Safety Executive states that a risk assessment is:

*"…simply a careful examination of what [at your event] could cause harm to people, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm."*

The HSE also states:-

*"The law does not expect you to eliminate all risk, but you are required to protect people as far as 'reasonably practicable'.*

So a risk assessment will help your association to identify potential hazards, identify who might be harmed and how and determine whether existing precautions are adequate or whether more action needs to be taken to reduce the risk.

(HSE) is responsible for health and safety regulation in the UK. The following is therefore a straightforward guide to undertaking a risk assessment and is based on information provided in the HSE's free publication Five Steps to Risk Assessment (single free copies are available from HSE Books, PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk, C010 2WA, telephone: 01787 881165 or [www.hsebooks.co.uk](http://www.hsebooks.co.uk/)).

When thinking about producing a risk assessment, remember:

* A hazard is something that may cause harm, such as trailing cables, hot water, overcrowding, wet floors
* The risk is the chance, low or high, that persons at your event could be harmed by the hazards, together with an understanding as to how serious the harm could be.

How to assess the risks at your PTA event:

Step 1: Look at the hazards

First you need to work out how people assisting and attending the event might be harmed. This should include the build up to the event, the event itself and the break-down of the event. Your association may be holding the event off or on the school premises. If it is the latter then being familiar with the venue may mean that potential risks are more easily overlooked, so extra care should be taken. Either way you should:

* arrange to see the venue so that you can familiarize yourself with the building(s) and rooms your association will be using
* make a note of what might reasonably be expected to cause harm and talk the preliminary findings through with the rest of the PTA committee - other committee members may think of things that you haven't considered
* look at the risk assessments held on file at the school/venue you are using; take these into account when preparing your own and make sure your association adheres to the recommendations e.g. if a school risk assessment states that the school hall holds a maximum number, this must be adhered to
* arrange to meet with the person who is responsible for Health and Safety at the school or venue you are using. You should also arrange to discuss your risk assessment with the caretaker/facilities manager if you feel this is appropriate. If additional guidance is still required, contact the Health and Safety person at your local authority.

Step 2: Decide who might be harmed and how

For each hazard you need to understand who might be harmed as this will help you to identify the best way to manage the risk. This doesn't mean listing everyone that is likely to be at your event but rather by identifying groups of people e.g.:

* PTA committee members
* pupils
* school staff
* the general public

In each case identify how the person(s) they might be harmed i.e. what type of injury might occur. For example, children on a bouncy castle might fall off and injure themselves.

Step 3: Evaluate the risks, decide if they are acceptable, agree the precautions needed

Once the hazards have been identified, you then, as a Committee, need to decide what to do about them. The law requires you to do everything reasonably practicable to protect people from harm. Assess the risks and decide whether existing precautions are adequate; if not decide what more needs to be done to bring the risk down to an acceptable level. Look at what you are hoping to do and discuss what steps you might take to minimise the risk e.g.:

* site the bouncy castle on the grass
* place PE mats around the fall-out area
* limit the numbers using the bouncy castle (and by age-range)
* have at least two "spotters"
* remove over-excited users that might cause harm to themselves or others

When evaluating the risks your association should ask the question - can the hazard be removed completely? If not, you should agree what needs to be done to control the risks so that an accident is unlikely.

Step 4: Record your findings and implement them

Once your association has identified the various hazards and agreed the steps needed to minimise the risk, you need to record the findings and share them with the committee. This will help when putting the findings of the risk assessment into practice - the most important part of the whole process.

When recording the findings the HSE states that this can be kept very simple, for example - 'members of the public may trip over rubbish - black sacks will be strategically located and PTA Committee members will remove and replace at frequent intervals'.

The HSE does not expect a risk assessment to be perfect, but it must be suitable and sufficient. Your association has a duty of care to show that:

* it undertook a comprehensive check
* advice taken from the school/venue and local authority (if applicable)
* who might be affected was identified
* appropriate steps to deal with hazards were agreed
* the precautions to reduce the risk are understood and any remaining risk is low; and
* all committee members are aware of the process

Your association should keep all risk assessments on file as they will probably be needed when running the event again and will provide a good starting point for new committee members.

Step 5: Review your assessment and update if necessary

Even if your association is running the same event, at the same time, in the same place every year, no two events are ever exactly alike. The organisers must therefore review what they are doing, at the planning stage of the event. You can use a previous risk assessment as long as it has been reviewed:

* have there been any changes?
* have your fellow PTA colleagues identified another potential hazard?
* have you learnt anything from the previous event - what accidents, incidents happened last time?

A risk assessment template has been prepared for PTA-UK members to modify and use, when risk assessing events. Points to note:

* don't over complicate the process
* remember a hazard is anything that may cause harm, such as electricity, trailing cables, hot water
* the risk is the chance, high or low, that somebody could be harmed by these or other hazards, together with an indication of how serious the harm could be